

February 22nd, 2023

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Wednesday, 22nd February 2023** at **7:00 pm** in **City Hall, Bangor.**

Agenda

Agenda

[C 22.02.2023 Agenda.pdf](#)

Page 1

1. Prayer

2. Apologies

3. Declarations of Interest

4 Mayor's Business

5 Mayor and Deputy Mayor Engagements for the Month of February 2023 (Copy attached)

[5 Mayor's Engagements February 2023.pdf](#)

Page 6

6 Minutes of Council Meeting held on 26 January 2023 (Copy attached)

[C 26.01.2023 MinutesPM.pdf](#)

Page 9

7 Minutes of Committees

7.1 Planning Committee dated 7th February 2023 (Copy attached)

[230207 PC Minutes.pdf](#)

Page 72

7.2 Environment Committee dated 8 February 2023 (Copy attached)

[EC.08.02.23 MinutesPM.pdf](#)

Page 92

7.3 Place and Prosperity Committee dated 9 February 2023 (Copy attached)

[PP 09.02.2023 Minutes PM.pdf](#)

Page 124

7.4 Special Council Meeting dated 14 February 2023 (Copy attached)

[SpC 14.02.2023 Minutes.pdf](#)

Page 160

7.5 Corporate Services dated 14 February 2023 (Copy attached)

[CS 14.02.2023 MinutesPM.pdf](#)

Page 181

- 7.5.1. **Matter Arising from Item 9 - Invite to Musical Tribute to HM Queen Elizabeth II (Copy Attached)**
📎 *7.5.1 Invite to Musical Tribute to HM Queen Elizabeth.pdf* Page 207
- 📎 *7.5.1 QEII Letter of invitation.pdf* Page 208

*****ITEM 7.5.2 IN CONFIDENCE*****











- 7.5.2 **Matter Arising from Item 16 - Romas Outdoor Seating Area at Mill Street Carpark, Newtownards (Copy attached)**
📎 *7.5.2 Arising from Corporate - Romas outdoor seating at Mill Street carpark.pdf* Not included

- 7.6 **Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 15 February 2023 (Copy attached)**
📎 *PM CWB 15.02.2023 Minutes.pdf* Page 209

- 7.6.1 **Matter Arising from Item 12 of the Community and Wellbeing Committee - Proposed Final Programme of Events to Celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III**
📎 *7.6.1 Council Coronation Report v2.pdf* Page 245

8. Consultation Documents

- 8.1 **The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland - Proposals to Approve a New Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) - L126The Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2019 (Correspondence attached)**
📎 *8.1 REPPIR ACOP.pdf* Page 249
- 8.2 **Department of Health and Department of Justice - Consultation Draft Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy (Correspondence attached)**
📎 *8.2 Consultation Draft Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-2030.PDF* Page 252
- 8.3 **Department for the Economy - Consultation on Design Considerations for a Renewable Electricity Support Scheme for Northern Ireland (Correspondence attached)**
📎 *8.3 Consultation on Design Considerations for a Renewable Electricity Support Scheme for Northern Ireland .msg.pdf* Page 254

8.4	South Eastern Trust Health and Social Care NI - Public Consultation on The Future Provision of Urgent and Emergency Care Services Ards and North Down Area (Report attached)	
	 8.4 Consultation on MIU closure cover report.pdf	Page 255
	 8.4 Public Consultation on The Future Provision of Urgent and Emergency Care Services - Ards and North Down area.msg.pdf	Page 257
8.5	Consultation on Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland (Report attached)	
	 8.5 Consultation Response - Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland DL.pdf	Page 259
	 8.5 Appendix 1 - draft-circular-economy-strategy-for-northern-ireland-response-template ANDBC response.pdf	Page 261
9.	Request for Deputation - The North Channel Wind Project, SBM Offshore (Report attached)	
	 9. Deputation Request Report - North Channel Wind.pdf	Page 273
	 9. Deputation Request - North Channel Wind Project.pdf	Page 275
10.	Sealing Documents	
11.	Transfer of Rights of Burial	
12.	Conferences	
12.1	National Association of Councillors (NAC) Northern Ireland Region - Leadership and Change in Local Enterprise (Report attached)	
	 12.1 NAC Leadership in Local Enterprise Workshop 23 March 2023 cover report.pdf	Page 277
	 12.1 Appendix 1 - NAC Leadership in Local Enterprise Workshop 23 March 2023 Flyer.pdf	Page 278
	 12.1 Appendix 2- NAC Draft Agenda for 23 Mar 2023.pdf	Page 279
13.	NIVSO: Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (Report attached)	
	 13. Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust.pdf	Page 280

 **13. Appendix 1 - Application form - Veterans Champions Outreach Project.pdf** **Page 282**


 **13. Appendix 2 - Activity flow chart - Veterans Champion Outreach Project.pdf** **Page 284**

14. Review of NILGA Constitution (Report attached)

Report attached.


 **14. Review of NILGA Constitution .pdf** **Page 285**

 **14. Letter from NILGA to CE.pdf** **Page 287**

 **14. Draft Amended NILGA Constitution 10 February 2023 Councils.pdf** **Page 288**

15. Notice of Motion Status Report (Report attached)

 **15. NOM Covering Report - February.pdf** **Page 297**

 **15. NOM Tracker February 2023.pdf** **Page 298**

16 Notices of Motion

16.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman McIlveen and Alderman Armstrong-Cotter

That Council, subject to consultation with addressees on the road, considers changing the name of that stretch of the A21 in Newtownards which runs from Portaferry Road to the junction with Upper Greenwell Street, Newtownards currently named New Road to Viscount Castlereagh Avenue as a mark of the life and legacy of Robert Stewart, 2nd Marquess of Londonderry, who was known by the courtesy title of Viscount Castlereagh during most of his life, in the 200th year of his passing.

16.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Irvine and Alderman Keery

That this Council tasks officers to begin discussions with the Education Authority with regards to the future of Bloomfield Playing Fields, Bangor. This is to include the lease and the exploring of the possibility of bringing the facility up to intermediate level for football. A report to be brought back to Council following said discussions.

16.3 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor P Smith and Councillor Smart

The this Council is concerned that recent data shows that the Ards and North Down Borough Council area has the highest level of potholes in Northern Ireland and calls on DfI Roads Service to produce an action plan to improve the quality of roads in the Borough.

16.4 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor T Smith and Councillor Kennedy, also Councillor Irvine, Councillor McKimm, Councillor Boyle and Councillor Cathcart

This Council writes to the South Eastern Trust rejecting their proposals to close the Bangor and Newtownards Minor Injury Units. We believe that this will lead to a detrimental impact on patient care particularly at an already overstretched Ulster Hospital. This Council calls on the Trust to not only retain the minor injury unit in Ards but also to re-open the Bangor Minor Injury Unit. We see this as a better way to treat more people locally and ease the pressure on the Ulster. We urge the South Eastern Trust to listen to the real concerns from the public and we hope that this consultation exercise is a genuine one and not a cover for something that is already a done deal.

16.5 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Adair and Councillor Edmund

This Council rename the square area at Portavogie War Memorial Queen Elizabeth Square in memory of our late Sovereign Queen Elizabeth II.

16.6 Rescinding Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor McKee, Councillor Gilmour, Councillor Irwin, Alderman Wilson, Alderman Smith and Councillor Woods


That this Council rescind the decision taken at the meeting of the Council on 26th October 2022 that 'Council notes the report and expressing concern with the reports of anti-social behaviour that is ongoing in and around Playparks. Furthermore, that Council agrees to carry out local consultation before taking a decision on the locking up of the 7 playparks identified in the North Down area' and instead proposes that Council notes the concerns raised with the decision taken to not lock the MUGA and playpark at Clandeboye and the playpark at Bloomfield; agrees to re-lock premises at Clandeboye and Bloomfield, as soon as possible, for a trial period of 6 months, subject to review, to monitor concerns and carries out local consultation at parks effected by changes in the locking up schedule in the Borough.

Circulated for Information

a) February Housing Council Bulletin and January Housing Council Minutes (Correspondence attached)

 *Housing Council Minutes - 12th January 2023.pdf*

Page 328

 *Members Bulletin - 9 February 2023.pdf*

Page 343

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

17. Award of Tender for the Provision of Speciality Marina Consultancy Services (Report attached)

 *17. Tender award for specialist marina consultancy.pdf*

Not included

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

16 February 2023

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, 22 February 2022 commencing at 7.00pm.**

Yours faithfully

Stephen Reid
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 February 2023 (Copy attached)
6. Minutes of Council meeting dated 26 January 2023 (Copy attached)
7. Minutes of Committees
 - 7.1. Minutes of Planning Committee dated 7 February 2023 (Copy attached)
 - 7.2. Minutes of Meeting of Environment Committee dated 8 February 2023 (Copy attached)
 - 7.3. Minutes of Meeting of Place and Prosperity Committee dated 9 February 2023 (Copy attached)
 - 7.4. Minutes of Special Council Meeting dated 14 February 2023 (Copy attached)

- 7.5. Meeting of Corporate Services Committee dated 14 February 2023 (Copy attached)
 - 7.5.1 Matter Arising from Item 9 – Invite to Musical Tribute to HM Queen Elizabeth II (Report attached)
- ***ITEM 7.5.2 IN CONFIDENCE*****
 - 7.5.2 Matter Arising from Item 16 – Romas Outdoor Seating Area at Mill Street carpark, Newtownards (Report attached)
- 7.6. Minutes of Meeting of Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 15 February 2023 (Copy attached)
 - 7.6.1 Matter Arising from Item 12 of the Community and Wellbeing Committee – Proposed Final Programme of Events to Celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III (Report attached)
8. Consultation Documents
 - 8.1 The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland – Proposals to approve a new Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) -L126 The Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public information) Regulations 2019 (Correspondence attached)
 - 8.2 Department of Health and Department of Justice – Consultation Draft Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy (Correspondence attached)
 - 8.3 Department for the Economy – Consultation on Design considerations for a Renewable Electricity Support Scheme for Northern Ireland (Correspondence attached)
 - 8.4 South Eastern Trust Health and Social Care NI – Public Consultation on The Future Provision of urgent and Emergency Care Services – Ards and North Down Area (Report attached)
 - 8.5 Consultation on Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland (Report attached)
9. Request for Deputation – The North Channel Wind Project, SBM Offshore (Report attached)
10. Sealing Documents
11. Transfer of Rights of Burials
12. Conferences
 - 12.1 National Association of Councillors (NAC) Northern Ireland Region – Leadership and Change in Local Enterprise (Report attached)
13. Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (Report attached)

14. Review of NILGA Constitution (Report attached)

15. Notice of Motion Status Report (Report attached)

16. Notices of Motion

16.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman McIlveen and Alderman Armstrong-Cotter

That Council, subject to consultation with addressees on the road, considers changing the name of that stretch of the A21 in Newtownards which runs from Portaferry Road to the junction with Upper Greenwell Street, Newtownards currently named New Road to Viscount Castlereagh Avenue as a mark of the life and legacy of Robert Stewart, 2nd Marquess of Londonderry, who was known by the courtesy title of Viscount Castlereagh during most of his life, in the 200th year of his passing.

16.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Irvine and Alderman Keery

That this Council tasks officers to begin discussions with the Education Authority with regards to the future of Bloomfield playing fields, Bangor. This is to include the lease and the exploring of the possibility of bringing the facility up to intermediate level for football. A report to be brought back to Council following said discussions.

16.3 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor P Smith and Councillor Smart

That this Council is concerned that recent data shows that the Ards and North Down Borough Council area has the highest level of potholes in Northern Ireland and calls on DfI Roads Service to produce an action plan to improve the quality of roads in the Borough.

16.4 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor T Smith and Councillor Kennedy, also Councillor S Irvine, Councillor McKimm, Councillor Boyle and Councillor Cathcart

This Council writes to the South Eastern Trust rejecting their proposals to close the Bangor and Newtownards Minor Injury Units. We believe that this will lead to a detrimental impact on patient care particularly at an already overstretched Ulster Hospital. This Council calls on the Trust to not only retain the minor injury unit in Ards but also to re-open the Bangor Minor Injury Unit. We see this as a better way to treat more people locally and ease the pressure on the Ulster. We urge the South Eastern Trust to listen to the real concerns from the public and we hope that this consultation exercise is a genuine one and not a cover for something that is already a done deal.

16.5 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Adair and Councillor Edmund

This Council rename the square area at Portavogie War Memorial Queen Elizabeth Square in memory of our late Sovereign Queen Elizabeth II.

16.6 Rescinding Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor McKee, Councillor Gilmour, Councillor Irwin, Alderman Wilson, Alderman Smith and Councillor Woods

That this Council rescind the decision taken at the meeting of the Council on 26th October 2022 that 'Council notes the report and expressing concern with the reports of anti-social behaviour that is ongoing in and around Playparks. Furthermore, that Council agrees to carry out local consultation before taking a decision on the locking up of the 7 playparks identified in the North Down area'; and instead proposes that Council notes the concerns raised with the decision taken to not lock the MUGA and playpark at Clandeboye and the playpark at Bloomfield; agrees to re-lock premises at Clandeboye and Bloomfield, as soon as possible, for a trial period of 6 months, subject to review, to monitor concerns and carries out local consultation at parks effected by changes in the locking up schedule in the Borough.

Circulated for Information:

- a) February Housing Council Bulletin and January Housing Council Minutes
(Correspondence attached)

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

17. Award of Tender for the Provision of Speciality Marina Consultancy Services
(Report attached)

MEMBERSHIP OF ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	Councillor Gilmour
Alderman Carson	Councillor Greer
Alderman Gibson	Councillor Irvine
Alderman Irvine	Councillor Irwin
Alderman Keery	Councillor Johnson
Alderman McDowell	Councillor Kennedy
Alderman McIlveen	Councillor MacArthur
Alderman Smith	Councillor McAlpine
Alderman Wilson	Councillor McClean
Councillor Adair	Councillor McKee
Councillor Blaney (Deputy Mayor)	Councillor McKimm
Councillor Boyle	Councillor McRandal

Councillor Brooks	Councillor Moore
Councillor Cathcart	Councillor Morgan
Councillor Chambers	Councillor Smart
Councillor Cooper	Councillor P Smith
Councillor Cummings	Councillor T Smith
Councillor Douglas (Mayor)	Councillor Thompson
Councillor S Dunlop	Councillor Walker
Councillor Edmund	Councillor Woods

**LIST OF MAYOR'S/DEPUTY MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS
FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2023**

Wednesday 1 February

18:00 hours St John's Ambulance Meeting – Craig Room, City Hall, Bangor

Thursday 2 February

19:00 hours 'All Our Yesterdays' – U3A Exhibition – Bangor Carnegie Library

Friday 3 February

10:30 hours Adopt-A-Spot Ambassador Filming – City Hall, Bangor

12:00 hours Photocall – NI Apprenticeship Week – City Hall, Bangor

Saturday 4 February

11:00 hours Charity Bucket Collection – Asda, Ards Shopping Centre, Newtownards

Monday 6 February

11:30 hours **Deputy Mayor** – Photo to Promote Recruitment to the AND Artist Network – Ards Arts Centre, Conway Square, Newtownards

12:30 hours Meeting with Tahnee McCorry – White Ribbon NI Campaign – Mayor's Parlour, City Hall, Bangor

Tuesday 7 February

10:30 hours Meeting with Bangor Macular Group – Mayor's Parlour, City Hall, Bangor

11:30 hours SERC Valentine's Market – Bangor Campus

Wednesday 8 February

12:00 hours Photoshoot – Go For It Programme: Case Study – NDDO, Balloo Avenue, Bangor

19:00 hours Taste and Food Heroes Awards – Clandeboye Estate, Bangor

Thursday 9 February

18:30 hours Menopause Wellbeing Event – Robert Andrews Church Hall, Donaghadee

Friday 10 February

12:00 hours Lunch for SEDSVP – Mayor's Parlour, City Hall, Bangor

Tuesday 14 February

10:00 hours Care Day 23 Visit – Mayor's Parlour, City Hall, Bangor

Wednesday 15 February

12:00 hours Visit from International Students from Denmark & North Down
YMCA – City Hall, Bangor

14:00 hours Launch of the Big Guide – City Hall, Bangor

Thursday 16 February

12:00 hours Business Advice Meeting – Mayor's Parlour, City Hall, Bangor

14:00 hours Phoenix Clinic & Resource Centre's 30th Anniversary –
Lansdowne Road, Newtownards

Friday 17 February

09:00 hours Arranging of a Maritime Heritage Conference – Council
Chamber, City Hall, Bangor

Saturday 18 February

10:45 hours Annual Commemoration of Henry Harrison – Holywood Library

Tuesday 21 February

10:30 hours Photoshoot – Ards Guitar Festival Launch – Ards Arts Centre,
Conway Square, Newtownards

11:00 hours Photoshoot with the Public Health Agency – City Hall, Bangor

12:00 hours Lunch with Social Work Leaders – Mayor's Parlour, City Hall,
Bangor

15:00 hours Photoshoot – Promotion of Engine Off initiative – St Mary's
Primary School, Kircubbin

Thursday 23 February

16:00 hours International Women in North Down Visit – Mayor's Parlour, City
Hall, Bangor

19:00 hours Visit to Basketball Club – Bangor Grammar School, Gransha
Road, Bangor

Friday 24 February

08:00 hours Meeting with North Down Hub – Genesis Network – Coffee Cure
at the Museum, Bangor

10:00 hours Launch of Big Spring Clean Campaign – Belfast Harbour
Commissioners' HQ – Corporation Square, Belfast

16:00 hours Photoshoot – Good Relations Football Sessions – Ards Blair
Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex – Newtownards

Saturday 25 February

- 11:30 hours Visit to the Polish Saturday Supplementary School – YMCA, High Street, Bangor
- 14:00 hours Visit to Croagh Patrick Care Home for 35th Anniversary – Millisle Road, Donaghadee

Sunday 26 February

- 11:00 hours Fun Run for Chest, Heart & Stroke – Stormont Park, Belfast
- 13:00 hours 1st Day of Ayyam-i-Ha – Skipperstone, Community Centre, Bangor

Monday 28 February

- 10:00 hours Road Safety Presentation – Bangor Academy and Sixth Form College
- 14:30 hours Rare Disease Day Event – Mayor's Parlour, City Hall, Bangor

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting of the Ards and North Down Borough Council was held at the City Hall, The Castle, Bangor and via Zoom, on Thursday, 26 January 2023 commencing at 7.00pm.

In the Chair:	The Mayor (Councillor Douglas)	
Aldermen:	Armstrong-Cotter (Zoom) Carson (Zoom) Gibson Irvine Keery	McDowell McIlveen M Smith Wilson (In person / Zoom)
Councillors:	Adair Blaney Boyle Brooks Cathcart Chambers Cooper (Zoom) Cummings Dunlop Edmund Gilmour Greer Irvine Irwin Johnson (Zoom)	Kennedy MacArthur (Zoom) McAlpine McClellan McKee McKimm McRandal Moore Morgan Smart P Smith T Smith Thompson Walker Woods

Officers: Chief Executive (S Reid), Director of Finance and Performance (S Christie), Director of Place (S McCullough), Director of Prosperity (A McCullough), Director of Environment (D Lindsay), Director of Community & Wellbeing (G Bannister), Head of Administration (A Curtis), Head of Communications and Marketing (C Jackson), Community Planning Manager (P Mackey), Corporate Communications Officer (C Mulgrew) and Democratic Services Officers (R King and S McCrea)

1. PRAYER

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

NOTED.

2. APOLOGIES

The Mayor sought apologies and none were submitted.

NOTED.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Mayor asked for any Declarations of Interest and the following were made:

Alderman Carson and Councillors Johnson, McAlpine, McKee, McRandal, Moore and Thompson - Item 8.5.1 - Matter arising Item 9 Kinnegar to Donaghadee Additional Public Engagement

NOTED.

4. MAYOR'S BUSINESS

It was with great shock and sadness that the Mayor had learned of the tragic deaths of Alex and Ann Easton in a house fire on Monday 23 January 2023. They were the parents of Alex Easton, MLA for North Down and a former Councillor. On behalf of the Council, the Mayor extended sympathies to Alex and his family on their loss before asking all of those in attendance to observe a minute's silence.

Alderman Irvine reflected on what had been a terrible tragedy for Mr Easton's family and he asked Members to keep them in their prayers. He added that Mr Easton had been grateful for all the kind words and messages of support. Alderman Keery echoed those comments.

Continuing with her monthly update, the Mayor had been honoured to have been in attendance on Christmas Eve for the Steele and Sons Cup Final and to see Bangor Football Club lift the trophy. She congratulated the Club on its achievement.

On the previous night, Members and staff had gathered at the City Hall to mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2023. Those attending had been honoured to hear from a Holocaust survivor, Eve Kugler, who had delivered a truly remarkable talk on her experience.

Members would be aware that at the end of last week, the UK Government announced the list of projects which had been successful in being awarded a share of the second round of the Levelling Up Fund.

The Mayor had been delighted to see that a number of the projects supported by Council had received funding. Benefiting was the Marine Gardens Public Realm Project with just under £10 million being confirmed to the Developer of the Queens Parade project, Bangor Marine. The Mayor had been able to welcome the Parliamentary Under Secretary for International Trade, Andrew Bowie MP, to Bangor

to view the plans for the Waterfront Regeneration after the announcement of the Levelling Up grant.

The Mayor had been pleased to see the Contract for Funding signed for the Bangor Waterfront Project releasing £40 million from the Department for Communities. Hopefully now Council would see progress on both schemes as part of the regeneration of the City of Bangor.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Cummings, seconded by Councillor Greer, that the Mayor's comments be noted.

5. MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR ENGAGEMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2023

(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Engagements for the month of January 2023.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Greer, seconded by Alderman Gibson, that the information be noted.

6. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 21 DECEMBER 2022

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above minutes.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McKimm, seconded by Alderman Irvine, that the minutes be adopted.

7. MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 12 JANUARY 2023

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above minutes.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor P Smith, that the minutes be adopted.

8. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

8.1 Audit Committee dated 15 December 2022

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above minutes.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Councillor Greer, that the minutes be adopted.

8.2 Environment Committee dated 15 December 2022

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above minutes.

Alderman McDowell proposed, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the minutes be adopted.

Item 7 – Car Park Strategy Update - Proposals for Car Parking Enhancements in Donaghadee

Councillor Gilmour indicated that she wished to propose an amendment in relation to the above item, on behalf of Councillor MacArthur who was attending virtually but due to illness she had 'lost her voice' and was unable to propose and speak to the amendment.

Councillor Gilmour proposed, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that in addition to points 1-5 in the recommendation: to add (6) That recommendations 1-5 are kept under review pending the outcome of the Kinnegar to Donaghadee Greenway application, given its potential impact on on-street parking in Donaghadee, to ensure that parking spaces are maintained, at least at the current level of provision.

Speaking to the proposal, Councillor Gilmour stated the car parking report was much awaited by the residents of Donaghadee who, on the whole, relied on already limited on street parking. This was largely due to the poor condition of the existing car parks in the town with officers having identified a series of car park deficiencies including poor signage or no signage at all, poor surfacing, no markings and poor or no lighting for car park users. The report recommended that these car parking issues be addressed. She referred Members to recommendations 1 to 4.

Officers had further identified that if on-street parking was marked out into bays along the Parade at the seafront, there would be a total of 50 parking spaces along the front within the town centre boundary and that marking these out would lead to more efficient use of the on-street parking space.

All of this was welcomed by the Town Advisory Group meeting at which Councillor MacArthur had attended and further, she was happy to second the recommendations at the Environment Committee also. However, at no point, either at the TAG meeting or during the Environment Committee was the impact of the current Greenway proposals on parking discussed. She explained that Councillor MacArthur did not intend to discuss the merits or otherwise of the Greenway at this point, she just wanted to point out that should the current Greenway plans go ahead, these 50 on street car parking spaces would be wiped out. Further, car parking which extended down along Shore Street, would also be removed so any displacement of on street spaces at the Parade could not be catered for elsewhere along the seafront.

Councillor Gilmour added that it was important when reports were brought, that all appropriate information was included, even when it sat outside the reporting Directorate. In Donaghadee for example, there could have potentially been a situation where one Council Directorate would be lobbying the Department for Infrastructure to mark out parking places along the seafront, whilst another Council Directorate would be requesting that this parking be removed to accommodate a Greenway.

In conclusion, this sixth recommendation was to ensure that the parking capacity in Donaghadee was not reduced but maintained, at least at the current level. It would be some time before any funding could be obtained to upgrade the existing carparks and without suitable surfaces or even lighting, these car parks were not fit for purpose. Local residents were therefore dependent on on-street parking which was the life blood for businesses in Donaghadee and the amendment was to ensure that parking capacity be kept under review in light of the Kinnegar to Donaghadee Greenway application.

Councillor Boyle, having proposed the original recommendation at the Environment Committee meeting, said he was happy to support the amendment as he felt it was important to maintain and enhance existing car parking. Indicating further support, Councillor T Smith believed that the addition being proposed was a prudent move.

Summing up, the Chair of the Environment Committee, Alderman McDowell, felt that this was a useful amendment.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that that in addition to points 1-5 in the recommendation: (6) That recommendations 1-5 are kept under review pending the outcome of the Kinnegar to Donaghadee Greenway application, given its potential impact on on-street parking in Donaghadee, to ensure that parking spaces are maintained, at least at the current level of provision.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McDowell, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the minutes be adopted.

8.3 Place and Prosperity Committee dated 15 December 2022

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above minutes.

Councillor Walker proposed, seconded by Councillor Adair, that the minutes be adopted.

8.3.1 MATTER ARISING ITEM 6 - PIPE BANDS CHAMPIONSHIP (FILE TO/EV64)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Place detailing that this update report was referred to Council, further to a report presented to the Place and Prosperity Committee held on 5 January 2023, when the Committee agreed the following two recommendations:

1. Officers submit a bid for the ANDBC 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; and further recommends that
2. Council decides on the host location for the annual ANDBC Pipe Band Championship from one of the following three options:

- Option 3

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.

Officers were bringing to the attention of Members, an update on revised costs to the deliver the event at the Newtownards Airfield.

Since the location was determined by Committee, Officers felt it prudent to progress planning, subject to Council ratification and the Rates setting process. The outcome of this work had established that costs such as venue hire and traffic management were likely to be significantly beyond what was previously anticipated.

It was necessary to highlight that while Members had been advised that the maximum spend for the event to be held at Newtownards Airfield in 2023 would be £26,500, further to receipt of a full quotation from the Airfield, it had transpired that the cost of hiring the venue for the event would be £8,500 (previously charged £2,500 in 2019), which included a non-refundable £5,000 in event of cancellation. Further monies in respect of traffic management (estimated now at £4,000) would likely be required. It should be noted the additional traffic management budget would now also be required if the event was in Bangor. It should be noted that the traffic management estimation could not be concluded until a traffic management company was appointed. This procurement exercise was currently a work in progress.

This report had been presented to Council to advise of the uplift in the event budget by £7,350.

RECOMMENDED that Council considers the additional information as presented in the report and the revised budget of £33,850 to deliver the event in Newtownards in May 2023, subject to a successful bid to RSPBANI and the Rates setting process.

Proposed by Alderman Irvine, seconded by Councillor T Smith, that officers submit a bid for the ANDBC 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 and further recommend that Bangor hosts the event in 2023 and 2024.

Speaking to the proposal, Alderman Irvine felt that given the rising costs to host the event at Newtownards Airfield, it would be more cost effective for Bangor to host instead and make a saving of £12,000.

Members debated the proposal with Alderman McDowell and Alderman McIlveen and Councillor Smart unable to support it, feeling that a sensible compromise had already been reached. They requested that the proposer withdraw the proposal in order to allow sufficient time for Council to look at alternative sites in Newtownards or try to negotiate a better rate with Newtownards Airfield. Taking a similar view, Councillor Irvine was aware of a potential alternative site in Newtownards and suggested that West Winds Playing Fields be considered.

Councillor Boyle expressed sympathy for the RSPBANI and felt the organisation had been sucked into another Bangor versus Newtownards situation while Councillor P Smith felt the publicity around this ongoing debate had been embarrassing.

While he had always felt the event should be held permanently in Bangor, Councillor Cathcart respected that a decision had been agreed to rotate it and there was now public expectation. In addition, he did not want any further changes to jeopardise Bangor's hopes of hosting the European Championships.

The seconder, Councillor T Smith felt that Bangor's bid to host the European Championships should be debated on its own merits as a separate matter. In terms of the projected costs of the Airfield, he was concerned that Council could suddenly find an additional £12,000 and the kind of message that sent out in the midst of a difficult rate setting process.

Summing up, Alderman Irvine had appreciated the comments and requests to withdraw his proposal but stated that he wished to proceed and requested a recorded vote.

On being put to the meeting, with 2 voting FOR, 36 voting AGAINST, 1 ABSTAINING and 0 ABSENT, the proposal FELL.

The voting was as follows:

FOR (2)	AGAINST (36)	ABSTAINED (1)	ABSENT (0)
Aldermen:	Aldermen:	Councillor:	
Irvine	Armstrong-Cotter	Boyle	
Keery	Carson		
	Gibson		
	McDowell		
	McIlveen		
	Smith, M		
	Wilson		
	Councillors:		
	Adair		
	Blaney		
	Brooks		
	Cathcart		
	Chambers		
	Cooper		
	Cummings		
	Douglas		
	Dunlop		
	Edmund		
	Gilmour		
	Greer		
	Irvine		
	Irwin		
	Johnson		
	Kennedy		

MacArthur
McAlpine
McKimm
McClellan
McKee
McRandal
Moore
Morgan
Smart
Smith, P
Smith, T
Thompson
Walker
Woods

The Mayor invited a further proposal.

Councillor Smart proposed, seconded by Councillor Thompson, to proceed with the revised budget of £33,850 to deliver the event in Newtownards in May 2023, subject to a successful bid to RSPBANI and the Rates setting process.

Speaking to the proposal Councillor Smart felt that this option allowed the maximum number of people to enjoy the event and further time to prepare for next year in Bangor and also to investigate other sites in Newtownards for 2023. While he recognised that the budget had increased this year, that had also been the case of every other budget in the current financial climate.

The seconder, Councillor Thompson had been disappointed by the earlier proposal and had thought Members had got past the 'Bangor versus Newtownards' issue. The current proposal would allow the event to be shared across the Borough and he hoped it would finally 'put the matter to bed'.

Alderman McIlveen appreciated that there were alternative sites being considered, although he felt that the car parking provision offered by the Airfield could not be matched by anywhere else in Newtownards or Bangor and the traffic management issues were much diminished at the Airfield site. While accepting of the current proposal, he felt in the longer term there could be alternative host towns to consider such as Comber, rather than the event being selfishly held on to by the same locations, and he understood the Pipe Band Association was keen for this approach too.

Unable to support the proposal, Alderman McDowell wanted to see alternatives to reduce the estimated costs for hosting in Newtownards, otherwise he would be content for the event to be held in Bangor in 2023 and revert to Newtownards in 2024.

Councillor T Smith said he had been flabbergasted that Members would not allow the event to go to Bangor to reduce costs yet they wanted to keep it Newtownards despite the cost being well over budget. He was concerned that should the attempt

to find a cheaper alternative in Newtownards be unsuccessful, it would be too late to hold it in Bangor.

Councillor P Smith took the view that the budget was only a ceiling and if something was available at a reduced cost that would be the preferred approach, and the proposal allowed that flexibility. Councillor McClean hoped that the Council's support and commitment to hosting the event had not been lost in the debate and wanted to place on record that the Council was delighted that the RSPBANII was performing in the Borough. A recorded vote was requested.

On being put to the meeting, with 23 voting FOR, 16 voting AGAINST, 0 ABSTAINING and 4 ABSENT, the proposal was declared CARRIED.

The voting was as follows:

FOR (23)	AGAINST (16)	ABSTAINED (1)	ABSENT (0)
Aldermen:	Aldermen:	Councillor:	
Armstrong-Cotter	Irvine	Brooks	
Carson	Keery		
Gibson	McDowell		
McIlveen	Wilson		
Smith, M			
Councillors:	Councillors:		
Adair	Brooks		
Blaney	Cathcart		
Chambers	Gilmour		
Cooper	Greer		
Cummings	Irwin		
Douglas	McAlpine		
Dunlop	McKimm		
Edmund	McRandal		
Irvine, S	Moore		
Johnson	Morgan		
Kennedy	Smith, T		
MacArthur	Walker		
McClean			
McKee			
Smart			
Smith, P			
Thompson			
Woods			

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Smart, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that Council proceeds with the revised budget of £33,850 to deliver the event in Newtownards in May 2023, subject to a successful bid to RSPBANI and the Rates setting process.

FURTHER RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Adair, that the minutes be adopted.

8.4 Corporate Committee dated 15 December 2022

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above minutes.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor P Smith, seconded by Alderman W Irvine, that the minutes be adopted.

8.5 Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 15 December 2022

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above minutes.

Proposed by Councillor Edmund, seconded by Councillor McKimm, that the minutes be adopted.

Item 11 - Update on Portavogie 3G Pitch Project

As a matter of accuracy, Councillor Gilmour advised that the proposer of the recommendation for the above item in the minutes should be recorded as Councillor Boyle and not Councillor MacArthur.

Councillor Adair proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that this Council writes to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Infrastructure and the Chief Executive of Northern Ireland Water expressing concern that Portavogie is currently under development constraint due to water capacity issues in the foul sewer network in the village; notes that this is currently preventing the delivery of community facilities such as the Portavogie 3G Pitch and other development and further requests that the Department for Infrastructure and Northern Ireland Water make investment in the water and sewerage infrastructure for Portavogie a priority and commits to funding and investment as a matter of urgency.

Speaking to the proposal, Councillor Adair said it was disappointing that the 3G pitch had hit another hurdle and NI Water, as a statutory consultee, was blocking the community project from gaining planning permission by insisting that the Council pay for upgrades to the water infrastructure, estimated to total £200,000. Even if that work was undertaken, he warned that there would still be no guarantees that NI Water would be content for it to proceed. The project had been planned by Council for over a decade and the need for an all-weather pitch had grown even greater in that time. The Council should not have to pay for water infrastructure upgrades in Portavogie and responsibility should lie with the Department for Infrastructure and NI Water to end the block on a much needed community facility.

Seconding, Councillor Edmund felt that NI Water was using this as a stick to beat the Council with and was attempting to make the rate payer fund the works. He accused NI Water of using this as a source of blackmail to get those upgrades completed and urged Members to support the proposal.

Councillor Boyle was happy to support the amendment but felt that Councillor Adair no doubt already had all the answers he was looking for from the Department

through his colleagues Michelle McIlveen MLA and Jim Shannon MP, who had also raised it, but he felt there was no harm in writing to the Department for Infrastructure.

Responding to claims of opposition to the pitch, Councillor Boyle wished to clarify that there had never been any objection to the pitch from any Member. He referred to a Sport NI call-in process which had identified need for a pitch in the Ards Peninsula and once Portavogie had been identified, all Members had given their support.

In terms of the water network upgrades required, he asked the Director for Community and Wellbeing for clarity on the costs but found it difficult to believe that upgrades to the village's water infrastructure was preventing the installation of a 3G pitch.

Speaking in support, Councillor Thompson understood that DfI had initially intended to give its support and that the water issues had only been flagged up at the last minute. He hoped there could be a quick resolution to avoid the risk of losing funding for the pitch.

Councillor McAlpine agreed with Councillor Boyle around the call-in process and once there was agreement that one pitch would be in Portavogie and one elsewhere in the Ards Peninsula, every Member had given their support and was fully behind the pitch for Portavogie. She wondered if Planners had considered other methods such as soakaways, as she felt Council was unfairly being asked to provide an upgrade that would serve the entire village.

The Director of Community and Wellbeing advised that alternative solutions to the matters raised by NI Water were being explored by the architect and those findings would be reported back shortly.

Adding his support to the amendment, Alderman Carson felt a letter would do no harm.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor Edmund that this Council writes to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Infrastructure and the Chief Executive of Northern Ireland Water expressing concern that Portavogie is currently under development constraint due to water capacity issues in the foul sewer network in the village; notes that this is currently preventing the delivery of community facilities such as the Portavogie 3G Pitch and other development and further requests that the Department for Infrastructure and Northern Ireland Water make investment in the water and sewerage infrastructure for Portavogie a priority and commits to funding and investment as a matter of urgency.

(Alderman Carson and Councillors Johnson, McAlpine, McKee, McRandal, Moore and Thompson left the meeting having declared an interest in Item 8.5.1 – 8.15pm)

8.5.1 MATTER ARISING ITEM 9 KINNEGAR TO DONAGHADEE ADDITIONAL PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Background

The purpose of this report was to clarify Elected Member concerns raised at the Community and Wellbeing Committee on 11 January 2023 regarding previous decisions made and the purpose of the public Information meetings to discuss the proposed Kinnegar to Donaghadee Greenway on the following dates:

- Monday 23rd January: Donaghadee Community Centre from 6.30-8.30pm.
- Tuesday 24th January: Council Chamber Bangor Town Hall from 6.30-8.30pm.
- Wednesday 1st February: Queens Leisure Complex Holywood from 6.30-8.30pm.

Following an update report to Community and Wellbeing in December 2021 relating to the Council's Greenway Network projects, Council agreed to the following amendments (in bold) to the Officer's recommendation.

"That the recommendation (*to note the update*) be adopted and furthermore that a commitment is given to undertake full public consultation on the proposed routes including public information sessions. Officers will bring back a comprehensive report detailing the outcome of the consultation with the full range of options outlined on the way forward."

Please note that the decision included to hold public 'Information Sessions'.

In February 2022, the outworking of this decision was agreed as:

1. applying only to the Kinnegar to Donaghadee section of the proposals,
2. that this additional element was to supplement consultation that was already carried out prior to the planning application being submitted – this consultation report was attached for members information - and general consultation was ongoing at that time (*through the planning process*),
3. That it was to include public meetings in order that residents have an opportunity to further engage once more with the project team

To that end it was agreed in February 2022 to organise

1. Public meetings on a DEA basis
2. User surveys on the path
3. A residents survey based on a sample that gives a high level of confidence that the results are meaningful and representative.

Points 2 and 3 had been completed and reported to the Community and Wellbeing Committee.

Point 1 would be completed by holding the three Public Information meetings. Council Officers would start the meeting by presenting information on the plans, the results of the surveys and then invite questions and comments from those attending. Half of each meeting would be reserved for the question-and-answer sessions. Information, comments, questions, and queries will be recorded, compiled and

brought back to Elected Members at a future meeting of the Community & Wellbeing Committee as soon as possible.

Although not advertised as public consultation (as this was not the Council's definition of the meetings requested), there was very much an element of consultation on the information that was being presented at the meetings, what was already in the public domain, and would provide opportunities for comments on the environmental statement, the plans on the portal and the hard board plans that would be at the meetings.

Those attending would also have an opportunity to view the plans, complete a feedback form and would be encouraged to contribute towards the Planning Consultation also being undertaken. Elected Members could be assured that Officers would be listening and reporting back to provide any feasible options for action resulting from the full consultation process, including issues raised at the public information meetings. A full outcome report would be brought to committee in due course with options for members information and consideration on next steps as required by the earlier Council decision.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the above and that a further report will be brought back after the public information sessions to a future meeting of the Community & Wellbeing Committee.

Councillor McKimm proposed, seconded by Councillor Dunlop, that Council reflects on the results of the public survey and asks how they might respond not only to the survey but to the huge public response given on the portal and more widely through various platforms by incorporating these concerns into the Kinnegar to Donaghadee phase of the Greenway network.

In considering the future development of a Greenway in the North Down area that an opportunity for reflection on the huge public response is taken by withdrawing the planning application (LA06/2020/0530/F) after the meeting in Holywood which was due to take place on 1st February 2023. As the significant changes requested by the community could not be genuinely responded to and incorporated whilst the application was in the planning process. This withdrawal would show the serious intent the Council had to develop in service to the community a project the community at large wanted, in a way they wanted it.

Further, that we establish a working group to look at the North Down Coastal Path, including the areas previously covered by the Greenway from Donaghadee to Kinnegar to explore accessibility, maintenance, and connectivity issues.

Speaking to the proposal, Councillor McKimm said there was growing dissatisfaction with the planning proposal (LA06/2020/0530/F). At the Community and Wellbeing Committee on 11th January 2023, Members had seen a summary of the research conducted, which when brought to the public this week and, he said, highlighted a number of errors. On the night, the Committee proposed to note the survey and move on with the project.

If the extent of public opinion was not clear then, he said, it surely was now following the events at both Donaghadee and Bangor public meetings earlier in the week. Those same concerns had been expressed, in their hundreds, on the planning portal, in print and social media and in the many emails that Members had all received.

He felt that Members could summarise the community response as saying yes to Greenways but not in the identified location and not looking like what was conveyed in the plans. There had been a clear plea for Council to listen and he felt that the community had lost trust in the process and with the Council and would not be satisfied by "tweaks" nor even with significant changes.

Those changes would need to see the Greenway taken out of the red lines and put somewhere else in a place yet to be determined. He felt that this required a withdrawal of the application.

He praised the volunteers who had met as groups to share information and provide clarity on what they had felt had been vague information 'copy and pasted' on the Council website.

Today the petition for the withdrawal was around 4,000 and growing and what the community was saying was do not mess with the promenade in Ballyholme, don't take away parking in Donaghadee which was already at a premium, and don't change the coastal path that Council did not create in 1971, but which had been there since the monks were in the Abbey.

To assume that we could change the coastal path, he said, to the extent required had been an error, he continued, and the criteria that the funders wanted was not suitable in this location. He wanted to see Council sit down with people in groups and look at not one path, but a series of paths cojoined and see what could be done to improve each section. He had been told by Officers that Council could not consult without a live application, but he was aware this had been done before.

He had been told by Officers that by withdrawing the Application would "waste" the £300,000 spent but if we kept going it would possibly be millions more wasted. In good business practice, there was a point that regardless of what had been invested, it was time to withdraw and cut our losses.

He argued though that there would not be losses but experiences on which the Council could build. In future plans, there would be a better understanding of both the community and the North Down coast.

Going forward he believed that the focus should be on the following two questions:

What do we do with a Greenway if we wished to connect Kinnegar and Donaghadee?

What do people want for their part of the North Down coast?

In conclusion, he felt that the project had been too big for the Council to handle well and in the future, it might consider a range of small community led projects building on the lessons learned.

He told Members that the plan was not wanted, and it was time they showed that Members of the Council did listen to those who had elected them and withdraw this plan. He asked Members for their support, show the community that they have been heard and show commitment to the democratic process.

Seconding the proposal, Councillor Dunlop said he had been taken aback by the level of emotion expressed by the public which was backed up by well-founded facts.

He reflected on comments that had been made at the public meeting in Bangor and shared the view of a student at Bangor Grammar School, stating that we currently had a winding meandering path along our coast, a place of haven away from the bustling A2. It was somewhere that families could go on a Sunday stroll; the elderly could go for a dander and young children could feel free to play without immediate fear of anything speeding past them.

Not everything needed to be fundamentally "improved" from a manufacturing point of view. Our current path was perfect for the 21st century. This path was recently ranked 3rd best walk in Northern Ireland so why not preserve it and focus on Queens Parade and the Belfast Region City Deal and leave the path for everyone to continue to enjoy its slow meandering nature. A place to get away from our hopefully soon bustling city centre.

Members rose in turn to support the proposal. All speakers were critical of the Council's handling of the public consultation process and recognised the strong public opposition.

Councillor Chambers referred to some of the arguments that had been raised by the public which included a flawed public survey, environmental issues, lack of consultation and potential for spiralling costs. He could no longer support the plans and felt that had this reached the Planning Committee it would have been rejected at that stage. He was aware of some Members suggesting that the project be paused but he felt that did not go far enough and the correct way forward was to scrap the project completely.

Councillor Irwin felt that the loss of public trust made any pause or recommencement of the existing project impossible and further use of public funding needed to be considered with proper co-design and proper consultation at its heart. There was now a need to rebuild public trust, and she made an informal request that officers bring back a report to reflect on lessons that had been learned in this process.

Alderman Wilson was critical of the consultation process and still even today he had received emails from people that had been unaware of the proposed scheme. He had observed polarised arguments with one group calling for a world class Greenway for cyclists and at the opposite end of the scale, a group of objectors that did not want a single blade of grass to be removed. He felt though that most people were somewhere in between and hoped there would be opportunity in the longer

term to address the areas where safety was a concern and make it accessible for both cyclists and wheelchair users while respecting the strong climate and environmental concerns.

As a Member of the Planning Committee, Councillor Brooks wished to express an opinion and therefore accepted that he would be excluded from any further discussion and vote at the Planning Committee should it reach that stage. He felt that the current scheme with provision for cycling did not meet what he understood to be the definition of a Greenway as a strip of undeveloped land near an urban area which offered environmental protection. He felt that as a cyclist himself, the A2 already provided a safe route from Donaghadee to Bangor. He raised some safety concerns about cyclists having to cross the road at certain points of the proposed greenway where the road narrowed and vision would be obstructed. There would also be impacts on the centre of Donaghadee and he pointed to the potential loss of car parking and planters that enhanced the town's appearance. There was already a potential greenway from Donaghadee to Newtownards along the disused railway line.

(Councillor Adair left the meeting – 8.40pm)

While she felt the existing scheme had been overkill, Councillor Gilmour had initially supported the pausing of the application to allow for further views and sensitive improvements to address flooding risks and coastal erosion along the coastal path through a working group. She felt that would have enabled Council to salvage something from the money and time spent on it to date. She recognised that view was not the will of the Council Chamber though and therefore the DUP grouping would be supporting Councillor McKimm's proposal to withdraw the application.

She added that the scheme that the Alliance Party were now rejecting was the outworking of a sustainable transport route that members of the Alliance Party had called for.

(Councillor Adair returned to the meeting – 8.45pm)

Councillor Woods was pleased that the amendment allowed for people in Holywood to attend a planned public meeting as it was important for that engagement to continue. Development should not be at the expense of a beautiful and natural environment and it was unacceptable to proceed when an environmental statement had highlighted that protections were in place along the North Down coastal area - a range of international, national, and local ecological designations, as well as several parcels of long-established woodland and areas of priority habitat. The area contained a range of protected species.

Referring to an NI Audit Office report and a 'damning' Public Accounts Committee findings, Councillor Woods called for honesty, transparency and accountability to be restored to a failing planning system in Northern Ireland. She felt this whole process had exposed a Planning Act that was not fit for purpose with no equal rights of appeal in Northern Ireland, as well as increased staffing in consultees, such as DfI Roads. She argued that there was a lack of experience, skills and time to thoroughly review the environmental statement properly.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Blaney, pointed to strong public disapproval over the scheme and the Council's handling of the consultation process and stated that a project should never again be allowed to reach planning stage without public support.

Councillor T Smith urged people to listen to previous comments made by the Alliance Party which had urged the Council not to jeopardise the scheme but the same party had now dramatically changed its stance following the clear message from the public. He had initially proposed for extra consultation as it was evident last year that there was public concern over the plans. He welcomed the working group inclusion in the proposal and that was an important step to restore public faith in the Council and bring the public back on board. It was important to have a 'bottom-up' approach going forward. He argued why the scheme had been pursued when 90% of existing users were happy with what was already there.

(The meeting went into recess at 9pm and resumed at 9.15pm)

As a member of the Planning Committee, Alderman McIlveen advised, that for reasons outlined earlier by Councillor Brooks, he would not be forming a view on the scheme but wished to defend the integrity of the Planning Committee. While he agreed with Councillor Woods that members of the Committee should be provided with regular training - it was a point he had repeatedly made – but he wished to advise that he had undertaken a Masters Degree in Planning and Development and he hoped that did qualify him to make planning decisions in addition to being a qualified solicitor and barrister. He argued that there was nobody on the Planning Committee that did not understand their role and all were quite capable of reading and understanding reports from Planning Officers. While he agreed that this process had exposed flaws within the planning system in terms of public consultation, he argued that the flaws were only in the system and not with the people involved in operating them at this level - he felt that Councillors had helped to draw out the views that had been expressed by the public and that had resulted in clear direction on this matter.

Further to that, he had been encouraged by the inter-party discussion and this was an amalgamation on a number of ideas that had come forward. He talked of fond personal memories of the Coastal Path and what it meant to people. The Council needed to look at what could be done better in future, recognising that £300,000 would now be lost.

Councillor Woods wished to respond, under Standing Order 20.12, that at no stage had she said that Planning Committee members were not trained.

Councillor Boyle reflected on the strong public opposition and the views that had been expressed over the scheme at one of the public meetings he had attended. Most of the views had been expressed clearly and were informative and there was nothing wrong with the Council admitting it had got something wrong and changing direction. He also made reference to emails he had received; some had been unkind but those had been outnumbered by people who had been respectful, and their messages had contained passionate pleas with signatures to stop the scheme. He

highlighted one email that had come from a lady who had felt that the process had moved from consultation to information and of potential tweaking of documents which he had brought to the Committee and it had led to Councillor T Smith withdrawing his support on the night. The vote taken on the night had been fairly even, he added.

Alderman Irvine felt clearly the strength of feeling from the public had been misjudged with outcry in the local press getting louder and louder every week and he had been aware of no confidence in the public survey. He also acknowledged there had been two petitions with 5,000 names attached and ignoring that number of people would have potentially led to a judicial review on the proposals. He was aware through his contact with one campaign group that there was a desire to relocate the greenway inland and he hoped that could be explored further as an alternative and he called for a rethink of the public engagement process.

Councillor Cathcart declared as a member of the Planning Committee he would not indicate his views on the application and would be abstaining on the proposal. While he agreed with earlier views expressed towards the Planning system it needed to be clear that none of the views were aimed at the Planning Officers. The legal system was set by the Department for Infrastructure and the process that had to be followed and it was not necessarily the planning application, it was the work that was required before the application was made and there was clearly a need for better method of engagement with the public of such a much-loved part of the Borough. There could not just be tweaks made to this which was the reason why it could not be paused. Although pausing would have enabled the Coastal Path aspect of the Greenway to have been dealt with separately and withdrawn. It was recognised that repairs were needed to the Coastal Path and that £300,000 spent to date was money that could have gone into those repairs. He understood there was a public perception that the Greenway was already decided and the Council were trying to ram it through, but that was never the case. This whole matter had highlighted a need to review engagement processes.

Alderman M Smith had not remembered ever receiving so many emails and phone calls over a single issue. She had felt the information presented at the public meeting had been uninspiring. She congratulated Councillor McKimm on the work he had done to bring this amendment and the constituents who had made their voices heard.

Councillor P Smith felt that Council needed to be careful and remind themselves that officers were only implementing plans decided by Council with the best of intentions and that needed to be recognised. Regarding the £300,000 of expenditure to date, he asked if that was accurate and if any of it was salvageable. The Director of Finance and Performance confirmed it was an accurate cost and it would depend on the outworking of the debate before officers could look to see what was salvageable but he suspected it would be minimal.

Councillor McClean advised he too was on the Planning Committee. He appreciated the passion that had been shown by members of the public but recognised that Council officers had been targeted unfairly throughout the public engagement

process which was not acceptable and the disappointment and rage over this should only be targeted at Councillors.

He felt that the sudden change of direction on the matter should not be unchallenged, referring to an Alliance Party MLA who he said had been leading the charge for the Greenway scheme for many years only to appear on the radio to give the impression that he had always been against it. He felt this was not a good way to treat the public and he felt that the sudden reversal of opinion, with no explanation of changing his mind, was corrosive towards public trust. He welcomed the opportunity for a working group and thanked Councillor McKimm for bringing the amendment.

Alderman Keery, a member of the Planning Committee, would be happy to exonerate himself from the application. He wished to emphasise the path was always meant for pedestrians and recalled a tragic accident many years ago where a young cyclist from the Sea Cadets had been killed and since then he had always taken the view that the path was not suitable for cyclists and the Council had made a mistake permitting cycling on the path a few years ago. He also raised concerns about wildlife along the route and this had been well documented in the local press.

Councillor Greer welcomed the cross-party support but felt that changing your mind had been made out to be a bad thing, also pointing out that both the DUP and UUP had also supported the plans. Council had now taken stock and reflected on the decision though and withdrawing the application was the right thing to do, despite some Members using that to score cheap political points. It was important to document lessons that had been learned.

Summing up as proposer of the minutes, Councillor Edmund felt that the debate had given a fair flavour of feelings on the issue and he would make no further comment.

On being put to the meeting with 30 voting FOR, 0 voting AGAINST, 4 ABSTAINING and 7 ABSENT, the proposal was declared CARRIED.

The recorded vote was as follows:

FOR (30)	AGAINST (0)	ABSTAINED (3)	ABSENT (7)
Aldermen:		Alderman:	Aldermen:
Armstrong-Cotter		Gibson	Carson
Irvine			
Keery		Councillors:	Councillors:
McDowell		Cathcart	Johnson
McIlveen		Cooper	McAlpine
Smith, M			McRandal
Wilson			Moore
			Thompson
Councillors:			Walker
Adair			
Boyle			
Blaney			
Brooks			
Chambers			

Cummings
Douglas
Dunlop
Edmund
Gilmour
Greer
Irvine, S
Irwin
Kennedy
MacArthur
McKimm
McClellan
Morgan
Smart
Smith, P
Smith, T
Thompson
Woods

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McKimm, seconded by Councillor Dunlop, that the Council reflects on the results of the public survey and asks how they might respond not only to the survey but to the huge public response given on the portal and more widely through various platforms by incorporating these concerns into the Kinnegar to Donaghadee phase of the Greenway network.

In considering the future development of a Greenway in the North Down area that an opportunity for reflection on huge public response is taken by withdrawing the planning application (LA06/2020/0530/F) after the meeting in Holywood which is due to take place on 1st February 2023. As the significant changes requested by the community cannot be genuinely responded to and incorporated whilst the application is in the planning process. This withdrawal will show the serious intent the Council has to develop in service to this community a project the community at large want, in a way they want it.

Further, that we establish a working group to look at the North Down coastal path, including the areas previously covered by the greenway from Donaghadee to Kinnegar. to explore accessibility, maintenance and connectivity issues.

(Councillors McAlpine, McKee, McRandal, Moore and Thompson returned to the meeting– 9.55pm)

Item 6 - UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Communities and Place Green Spaces Application

Councillor P Smith was pleased to see that £114,000 would be delivered for a new play park at Comber's De Wind Drive, but he asked for clarity that it would be built at the existing location. The Director of Community and Wellbeing advised that the

scheme had been developed through community consultation and it would be developed at its existing location and funding was to be used by the end of March 2023.

Councillor Adair asked for an update on the request for a new play park at Ballyhalbert and if this fund could be used for that. The Director advised that it would depend on the outcome of the prioritising process for that particular playpark and that list was currently being finalised.

Item 8 – Rewilding Update and Extension of Scheme

Councillor Gilmour referred to Stricklands Glen and Connor Park, sites that had traditionally been used for recreation but recent rewilding had meant the loss of recreational use of that space and local residents had been disappointed by this. She had approached the Council's Parks team to see how it could re-introduce in the area and she thanked the Parks team for listening. It was important to have a balance of recreational and rewilding space. Additional tree planting was also mentioned and she asked for a timescale on that.

The Director confirmed that it would be hedging and low level trees, that would suit the type of environment at Stricklands Glen and planting would start in March, or April at the latest.

Alderman McIlveen pointed to Ballystockart that was highlighted in the report. There had previously been agreement for a land swap and the site was for a specific purpose for open play. The issue now was the entire area had been rewilded so he asked for assurances that Ballystockart would be reviewed for green space. The Director was not aware of the detail but would ensure that what was agreed would be carried through.

Councillor Thompson was disappointed that there was no proposal for rewilding for villages along the Irish Sea coast and suspected that had been an oversight. The Director added that it was a rolling programme and reviewed regularly, so he would raise it with the Head of Parks and Cemeteries to consider those locations.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Edmund, seconded by Councillor McKimm, that the minutes be adopted.

(Alderman Armstrong-Cotter left the meeting 10.07pm)

9. CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

9.1 Draft Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan (Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Correspondence from the Department for the Economy stating that the Draft Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan consultation closed on 16th March 2023. The document was available on the Department for the Economy's website.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor P Smith, seconded by Councillor Dunlop, to note the above consultation.

10. RESOLUTION

10.1 Workers Legal Rights to Tips – Notice of Motion from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council (Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Correspondence from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

Proposed by Councillor Woods, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that this Council supports this and writes back to NMD Council expressing such support, as well as writing to the Department for the Economy and the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in Westminster advocating for such legislation to be put through, but with any identified loopholes closed that would allow tips to be kept by the employer and not issued to staff. This should be done in consultation with the industry and those that worked in it, including union representatives.

Speaking to the proposal, Councillor Woods said that ideally this would have been overseen by a functioning Assembly in Northern Ireland, but yet again, there was no basic level of government in Northern Ireland.

Councillor Woods was employed in the hospitality sector and described it as fantastic but also problematic in that it could be exploitative and employees were not particularly well paid in certain areas, they worked hours that most people working a 9 to 5 would consider ridiculous. They did not get double time for holidays and worked weekends - a Friday night shift was like everyone else's Monday morning. Employees in the sector were there when everyone else was off and were one of the backbones of the country. They contributed so much to Northern Ireland's industry. Tips generated supported those who were working for minimum or living wage.

Continuing, she said that those who worked front of house were those that gave customers the experience. Front of house was an art. When you gave a tip over for service therefore, you expected that to go to the staff but that did not always happen. Councillor Woods had only ever worked in one place that did not do that and it was taken by the management and shared amongst them. Others may have given card tips, but that didn't necessarily get passed on to the people who had actually done the work.

Much more needed to be legislated and regulated for, like ensuring tips went to staff in full including those that came from cards. Tips could not and should never be used to subsidise low wages.

The seconder, Councillor Boyle spoke of what was a difficult industry where people worked hard, during hours when everyone else was enjoying themselves. Whilst things had improved over the years, the wages had never been great. It was incredibly wrong for an establishment to take tips from its employees. Cash tips had always been simpler and people were more confident it was going to the worker or

into a pool that would be shared with workers. He hoped that the issues raised did not relate to businesses in this Borough. It was also all the more reason to support this given the number of establishments struggling to find staff following the Covid-19 lockdown.

Councillor P Smith was happy to support the proposal and was aware of a number of establishments that did not pass on tips to service staff and felt that was appalling. Anything that could be done to stop that needed to be encouraged.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Woods, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that this Council supports this and writes back to NMD Council expressing such support, as well as writing to the Department for the Economy and the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in Westminster advocating for such legislation to be put through, but with any identified loopholes closed that would allow tips to be kept by the employer and not issued to staff. This should be done in consultation with the industry and those that worked in it, including union representatives.

11. REQUEST FOR DEPUTATION FROM GREENSPACES BANGOR AND NORTH DOWN

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Chief Executive stating that a request to make a deputation to the Community and Wellbeing Committee had been received from Ms Louise McCartney of Greenspaces Bangor and North Down.

The deputation request stated the following:

"Our group comprises people from a range of professional or skills-based backgrounds relevant to the environment and ecology, who are passionate about seeing our borough become the best it can be for nature and for people's access to nature. We were outlining for the Mayor our aspirations for the coming year in terms of promoting and enhancing the green spaces in the locality and looking for ways to support Council in its recent initiatives for example the tree planting policy, and launch of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. In relation to this, we write to you, to request that we might bring a deputation to the Community & Wellbeing Committee to make contact and build connections.

I am confident we can offer some support or add value to the efforts of Council to creating a well-managed, sustainable environment, that we can all take pride in, as per the aspirations of the Big Plan."

RECOMMENDED that Council considers the request for a Deputation from Greenspaces Bangor and North Down.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Smith, seconded by Councillor Chambers, that Council grants the request for a Deputation from Greenspaces Bangor and North Down.

12. NOMINATIONS TO WORKING GROUPS

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

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

1. Car Parking Strategy Working Group
2. East Border Region Members Forum

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

Body: Car Parking Strategy Working Group – 11 Places

	2022/23
1	Alderman Carson
2	Councillor Smart
3	Alderman Gibson
4	Councillor Thompson
5	Councillor Edmund
6	Alderman McIlveen
7	Councillor Dunlop
8	Councillor Douglas
9	Alderman Wilson
10	Councillor Irvine
11	

Body: East Border Region Members Forum – 6 Places

	2019 - 23
1	Councillor Thompson
2	Alderman Keery
3	Alderman McDowell
4	Councillor Boyle
5	Alderman Carson
6	

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

RECOMMENDED that Council nominate a Member to the following groups:

1. Car Parking Strategy Working Group
2. East Border Region Members Forum

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McDowell, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that Councillor Morgan be appointed to the Car Parking Strategy Working Group and the East Border Region Members Forum.

13. CORONATION COMMUNITY GRANTS RESPONSE TO NOM (FILE CW157)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing outlining the following:

In November 2022 the Council agreed the following Notice of Motion:

In light of the fact that the Coronation of King Charles III will take place on 6 May 2023, this Council tasks officers to make provision for community celebrations across the Ards and North Down Borough Council area, and tasks them to allow for this in the forthcoming rate setting process.

Whilst a celebration of the Coronation of King Charles III undoubtedly fitted with the Council's Big Plan and Corporate Plan and would enable pride within our communities, we were aware that the Coronation was happening during a period of austerity, where many people within our communities were struggling to cope with rising food, fuel and utility costs.

The current process towards setting the Rate for 2023/24 is nearing its conclusion and an indicative allocation of £50,000 had been made. It was hoped that grant funding may have been available from the Northern Ireland Office or other sources, which could have supplemented this budget.

Based on Members debate around the Notice of Motion, officers were developing a number of programmes and activities to enable communities to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III. These included an arts competition for schools, tree planting, civic events and beacons, traditional crafts at North Down Museum and the Newtownards Town Hall, a tea dance, coronation party packs, coronation grants and commemorative coins. Officers were currently waiting on guidance from Royal Pageant Master to finalise the civic element of the programme and a fully costed programme would be brought to committee in February for Members consideration.

Officers had also investigated the option to include the screening of the Coronation. However, the cost of screening the event in one outdoor venue was approximately £27,265 to include the cost of screen hire, infrastructure and marketing costs. Therefore, with a budget of £50,000 the cost of screening the event within budget was likely to be prohibitive and was not being considered as a recommendation.

Big Screens had also been used in other Council areas, such as Belfast, Lisburn and Castlereagh, Mid and East Antrim, Antrim and Newtownabbey, for events such as the Queens Funeral. The feedback from those Councils confirmed that numbers in attendance were very low. Whilst Big Screens may have been appropriate for certain types of events such as large-scale sporting events, they did not appear to draw a crowd for some other types of events.

It was recommended that £30,000 was ringfenced within the total budget for Coronation Community Grants. The grants would be limited to £500 per constituted community and voluntary group, allowing up to 60 constituted community and voluntary groups to be supported to celebrate the Coronation. Any unallocated funding from the total budget of £30,000 could be reinvested into the overall programme of activities.

Members would be aware that there were multiple constituted groups within each of our towns and villages all of whom were likely to want to celebrate the event in their own way. Alternatively, the individual groups could apply and pool their funds to organise a single large event for their area.

This grants scheme was based on the previously successful scheme run by Council for HM the Queen's 90th Birthday and it was proposed that the maximum award for each application was increased from £300 to £500. By using a first come first served simplified grants scheme, the eligibility of applications could be considered upon receipt, without the need of a formal assessment panel, which would fast track the process.

In order to administer and award the grants in time for the Coronation on 6 May 2023 the simplified grant scheme would have to open in early February 2023, with Council approval sought in March 2023. Following the call-in period £500 could be released to up to 60 successful groups during April, upon receipt of a signed and accepted Letter of Offer.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees that a budget of £30,000 is ringfenced for the Coronation Grants Scheme, which is opened for applications in early February 2023 and administered as detailed in this report, and that a further report on other activities and costs will be brought to committee for consideration in February.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Alderman McIlveen that Council adopts the recommendation with the addition that a Coronation working group consisting of elected Members and officers be created to consider how we may incorporate the plans from the Palace into our celebrations and consider how as a Borough we may mark the significant occasion in a permanent way to include plans for a borough wide legacy of this historic event.

Councillor Gilmour was bringing the proposal on behalf of Councillor MacArthur and talked of the magnitude of such an event that most of the population would have never seen. There had now been an update released from Buckingham Palace on what the Coronation schedule would include, and it had community at its heart. She outlined that schedule and felt that Council should look at how it could maximise the volunteering aspects of it. She referred to litter pickers, charity volunteers and volunteers that were being recruited for the social supermarket scheme as an example of the sector in the Borough. She had hoped that a working group could help explore how the plans could be incorporated and identify other activities that could occur. She hoped Members would support this.

The seconder, Alderman McIlveen spoke to support the proposal and felt a working group would take the pressure off officers and provide a useful sounding board and

create Member buy in at an early stage which often made decisions easier to get agreement on. He also welcomed the opportunity to create a permanent legacy given the early connection with the new King who had recently signed the Letters Patent following the granting of Bangor's City Status. This had also included a visit to Bangor City Hall by Princess Anne in December 2022

It was Agreed to create a Working Group.

Alderman McIlveen proposed, seconded by Councillor McClean, that Councillor MacArthur be appointed to the working group.

Alderman McDowell proposed, seconded by Alderman Wilson, that Councillor Moore be appointed to the working group.

Councillor P Smith proposed, seconded by Councillor T Smith, that Councillor Smart be appointed to the working group.

Councillor T Smith proposed, seconded by Councillor McClean, that Alderman Irvine be appointed to the working group.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that Council adopt the recommendation with the addition that a Coronation Working Group consisting of elected members and officers is created to consider how we may incorporate the plans from the Palace into our celebrations and consider how as a Borough we may mark the significant occasion in a permanent way to include plans for a boroughwide legacy of this historic event.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that Council appoints Alderman Irvine and Councillors MacArthur, Moore, Gilmour and Smart to the Coronation Working Group.

14. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2023 – FURTHER UPDATE (Appendix IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Chief Executive stating that at the Council meeting in November 2022, Members approved the schedule of meetings for 2023.

Since then, the date of the Local Government elections had been rescheduled and would now take place on 18 May 2023. Accordingly, the 2023 meeting schedule had been reviewed and updated, and could be found attached.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the updated schedule as found in appendix 1.

Councillor Greer proposed, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor T Smith asked for clarity on the absence of Committee meetings in April and it was confirmed by the Chief Executive that the lighter schedule before a Local

Election was a tradition to enable candidates to focus on their election campaigns. There was a Council meeting scheduled for 26th April which would pick up any matters that would have normally gone to the Committees in that month.

Councillor T Smith and Councillor Woods asked to be recorded against the proposal.

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

15. INDEPENDENT REPORTING COMMISSION FIFTH REPORT – LETTER OF RESPONSE

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Chief Executive stating that at the Council meeting in December 2022, Members considered the Independent Reporting Commission's Fifth Report. At the meeting it was agreed:

“That Council writes to the IRC to ask if the IRA Council still direct Sinn Fein Policy and Strategy.”

On 9 January, the Chief Executive wrote to the Independent Reporting Commission and received a response on 17 January. A copy of the response could be found in Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the response.

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

Councillor Cooper wished to place on record his disgust at what he felt was a pathetic response from a toothless and incompetent body filled with likeminded individuals.

Councillor McKimm felt that the organisation did great work in attempting to rid society of organised crime gangs.

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

16. WHOLE SYSTEMS APPROACH TO OBESITY

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing stating that a report “Whole System Approach to Obesity – early adopter expression of interest” ref EHPD5, was taken Community and Wellbeing Committee on 12th October 2022 advising that we had been approached by Public Health Agency (PHA) to apply to be an early adopter of this new approach to tackling the significant and worrying trend of increased overweight and obese adults and children. The report was approved by the Committee and subsequently ratified by Council at the October Council meeting.

Following the application process, Officers were informed in late December 2022 that Ards and North Down had been chosen as the first council in Northern Ireland to begin the process of developing a Whole system approach to obesity. Belfast and Derry and Strabane Councils would join in this first phase towards the end of 2023. Another three NI councils would then follow suit in phases 2 and 3.

Members would receive an update report at the February Community and Wellbeing Committee. However, before that, in January, PHA would be releasing a press release outlining the successful Councils and that they have chosen Ards and North Down as the first adopter. This would be done alongside the publication of their research work commissioned from the Institute of Public Health which had provided the evidence for their new strategy. It was envisaged that shortly after this PHA launch and following the report to Community and Wellbeing Committee and Council in February, Ards and North Down will do a local press release.

As the PHA press release would take place before the date of the February Committee, it was important to notify members of the successful application at the earliest opportunity and before the information was in the public domain.

The lead officers on this project were the Community Planning Manager and Environmental Health Manager (Health and Wellbeing) and further information or queries needed to be addressed with them.

RECOMMENDED that Council note that the application to be an early adopter of this new approach to tackling obesity has been successful.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Irvine, seconded by Alderman Keery, that the recommendation be adopted.

17. RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION IN RELATION TO COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS

(Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing the undernoted report:

Background

Members would be aware that at a special meeting of Council on 12 January 2023 the following was agreed:

"That this Council recognises the significant Cost of Living hardship facing the many residents in Ards and North Down and directs officers to urgently complete a report outlining options for how we can best support our residents.

This should include consideration of a potential hardship fund following liaison with counterparts in other District Councils in Northern Ireland around the nature and delivery of similar schemes, and liaison with local organisations and charities who specialise in delivering financial support around how Council can best support their services.

This Council will also write to the Department of Communities and the Northern Ireland Office to request that funding is provided to Councils (and that it is ring-fenced in the 2023/24 budget) to assist with the implementation of any such support schemes. Given the urgency of the matter, this report should be ready for the meeting of Full Council on 26 January 2023”

It had been a challenge given the short time available to produce a comprehensive report, on this complex matter. However, officers had collated information on help that was currently available to residents, feedback on the impact of cost-of-living on our residents, and support programmes (including hardship funds) that had been established in other council areas. The report also outlined options, for additional support, for Members to consider.

It should be noted that no funding had been identified and the potential options outlined at the end of this report have not been budgeted for.

The report sought to address each aspect of the Notice of Motion and provide information as requested.

1. Outline options of how we can best support our residents

To consider additional support it was important to reflect on the existing services that were available to residents. The examples set out below included initiatives already being led by council, initiatives where council was a partner and initiatives that were being led by others. While not referencing everything that was being done, these provided a flavour of the support that was already available.

A. Communication and signposting

Council had repeatedly promoted the cost-of-living support information that was available on NI Direct (www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/cost-living). Council's own website also included information, lifted from the **Big Guide to Age Friendly**, on its website about money, poverty and legal matters (www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/resident/community/money-tackling-poverty-and-legal-matters). This was a useful way of providing support to people as Council was a trusted source of official information.

The recently launched **Here2Help** app, that was being supported with an extensive promotional campaign, also contains signposting to organisations (both local and regionally based) who can offer support to people who are struggling and adversely affected by the cost-of-living crisis. Within the app there was a dedicated theme for 'Benefits and Finances'. This included organisations who could help with debt advice.

In addition to Facebook, Council promoted the Here2Help app on the community support section of its website, accessed via the following link: www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/resident/community/community-support. The app was also promoted by statutory and community partners. Work was ongoing to roll out signs across the borough. This included attaching signs to approximately 100 benches. Future marketing activities included

window stickers for shops, schools and taxis as well as business cards for GP surgeries.

Alongside other Community Planning Partners, Ards and North Down Borough Council was a member of the AND Poverty Forum. A Cost-of-Living Event is being considered for March 2023. This is like previous events (pre covid) where residents were invited to attend a 'funday' and could also avail of other support information. Funding for this event may be available via the South Eastern Protect Life Implementation Group (of which the Community Planning Manager is a member), funding is likely to be provided by several partners organisations. Exhibitors at this event are likely to include Make the Call (benefits advice), mental health support services and other community support organisations.

Following input from AND's Community Support Steering Group a Find a Warm Welcome Here Campaign had been implemented. This campaign has involved creating a shared graphic that could be used by organisations to promote their warm spaces. Information on these spaces is collated via an online form and a document produced that gave information on the location of each space, what happens in the space and whether hot drinks, food, activities, or device charging is also available. The document was updated as required and a new version circulated.

Lots of partners (statutory as well as community and voluntary) were also undertaking signposting exercises. The Children and Young Person's Strategic Partnership had a resources publication available on their website with signposting to organisations who offer support. <https://cypsp.hscni.net/download/390/lpg/39049/cost-of-living-crisis-resource.pdf>. The Family Support Hubs would also be providing support to families in crisis. The Networks and AGenda also undertook considerable amounts of signposting.

B. Affordable Warmth Scheme

(existing help for low-income families to reduce energy costs)

The Council, in partnership with Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and Department for Communities (DfC) delivered an Affordable Warmth scheme to upgrade home insulation and heating systems to alleviate fuel poverty. Low-income households (less than £23,000 total gross income per year) and a homeowner or private tenant, can apply for a range of measures including cavity wall and loft insulation, double glazing, draught exclusion, new boiler and radiators, etc

This was a targeted scheme. Council officials made contact with households likely to be affected by fuel poverty to check eligibility and advise on energy efficiency measures (strict criteria applies).

Currently the Council could refer 20 households per month to NIHE for the technical assessment and grant but there are challenges with households signing up. There was sometimes a reluctance to provide the amount of documents that needed to be submitted (proof of ownership, income, etc)

and be transparent about finances (bank statements must be provided). Occasionally the occupant is unwilling to allow the full range of works required to proceed because of the disruption.

Discussions were in progress with DfC to widen the targeted areas and make it more accessible. The referral rate was expected to increase to 30 per month from 1 April 2023.

In the previous financial year 341 referrals were made by the council and during that timeframe 241 homes were improved with 302 measures undertaken to a value of £861,913.35.

C. Existing Council funding mechanisms to support people

Currently, Community Advice Ards and North Down (CAAND) and the three Networks were funded to supply, help, assistance and signpost residents of the Borough that are struggling with the ever-increasing cost-of-living crisis.

CAAND received £294,000 annually via a 3-year contract (2021-2024) which is co-funded by DfC. This funding was allocated to Advice support. In addition, CAAND receives £86,835 towards Welfare Reform Mitigations, Tribunal Representations, and uplifts.

The three Networks Ards Community Network (ACN), County Down Rural Community Network (CDRCN), and North Down Community Network (NDCN), each received £10,000 from Council as a contribution to the services they provided.

Council agreed that to assist groups during the cost-of-living crisis, that project costs were removed from the Community Development Fund so that 100% of the fund, totalling £93,000 was allocated to grants for grass roots community and voluntary groups to assist with "Running Costs". The budget for individual applications was also increased from £2000 to £2500, to enable Council to provide up to 37 local groups with support towards their energy bills.

Members would be aware the Borough's first social supermarket, Well Fed, was launched in September 2022. This serviced all of Ards and North Down and included a mobile outreach service to ensure those living on the Peninsula and Comber/Ballygowan and Killinchy had equal access to services. Statistics for the first month of operation were available. These were not statistically reliable as the Social Supermarket was launched slowly as people becoming members needed high levels of support. However, initial data indicated that personal debt was a factor in 69% of individuals who joined in the first month. To date, £68,267.22 had been provided for this initiative.

£10,000 was also provided to Kilcooley Women's Centre for a heating system for their Social Supermarket. Northern Ireland Housing Executive

paid the costs for the remedial works needed for their Social Supermarket building.

Council also provided support to older and younger residents via leisure member concessions.

D. Central government support for cost-of-living

Starting from January 2023, every household in Northern Ireland would receive £600. Prior to this, central government put in place a cost-of-living support package that includes one-off payments to those on income related benefits, disabled claimants and pensioners. Those payments were intended to provide support with the current rise in the cost of living. Two low-income cost-of-living payments of £326 and £324 had already been made to eligible households. A lump sum of £150 had been paid to individuals in receipt of disability benefits. Pensioner households had received an extra £300 Pensioner Cost-of Living Payment in addition to their normal Winter Fuel payment.

The payment schedule for 2023/24 had been announced. Payments would be made to those in receipt of eligible low income (means tested) and disability benefits.

An additional Winter Fuel Payment would also be made. This information was available on NI Direct. Additional payments would be:

- The first £301 low income (means tested) Cost of Living Payment was due during Spring 2023
- A £150 Disability Payment is due during Summer 2023
- The second £300 low income means-tested) Cost of Living Payment was due during Autumn 2023
- A £300 additional Winter Fuel Payment was due during Winter 2023/24
- The third £299 low income (means tested) Cost of Living Payment was due during Spring 2024

The UK government had announced further Cost of Living Payments (www.gov.uk/government/publications/autumn-statement-2022-cost-of-living-support-factsheet/cost-of-living-support-factsheet) of up to £900 for people on an eligible low income benefit, £300 for pensioner households and £150 for people on an eligible disability benefit.

2. Review of support provided by other Councils

In December 2022, as part of their knowledge sharing remit, the Community Planning Officers Network (all 11 councils) collated information to share with each other on the activities being undertaken within each council area to address the cost-of-living crisis. The key activities were summarised in the table below.

Council	Hardship/ Fuel Poverty Fund	Other Support
---------	------------------------------------	---------------

	(inc amount)	
Antrim and Newtownabbey	No	<p>To tackle the specific Energy crisis issues ANBC have also been involved with the following interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable Warmth • NISEP grants • Oil Stamp Saving Scheme • Heater Lending Scheme • Keep Warm Packs <p>Other initiatives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concession leisure membership • Support of existing community activities
Armagh Banbridge Craigavon	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication on cost-of-living via website and Seniors Newsletter. • Formed an independent Poverty Forum • Established a Poverty Truth Commission
Belfast	Fuel Poverty Hardship Fund £1m Council funding committed (see below for more info)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed Belfast Cost of Living newsletter guide (communication) • Warm Spaces/ Warm Welcome Campaign • Establish a Poverty Truth Commission
Causeway Coast and Glens	2 nd Fuel Support Scheme completed with support to 90 households (signposted to St Vincent de Paul or Salvation Army via Community Advice)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established Anti-poverty Stakeholder Steering Group and develop and action plan • Developed a 'Where to Turn' Campaign • Held Cost-of-Living crisis information sharing event • Emergency fuel signposting • Setting up of warm spaces • Energy advisors • Fuel Stamp Saving Scheme
Derry City and Strabane	Emergency Fuel Support Programme - £100 to eligible households (see below for more info)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm Banks as welcoming places in council owned community centres, civic buildings and leisure centres
Fermanagh and Omagh	£80,000 allocated to help households with home heating via St Vincent de Paul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support provided to food banks • Established as Poverty Truth Commission • Money for school breakfast clubs • Anti-poverty Officer
Lisburn and Castlereagh	<p>Missing from collated table but information on their hardship fund (for organisations rather than individuals) is available on their website. In October 2022, local community and voluntary groups or organisations could apply for a grant of up to £2,000 from the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council Hardship Funding Programme.</p> <p>This £80,000 scheme opened on Friday 28th October. It closed at 12 noon on 21st November 2022.</p>	
Mid and East Antrim	Only covid monies and Social Supermarket funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty Action Group • Food and fuel vouchers • Slow cooker scheme • Warm spaces grants (£500) to constituted groups • Info on Council website

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil heater and electric blanket scheme
Mid Ulster	Crisis Support Programme (£90,000) – Foodbanks and St Vincent De Paul (food, fuel vouchers, white goods)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Support Programme – referrals in partnership with Save the Children, Northern Health Trust and Southern Health Trust. • £500 uplift to community (and sports) venues and facilities • DfC Funding for Social Supermarket
Newry Mourne and Down	Missing from collated table. But information shared by Co Down Rural Community Network of a small oil grant (£6,000) provided to the Network to distribute to households via a social worker referral.	

The table showed that many councils had implemented/participated in similar initiatives to Ards and North Down Borough Council. This included pro-active communication and signposting, establishing social supermarkets and promoting warm spaces. Councils appeared to have used a mixture of remaining Covid-19 monies previously provided by DfC (ANDBC's allocation was quickly distributed to groups) and small amounts of their own budget. Only Belfast City Council and Derry City and Strabane District Council appeared to have used their own funding for direct hardship support payments. Other Council's appeared to have either Covid or Social Supermarket funding available. Due to the short time available to prepare this report we had not been able to verify this assumption.

3. Specific review of Hardship Funds by other Councils

The agreed recommendation from 12 January 2023 Special Council asked officers to consider a potential hardship fund and liaise with counterparts in other District Council who have delivered similar schemes to consider how these have worked.

A review of publicly available information was undertaken. Officers within Councils with 'hardship funds' were approached to find out about the processes that were used to establish the funds and how they had been administered. While the debate at the Special Council meetings suggested that Elected Members were unsure about Council using its own funds, it was considered appropriate that distributing funding provided by central government was potentially a palatable option.

Belfast City Council

Information on Belfast City Council's Fuel Poverty and Hardship Fund was available on their website(www.belfastcity.gov.uk/Community/Cost-of-living-and-winter-support/Fuel-poverty-hardship-fund).

Several critical news reports had been written about Belfast's Scheme. In December 2022 negative reports appeared around the £60k gross household income criteria. In January 2023, Belfast Telegraph reported that the NI Audit office was looking into the scheme due to concerns with the use of nine 'statutory' partners who had been contracted to distribute the fund vouchers. Some partners had allegedly started distributing their allocation of vouchers prior to the scheme officially being launched, meaning that by the time the scheme launched some had already closed to applications.

A MS Teams meeting was held with officers (19 January 2023) from Belfast City Council to gather information about the scheme. At this meeting it was stated that media reporting was not accurate.

The allocation of the £100 vouchers to individuals was undertaken via nine 'Strategic' partners. These partners had previously worked with Council during the covid pandemic. Not all the previous covid partners had the capacity to deliver the scheme. The partners who did, confirmed they had the resources to undertake all the necessarily procedural steps (as set by Council) within the timescale available.

The distribution of £1million (provided entirely by Council) put into the scheme was based on statistical evidence of need and poverty. Each partner was then allocated a value of vouchers. Funding agreements were signed between Council and the nine partners, and the agreed funding transferred. Retail partners who could accept vouchers to process fuel (gas – only one partner found a retailer for oil) and electricity had already been established during the Covid pandemic. It would have been challenging to deliver the scheme if these retailer arrangements were not already in place.

Based on voucher allocation to households, partners then paid retailers directly. No cash was distributed to individuals

The £1 million pounds within the scheme went directly to 10,000 households. Partners were not paid to deliver the scheme but were allowed to recover their costs (premises, travel etc) which could be no more than 10% of their total cost allocation. This potentially increased the cost of the scheme to £1.1m.

In the four weeks between Council approving the scheme and its roll out, a team of officers from Belfast City Council arranged for Funding Agreements to be signed. This process included checking the financial capability of partners organisations. Officers applied the funding model (calculation based on statistical evidence) to determine how the £1m fund should be equitably split between the nine partners. They developed (in consultation with the nine partners) a Client Capture Sheet to record the evidence used to assess applicants' suitability and prepared detailed guidance notes so each partner was consistent with their application of the criteria.

To apply for the Belfast scheme, households had to demonstrate they met one of the following criteria:

- **A member of the household is entitled to free school meals**
Evidence of entitlement for example a copy of written or email correspondence from the Education Authority
- **A member of the household has recently become unemployed**
Evidence that employment has ended, for example a copy of P45
- **A member of the household is in receipt of means tested benefits**
Evidence of entitlement, for example copy of written or email correspondence from the relevant department or organisation
- **The household is in debt to an energy provider**

- Evidence of current status, for example letter or recent bill from their energy provider
- **The gross annual household income is less than £60,000**
Evidence of annual income, for example copy of recent payslip(s) or copy of P60 for all adults in the household

Households meeting more than one criterion where only eligible for one £100 voucher.

While £1m was available for 10,000 households, a quick look at deprivation and poverty data from Belfast suggests that over 30,000 households could have been eligible. A first come first served approach was applied to how the vouchers were distributed. Many partners ran out of their allocation within the first few hours the scheme was open.

When the Client Capture Sheets were returned, Belfast City Council Officers would undertake random spot checks to clarify how well processes were followed and that the appropriate evidence was collected.

While the scheme was delivered by nine strategic partners, there was still a significant administrative requirement from council officers. The exact number of Officers working on the scheme was unknown, a request for this information had been submitted. It was likely to be senior officers, neighbourhood officers, finance officers and administrative officers.

Derry City and Strabane District Council

Information on DCSDC's Emergency Fuel Support Payment Scheme was available via a report written for their Council Committee ([Emergency Fuel Support Payment Appendix 1.pdf \(derrycityandstrabanedistrict.com\)](#)).

Derry City and Strabane District Council established a Hardship Fund and allocated £258,000 towards a Discretionary Emergency Fuel Support Programme (DEFSP). The purpose of this programme was to provide a one-off emergency fuel payment of £100 to a household in a financial emergency and requiring support to make a fuel payment of electricity, gas or oil.

The DEFSP was designed to provide an accessible and discretionary approach and operated via a referral system. Referrals to the scheme could be made via 'Trusted Partners'. These were local support organisations aware of households who were in difficulties and submitted a referral form directly to Council. The 'Trusted Partner' making the referral had to sign a declaration on the referral form that the household was in an emergency financial situation.

The eligibility criteria that the 'Trusted Partners' applied was:

- A member of the household is entitled to free school meals
- The household is in debt with an energy provider
- There is a person with a disability in the household
- A member of the household has recently become unemployed (last 3 months)
- A member of the household is on a zero hours contract

- The gross annual income of the household is less than £40,000

Each DEA was allocated an amount based on the Council's grant-aid allocation template. Once the funding was exhausted for that DEA no further referrals for that area could be assessed. A total of 2,405 households were supported with the fund.

Once the referral forms were received by the Council, a small, dedicated administration team collated each of the forms according to DEA and rank, and according to the time received. At the end of each day a tally was drawn up on the number of forms received so that communication could be issued on the level of demand for each area and when the programme might close.

All eligible referrals were then sent to the Fuel Payment Partner via an excel document for processing their fuel payment according to their requested fuel type. The Fuel Payment Partner made the payment of up to £100 to the nominated energy supplier on behalf of the household or provided a credit voucher for top up for the fuel type to the household.

An approach has been made to Derry City and Strabane District Council for more information on their scheme and the internal council staff resources used to administer it.

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council was offering a Fuel Support Programme via St Vincent de Paul to support those most in need during the cost-of-living crisis. The fuel support was one of the initiatives of the Council's £250,000 cost-of-living crisis programme which was launched in December 2022. A total of £80,000 has been allocated to support local households with home heating.

The monies for this initiative had come from Covid Reserves. It was not clear whether covid funds were provided by Council or central government. As the Council had indicated they sought support from Department for Communities it could be assumed that this money had come from funding provided by DfC to address the community impacts of covid.

It was anticipated that £80,000 would help 400 families with home heating costs. A direct referral protocol would be put in place to enable community partners such as the six established foodbanks, South West Age Partnerships, Enniskillen and Omagh Family Support Hubs, and other organisations, to make requests to St Vincent de Paul to draw against the direct emergency fuel support scheme. Individuals can also self-refer to St Vincent de Paul.

As part of their Cost-of-Living Scheme, £12,000 had also been allocated to the Food Banks.

A study carried out by council identified that families with children, the 'working poor', those living with disability and older people would be most

adversely affected by the crisis. Council was considering support for schools in the setting up of breakfast clubs. It was proposed that £28,000 was allocated to support those schools that wished to offer additional food provisions.

4. Liaison with local organisations and charities who specialised in delivering financial support around how Council could best support their services.

A meeting of the Community Support Steering Group was convened on 20 January 2023 to gather feedback on how Council can best support the services of local organisations.

Community Support Steering Group Engagement

Feedback was gathered on local need. Partners reported that an increased number of individuals have asked for help with food, fuel, and general hardship issues. Lots of people who are asking for help work full time and fall outside the criteria for free-school meals and don't get help with childcare costs. Working families are falling through the cracks. This experience was also supported by information from a survey exercise undertaken by schools where 30% of the parents who signed up for a food support scheme have children who were not eligible for free school meals. Action Mental Health indicated that a third of their clients needed help to access food.

Bangor Foodbank explained that while food donations have increased by 26%, demand has increased by 88%. This is a concern as it is a challenge to maintain the level of food supply needed. Ideas around breakfast clubs and exploring food links between partners were discussed.

Concern about cost-of-living carrying over into neighbourhood disputes was highlighted. Concern was also expressed about the increase in illegal money lending from organised crime gangs. Many people have indicated that the £600 payment from central government was spent in anticipation in the run up to Christmas and the actual money was now being used to pay off a debt.

Lots of the good examples of support being provided, such as warm spaces, were discussed. Organisations have reported an increase in the number of people accessing warm spaces. Where food is provided it is apparently evident that people are reducing their food intake at home to save money. The spaces had also highlighted high levels of loneliness. The Warehouse in Newtownards had over 500 individuals through the door every week and many spend a considerable time in the venue benefiting from the warm space and the food that was available.

Cost-of-living increases has resulted in increasing levels of loneliness experienced by both older and younger age groups. Money was not available for extracurricular activities, or for the transport to get to them. This was also an issue with students struggling with transport costs to attend SERC.

Partners within the Community Support Steering Group indicated that a hardship fund may not be the best method of getting support to those most in

need. Agreeing the household income threshold, creating a scheme that was equitable (and not a postcode lottery) and getting support to those most in need were just some of the challenges mentioned.

Partners suggested support for the organisations providing advice and signposting is probably of greater value to a household than the £100 voucher. This was due to the time spent supporting an individual in crisis plus the referral pathways to support available from other organisations.

Feedback on delivering financial support

This was discussed at the 20 January 2023 meeting of the Community Support Steering Group. None of the partners organisations have much experience making direct payments or vouchers to individuals. The most common method of supporting individuals with fuel costs is via referrals to St Vincent De Paul. This was the route that most partners use when they got a request for help with fuel. There had been a huge increase in demand from SVP.

The County Down Rural Community Network is the only partner who mentioned they had some experience of delivering hardship payments. This was due to a grant of £6,000 given to them by Newry Mourne and Down District Council. This grant helped people (in financial hardship) within that council area purchase oil. Referrals for this scheme were accepted from social workers via HomeStart and SureStart. The Network then paid an oil supplier £200 per household referred. The fund was spent within a morning.

5. Statistical evidence about people in hardship in AND

To know how best to help people living in Ards and North Down, it was useful to consider some of the evidence. A short paper providing information on claimants, food bank demand, salary data and children living in low-income families was provided in appendix 1. This information showed the scale of the problem as well as challenges to ensure that support gets to where it was most needed.

The benefits system in Northern Ireland was extremely complex. The move from multiple benefits to universal credit means the definitions for any statistics quotes needed to be carefully considered. In 2020, 9.5% of the working age population claimed Universal Credit compared to a Northern Ireland average of 14.2%. In Belfast 14% of the working age population were on universal credit, while in Derry City and Strabane this figure is 14.9%. This comparison was potentially relevant due to the information provided earlier in the report about their 'hardship/fuel poverty' funds. Not everyone in Ards and North Down would have transferred to Universal Credit. Universal Credit was scheduled for roll out in AND in 2018. We assume that the jump in UC claimants from 4220 in 2020 to 9710 in 2021 is due to how Universal Credit was rolled out. This followed a similar trend and NI. This jump was not due to Covid.

Heat maps within the document in appendix 1 showed where claimants were located. It also showed which parts of the Borough an increased number of claimants were located in.

Trussell Trust information on food bank parcels had also been included in the report. There were two Trussell Trust Food Banks in Ards and North Down, in Bangor and Newtownards. Covid did have an impact on the demand for food parcels and this demand had now dropped. However, demand was still above pre covid levels which indicated there had been an increase in need. Economic inequality was a priority within the Community Plan. A project had been initiated between Community Planning, the Trussell Trust, the Social Supermarket and Community Advice AND to collate data that would be used to provide more comprehensive information about poverty within this area. This would help understand people's circumstance for accessing support. As this project had just commenced, we did not yet have access to this level of local intelligence. We believed this project may help us understand why people were living in poverty.

The report included information on salaries. In 2021, the median gross annual salary for people living in Ards and North Down was £24,123 which was similar to the NI average of £24,000. The median gross annual salary of people living in Ards and North Down working full time was £29,332 compared to £10,670 for people working part-time. This information was important if we were to establish a hardship fund and to identify appropriate criteria based on household income.

Included within the report was information on children in low-income families as well as information on pension credits. While below the Northern Ireland average of 20.9%, 17.3% of children (under 16) in AND live in relative low income families. Only Lisburn and Castlereagh had a lower percentage of children living in relative low income families. 17.3% equated to 5187 children. While this was lower compared to other areas and increasing trend was observed in the data.

Pension credit data showed a similar pattern. Lisburn and Castlereagh was the only council area with a lower % of claimants than Ards and North Down. AND has 12.9% of its population claiming pension credits compared to 20.8% as the NI average. This equated to 4,500 people. But not everyone who was eligible was claiming their pension credit. The trend for people claiming pension credits in AND was decreasing.

The information provided showed that poverty existed in AND, that this info could be used (with caveats) to agree a support programme that tried to address need. It also showed how complicated this would be.

6. Options for Members to consider

As requested, officers had identified options outlining how Council can best support our residents.

These options were additional to the support already available. The options proposed were currently hypothetical as no budget had been identified to implement them. A review of potential underspend within Community and/or Social Supermarket budgets was the most likely source of money to fund cost-of-living support. However, if this was the source then the original purpose of DfC providing this funding to Council could not be deviated from i.e. food and wrap around services.

a. Hardship fund (as specially mentioned in NoM)

To establish a hardship fund in Ards and North Down, money would need to be secured from Council reserves as any underspend from DfC funded programmes could not be given out as vouchers to individuals.

The information and research undertaken for this report highlighted the challenges of designing and delivering a hardship fund. There was no mechanism in Ards and North Down to implement a voucher scheme. No organisations had come forward to say they would have the capacity to roll out a voucher scheme.

Data had been provided for Members that may help identify appropriate criteria for a scheme. This data indicated that eligibility would be significantly more than the value of a hardship fund meaning those who were most in need may miss out. Examples of other hardship funds and their criteria had been provided. If Members agree to establish a Hardship Fund, criteria would either need to be agreed at Council. Criteria from the Belfast and Derry City and Strabane scheme had been included. It should be noted that members of the Community Support Steering Group, highlighted the large number of 'working poor' accessing their services who would be unlikely to meet the criteria used in the other schemes.

b. Large signposting and support event (via AND Poverty Forum)

The Cost-of-Living event to be held before March will be particularly useful to residents to show them help that was available. Along with other partners, Council may be asked to contribute a small amount of money to help maximise the reach of the event across the whole borough. This small contribution could be met from within existing budgets.

c. Financial help for support organisations

An option to increase financial support to the 3 networks named above budget depending. Each network to receive additional financial support to enable them to advise, inform, and signpost the residents of the Borough who are experiencing financial hardship. Explore if funding is available to provide funding for Kilcooley Women's Centre My Pantry Social Supermarket.

Donations to the food banks are insufficient for demand, as more residents were encountering hardship, due to the cost of living was increasing. An option would be to provide financial aid to the 3 foodbanks within the Borough, so they could restock their shelves, budget and funding identified dependant.

Provide financial assistance, through Community Advice AND, to St Vincent De Paul. Utilising this method would ensure those that were struggling the most with the cost-of-living crisis received vouchers for food and fuel and was recorded/accounted for appropriately.

d. Consideration of schemes to reduce cost-of-living impact

Potential projects with partners, such as South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust to run courses on low-cost nutritional cooking. Funding could be used to purchase slow cookers.

Exploration of the number of breakfast clubs and identify links between Schools, Social Supermarket and Foodbanks who have a large (over) supply of breakfast cereals. This could have linked to the option outlined above.

e. Additional support from central government

A letter had been sent to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Communities to ask if there was a funding stream available from the Department to assist with the Cost of Living crisis. From discussions with DfC Officials, it was unlikely that additional Departmental funding would be made available, other than what had already been introduced by the Department, including:

- Additional funding from DfC (£1500) for Community and Voluntary Sector organisations already funded to deliver services.
- Fair Share, would also be assisted by the Department to secure additional food for member organisations to access.

A letter had also been sent to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland asking for additional financial support from the Northern Ireland Office towards the Council setting up a Cost of Living Hardship Fund. No replies to the letters had been received at the time of writing this report, but an update on this would be given at the Council meeting.

Members should note that care needs to be taken with how funds were distributed to non-profit organisations to comply with audit requirements and fraud regulations. This would be a risk to be assessed closely and advice taken. When some potential projects had been outlined above, it was also important to recognise that if funding was secured, the requirements of that funding would need to be applied to assess any potential projects.

Finally, no existing or proposed funding allocation was currently allocated for 2022/23 or 2023/24 years. Sources of funding would have to be found such as from Reserves, to fund a scheme.

RECOMMENDED that that Council:

1. Notes the contents of this report and research on the subject undertaken by officers with other Councils and partners to date

2. That no resources currently exist to fund such additional schemes including a potential hardship fund within current budgets, underspends, or other outside sources, but that funding has been requested from DfC and the Northern Ireland Office.
3. If funding was to be made available in the meantime, this would have to be drawn from current reserves
4. It is therefore further recommended that Council considers this report and any action to be taken.

Proposed by Councillor P Smith, seconded by Councillor T Smith, that Council:

1. Notes the contents of this report and research on the subject undertaken by officers with other Councils and partners to date
2. Council provides short term support in that Council allocates £50k from reserves for local food banks, social supermarket and other advice and support groups within the Borough to help those in immediate financial hardship.

Speaking to the proposal, Councillor P Smith had been impressed by the informative content in the report given the short timeframe that officers had been given to prepare it.

Noting that the original motion had asked for a hardship fund, he felt the report confirmed it would not be prudent for Council to proceed with that option.

He was also aware of some awful publicity in relation to hardship fund schemes run in other Council areas and he understood that the NI Audit Office had become involved following what had been described as a Dickensian scheme with people queuing for vouchers on a first come first served basis. It had been described as a farce and not targeted at those in genuine need and something that this Council needed to avoid at all costs.

Continuing, he felt Council could provide a balanced approach within its statutory remit as a local authority. At the Special Council meeting where this item arose, he had proposed a £50,000 funding package to groups providing support in the community but the proposal had fallen on the night. He still felt this would be the best approach and there was a proven model that had worked for Council before in providing much needed support to the front line. He hoped Council would support this.

The Mayor asked the proposer for clarity on which groups he was referring to. He felt that officers would be best placed to determine which groups should be involved. He felt that would have the greatest impact, St Vincent de Paul was one example but he was aware of others that officers could consider.

The seconder, Councillor T Smith supported the proposal and believed that Council should not be operating any sort of hardship fund and was also mindful that Council was trying to strike a rate. He felt that the £50,000 funding struck the right balance by providing support to those groups on the frontline which could better identify and meet need.

Speaking in relation to the current proposal, Councillor Woods noted that it was almost word for word identical to the proposed amendment that she had intended to bring and was disappointed that she was denied the chance to propose it purely because Councillor P Smith had raised his hand first.

She stated that anyone reading the officer's report and not feeling ashamed and disgusted at what had become of our so-called developed society needed to take a look at themselves.

She referenced some of the points in the report, reminding Members that they referred to local need. 'Lots of people who were asking for help work full time and fell outside the criteria for FSM and didn't get help with childcare costs', demand for Bangor Foodbank had increased 88%, there had been an increase in illegal money lending from organised crime groups, the fact that we have Warm Spaces operating, where food was provided was evident that people were reducing their food intake at home to save money, increasing levels of loneliness because of the cost of living by younger and older age groups. Poverty existed in Ards and North Down - it always had done. She said that it was our ratepayers that were suffering.

Anyone reading the newspapers, scrolling social media and listening to the radio would know. People were in need across our Borough and across this country. Councillor Woods recalled her Granny hearing a radio interview with a single mother of two who had pennies left for the week. Her Granny had tried to call the show to donate money to the caller.

This was what people were up against because of systematic and government failures. We had an enormous capacity to turn a blind eye to needs of our neighbours and constituents. We had a responsibility to help. We had normalised food banks; we had allowed charities to do the job of government.

Whilst it was helpful to signpost, there wasn't a money tree to back it up. The social security system was not adequate to help, and support could be discretionary. We had a lot to do to sort this out long term, but in the short term it was important to help as a Council.

Councillor Smart rose to support the proposal and felt that Council should do what it could to help and hoped that Members would agree to come together to give their support. Councillor Boyle agreed that other Councils trying to deliver a hardship fund scheme had been disastrous and it was not a function of the Council to provide that level of support. He was also concerned that the threshold for the grant in those areas had been too high with household incomes of £40,000 and £60,000 enabling a large number of applications. He noted that even an MLA could apply to one of those particular funds which highlighted that even those on working incomes were still struggling. He asked if a report would come back on how Council would distribute the £50,000 to those organisations once they had been identified.

The Chief Executive advised that would be provided if the proposal was carried.

Alderman McIlveen said he was sympathetic to the proposal, and it had been important to have the report to make a decision. The only disappointment was that it did not ask for a workable policy to provide a mechanism as to how the funding was distributed. He wondered if that would require organisations to bid or if Council made the approach. He suggested that delegated powers could be provided to Community and Wellbeing Committee to speed up the proposal.

Alderman McDowell thanked officers for the report and the speed it was put together. It had clarified some of the problems other Councils had run in to, particularly with the voucher scheme. It had not helped those that really needed the help. He noted that Council would need to spend as much money in setting up an administration process for the scheme in order to satisfy audit conditions. He asked if Council was able to satisfy those conditions of setting up a process and asked if another report was coming on the delivery of the scheme if it was passed tonight.

The Chief Executive advised that clarity would be needed in the follow-up report.

Alderman McDowell recognised it would be very difficult to meet all of the needs that people were experiencing and he felt Council should still be continuing to achieve central government funding support.

Councillor Woods asked to make the amendment she had intended to bring earlier.

Councillor Woods proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor McKee, that Council:

- Notes the contents of this report and research on the subject undertaken by officers with other Councils and partners to date.
- That no dedicated resources currently exist to fund additional schemes, including a potential hardship fund within current budgets, underspends, or other outside sources, but that funding has been requested from DfC and the Northern Ireland Office.
- That £50,000 of funding is made available in the meantime from current reserves to establish a funding stream to be used by local foodbanks, St Vincent De Paul and Community Advice Ards and North Down.

Having already outlined her reasoning to what was a similar proposal from Councillor P Smith, she clarified that the amendment was adding in the partners that were identified in the report.

She had included the foodbanks given the pressures they were under and these could also include social supermarkets. The funding would come out of Council reserves and designated to the bodies as partners. This method would ensure those struggling the most would receive support directly from those organisations which were better placed and held accountable.

Councillor McKimm said that six months ago he had sat with a group of officers and other Members along with a wide range of representatives from the voluntary and community sector and there was a clear message from the community and voluntary sector that they too were struggling and found themselves with vast increase in cost

of living demands and trying to address the poverty in front of them. He was cautious of the need to specify which groups would be partners at this stage without consulting with the author of the report. He felt to randomly generate a list could be a too random approach. He was aware of the difficulties of foodbanks with Bangor Food Bank reporting an increase of 300% demand. He was supportive of the proposal and felt it important to help those voluntary and community groups to help others.

Councillor Adair felt that one of the groups often missed were working families and lone parent families who were out working with very little help with many excluded from previous government support. He understood that the £50,000 would not be able to help everyone and he also raised concern about rate rises that may come in the future and people such as working parents would struggle to pay them.

Councillor Irwin spoke to support the amendment but asked for reassurances that a report would be brought back on how Council would administer the funding. It was advised by the Chief Executive that a report could be brought to the February meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee.

Councillor Irwin thanked the officer for the report and appreciated the work that had gone into it.

The Chief Executive confirmed to Councillor Greer that the amendment differed from the original proposal because it identified specific groups which the funding would be distributed through. Councillor Greer raised a number of concerns around managing expectations, how funding would be distributed and governance issues. The Director of Community and Wellbeing confirmed the report would address those matters.

Voicing her support to the amendment, Councillor Gilmour felt that it brought more details and was specific in terms of the groups it mentioned.

Councillor P Smith was more than happy to accept the amendment as the aim was to get the money out to the people who needed it. He agreed that process needed to be considered by the groups which Council had worked with many times and were used to distributing money. He was also happy for Council to provide delegated authority to Community and Wellbeing Committee to speed up the process.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Woods, seconded by Councillor McKee, that Council:

- **Notes the contents of this report and research on the subject undertaken by officers with other Councils and partners to date.**
- **That no dedicated resources currently exist to fund additional schemes, including a potential hardship fund within current budgets, underspends, or other outside sources, but that funding has been requested from DfC and the Northern Ireland Office.**
- **That £50,000 of funding is made available in the meantime from current reserves to establish a funding stream to be used by local foodbanks, St Vincent De Paul and Community Advice Ards and North Down.**

FURTHER RESOLVED on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor T Smith, that that the Community and Wellbeing Committee is granted Delegated Authority in relation to the above decision.

(The meeting went into recess at 11pm and resumed at 11.15pm)

(Alderman Wilson re-joined the meeting on Zoom – 11.15pm)

(Alderman M Smith and Councillors Brooks, Dunlop and McKimm left the meeting at this stage)

18. EQIA ON THE FLYING OF THE UNION FLAG

(Appendix VI – IX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Chief Executive detailing the undernoted:

Background

At a meeting of Council on 30 March 2022 it was resolved that 'subject to the completion of an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA), Council amends the current flag policy to fly our Union Flag at every war memorial all year round, and will also include Church Street, Newtownards Council building'.

In accordance with the Council's Equality Scheme, this decision was Equality screened. It was identified that the decision should be 'screened in' and subject to an EQIA as there was evidence that there could be a differential impact for the public and employees on two Section 75 grounds in particular, i.e., religious belief and political opinion, although it could be argued that the issue of emblems and national identity (i.e. flags) also brought into play a third category, ethnic origin. In general, the impact would relate to the perceptions of the Union flag by different communities in Northern Ireland, in turn related to considerations of national identity and allegiance.

EQIA Process (Appendix 1)

The Equality Commission had provided guidance on the EQIA process which set out seven distinct stages:

1. Define the aims of the policy.
2. Consider available data and research.
3. Make an assessment of impacts.
4. Other factors to consider.
5. Consult on the actual impact of existing policies and the likely impact of proposed policies.
6. Decision by public authority & publication of report on results of EQIA.
7. Monitoring for adverse impact in the future and publication of the results of such monitoring.

Stages 1 – 5

The Council had completed stages 1 – 5 of the EQIA process as set out above.

Following completion of steps 1 to 4 of this process, a 20-week consultation period

took place from Thursday 9 June 2022 until Tuesday 1 November 2022. The extension to the usual 12-week period was to allow the Council to facilitate public meetings and a staff meeting as requested by several respondents in response to the initial consultation.

The Draft EQIA report that was issued for consultation in June 2022, along with a public survey and a staff survey, are attached at Appendix 2. The consultation was widely publicised using press advertisements in local papers, via social media, the Council website and, for staff, through internal email and newsletter. Further to requests received in survey responses, three public consultation meetings were held (one in Portaferry, one in Newtownards, and one via Zoom) and a staff meeting was also held.

Stage 6

At the end of the consultation period the initial draft EQIA report was revised to provide details of the consultation process and to reflect the comments made by consultees. This final draft report was attached at Appendix 3 and had been placed before the Council in order that it may make a decision.

The Council's decision would be incorporated into a final summary document and the results of the EQIA would be published via the Council's website and in the Council's annual report to the Equality Commission.

Section 7

Monitoring of potential adverse impact in the future and publication of the results of such monitoring will be undertaken using existing Council engagement channels:

- Biannual Residents Survey
- IIP Staff Surveys
- Visitor Market Research

A summary of any section 75 complaints received was included in the equality update reports provided to Corporate Services Committee on a quarterly basis. Therefore, any complaints received further to the Council's decision on the EQIA would be captured within the quarterly report and details of any actions taken or proposed to be taken as a result of the complaint(s) would be included within the report. Details of complaints received, and outcomes are also reported upon in the Equality Annual Progress Report that Council must submit to the Equality Commission each year.

In its response to the Draft EQIA Consultation Report, the Equality Commission made explicit the need to determine 'the rationale for flying the flag at each location.', with an inference that the final decision should accommodate and reflect on a stated rationale.

RECOMMENDED that the Council, having taken into account the final draft EQIA report attached at Appendix 3, considers the proposal to:

- (i) Amend its flag policy to include the flying of the Union Flag at every war memorial all year round; and

- (ii) Amend its flag policy to include the flying of the Union Flag at the Church Street, Newtownards Council building, all year round.

The Mayor advised that Mr John Kremer, the Council appointed consultant and author of the EQIA assessment was in attendance to respond to any queries that Members had during the debate.

She invited a proposal for the officer's recommendation.

Proposed by Alderman McDowell, seconded by Councillor Irwin, that Council does not amend the policy to include the flying of the flag at every war memorial all year round and that this Council does not amend the policy to include the flying of the Union flag at the Council building at Church Street, Newtownards, all year round.

Speaking to the proposal, Alderman McDowell acknowledged that the flag policy was an emotive issue and strong feelings had been expressed since the motion to review it had been brought to the Council. He was respectful of the different views but referred to the Alliance Party's policy to have the flag flown only on designated days. The attached report and EQIA documents had indicated that there was a majority who were supportive of designated days and his proposal for Church Street reflected that along with the fact it was a place of work and should be a neutral environment.

While the flag should be flown at war memorials as a mark of respect, he recalled that in previous years the Royal British Legion had been disappointed by the Council's policy to fly the union flag 365 days as it conflicted with the RBL's own protocol to fly the Union flag on designated days. He understood that the Belfast branch of the RBL did not want to get involved in political arguments, however.

In closing, Alderman McDowell added that the Alliance Party grouping was concerned about the increase of flags that were being flown and believed it was important to recognise their policy to fly the Union flag on designated days and asked for that status quo to remain.

The seconder, Councillor Irwin, reserved her right to speak until later in the debate.

Alderman McIlveen welcomed the Alliance Party's view on flying the flag 365 days at war memorials which he noted was in opposition to what they had voted for previously. Given the Alliance Party's position on supporting designated days at Church Street though, he would not be supporting the proposal and suggested that Alderman McDowell was only going through the motions in support of his party's political policy.

Taking a similar view, Councillor Cooper added that Church Street was the only anomaly and the rest of the Council buildings had the Union flag flying 365 days. The passing of the Duke of Edinburgh and more recently, Her Majesty, The Queen, had exposed the flag policy and he had initially brought the matter to Council in an attempt to rectify the matter. Now that Council was being asked to make a decision, he hoped that Members could respect the democratic wishes of the majority of people in Ards and North Down to remain in the United Kingdom and fly the national flag at the Church Street building.

Councillor P Smith said he had opposed the legacy Ards Borough Council's amendment of its flag policy in the early 2000s to move from 365 days to designated days and he still took the same view now that it should be displayed permanently.

Referring to an included Equality Commission statement, he said that a harmonious working environment did not necessarily mean a neutral one. The same guidance also stated that while acceptable and appropriate to fly the flag 365 days at a civic location, the rationale for flying it at other facilities such as leisure centres would be questionable. He argued that Church Street was a civic building, as a venue for Committee meetings. He added that the public had overwhelmingly supported both proposals and whilst the response from staff was more split, the sample size was small with only 11% of staff responding. He felt it could be taken forward with suitable management of adverse effects and therefore he could not support the proposal.

Councillor Boyle felt that the timings of the Portaferry EQIA sessions, held in the early afternoon, had been inconvenient for the public to attend, resulting in a lower response rate from the area. He noted that the sessions in other parts of the Borough had been held in the evening, a time of day that would have been much more appropriate for people who worked.

In terms of the current debate, he felt it disappointing that unionist parties were trying to out-do one another, particularly given there were other significant matters on the agenda and worldwide issues such as the war in Ukraine and the cost of living crisis. It was in this context, he referenced a quote from the late John Hume who had recalled his father once saying 'son, you can't eat a flag'.

He referred Members to a series of sections within the EQIA assessment which highlighted the Council's responsibility to promote good relations and its duty to provide convincing evidence should its decision be challenged by way of complaint to the Equality Commission. A further section highlighted that flags, symbols or emblems displayed in public could act as a territorial marker or method of harassment, irrespective of intention. The same guidance highlighted the Council's need 'to strike a balance between respecting the national flag of the United Kingdom while acknowledging that the flag had the potential to be used to mark sectional community allegiance in the context of Northern Ireland'.

He added that this was the current policy that the Council had in place and the position of 70% of other Councils in Northern Ireland which either flew no flag, a Council flag or replicated this policy.

He also noted the warnings of flags creating a potential chill factor and adverse impacts for users and potential users, particularly those from the Roman Catholic community, of Council facilities and premises. He noted that most Catholic respondents had rejected the flying of the Union flag permanently at Church Street and at war memorials and the consensus had been for designated days. He also believed that Church Street offices had been reduced to an administrative building from that of a civic building.

He went on to highlight section 6.49 which stated, 'with this in mind, while acknowledging that the staff sample size was small, responses to the survey from Roman Catholic staff in particular revealed a level of disquiet with not only the flying of flag at various locations but also the display of memorabilia within council buildings generally, and this concern is unlikely to subside should the proposed policy be adopted.'

In closing, Councillor Boyle felt those views should not be ignored and to unravel the current policy would seriously contradict Council's thinking that it was an open, welcoming and progressive Borough to visit, to live and to do business.

Voicing his opposition to the proposal, Councillor S Irvine explained he had attended two of the EQIA consultation meetings and the consensus was to fly the flag 365 days. He noted that Councillor Boyle had referred to the policies of other Councils but this was not about other Councils. He explained he had received a mixture of emails with the majority being supportive of flying the flag 365 days and some of those views had come from the Roman Catholic community that were supportive of the flag being flown every day provided it was maintained.

Councillor Irwin was aware that Equality Commission guidance was that a harmonious workplace did not necessarily need to be a neutral one, she pointed to the responses from staff where 52.8% identifying as Protestant had felt that it would lead to a neutral or positive impact response whereas 90% of Catholic respondents felt that the impact would be negative. She added that the Alliance Party was not in favour of sectarian head counts in any form, but this level of data was too substantial to be dismissed and she noted that the Council was subject to employment laws.

Alderman McDowell asked for a recorded vote.

On being put to the meeting with 12 voting FOR, 20 voting AGAINST, 0 ABSTAINING and 8 ABSENT, the proposal FELL.

The voting was as follows:

FOR (12)	AGAINST (20)	ABSTAINED (0)	ABSENT (8)
Aldermen:	Aldermen:		Aldermen:
McDowell	Armstrong-Cotter		Carson
Wilson	Irvine		Gibson
	Keery		Smith, M
Councillors:	Mcllveen		Councillors:
Boyle			Brooks
Douglas	Councillors:		Dunlop
Irwin	Adair		Greer
McAlpine	Blaney		Johnson
McKee	Cathcart		McKimm
McRandal	Chambers		
Moore	Cooper		
Morgan	Cummings		
Walker	Edmund		
Woods	Gilmour		

Irvine, S
Kennedy
MacArthur
McClellan
Smart
Smith, P
Smith, T
Thompson

Councillor Cooper proposed, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that Council, having taken into account the final draft EQIA report attached at Appendix 3, approves the proposal to:

- (i) Amend its flag policy to include the flying of the Union Flag at every war memorial all year round; and
- (ii) Amend its flag policy to include the flying of the Union Flag at the Church Street, Newtownards Council building, all year round.

Speaking to the proposal, Councillor Cooper began by responding to earlier comments in the debate, and said that Councillor Boyle's political party, the SDLP, had disgracefully approved the naming of a play park in memory of an IRA terrorist. This had left a bad taste in his mouth and comments such as 'you can't eat a flag' were chipping away at his culture and attempting to decimate his Unionist perspective. We lived in the United Kingdom, which was a fact. If other politicians wanted to change that then they should get the votes but the fact was we were the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and no bombs or bullets were going to change that.

(Councillor Greer re-joined the meeting)

Regardless of whether the building was for civic or administrative purposes, he continued, the Council needed to respect the democratic wishes that it was part of the United Kingdom. The cheerleaders of the disastrous Belfast Agreement needed to obey that.

The seconder, Alderman McIlveen, explained that the Church Street building was an anomaly in terms of the policy for other Council buildings. He felt it was clear in that it was a civic building where committee meetings were held and that differentiated it from other facilities in the Borough. He was therefore more than happy to amend the policy to reflect that along with those flags that were displayed at war memorials which would address the anomaly there too. Sharing the view of Councillor S Irvine, he felt that the flag should be displayed respectfully and in good condition and it was something that the Council should take pride in.

Councillor McRandal had no issue with the flying of the nation's flag in a respectful and dignified way and he felt that the Alliance's stance reflected that. In Holywood the flag would be displayed in three different locations in the town centre, all within 300 metres of each other. At present it flew at the Maypole and the Queen's Leisure Complex which was, like Church Street, a place of work. Under this proposal the Union flag would also fly permanently at the war memorial at Redburn Square which

was opposite the Queen's Leisure Complex. Hollywood was a mixed town with a liberally minded population and many people would feel three Union flags in such close proximity was too much and moving from respectful and dignified into the realms of territory marking. He was disappointed the report had not addressed this specific issue in Hollywood.

Speaking in support, Alderman Irvine believed that the Council had a harmonious workforce and people felt at ease coming to their place of work. The proposal by the Alliance Party, he believed, would have damaged good relations and would have been a backward step for the Borough.

Councillor McAlpine spoke of family who had fought and died in service – she had connections to both World Wars and even the Boer War. Even with those sentiments though, she was concerned that there was a risk of creating a cold house for those from a Catholic background that worked in and visited the Council offices. While she was in support of commemoration because of her family connection with both World Wars, she did not want to create difficulty for those from a Catholic background and asked Mr Kremer what he had picked up on in that regard throughout the EQIA process.

It was a question of balancing different concerns, Mr Kremer responded, adding that the survey showed strong community support within this Borough which was predominately one community. The staff survey results were more equivocal with some staff indicating unease that the drift had been too far in one particular direction and he had tried to get that across in the report. The report referred to the situation in Hollywood of the three flags in close proximity and while he had tried to give weight to each of the arguments, the Council might have been vulnerable to challenge if it moved its position too far from what would be considered appropriate. He had felt that the issues regarding Church Street were different to the issues regarding war memorials because Church Street was a place of employment and fair employment legislation fell squarely behind those concerns.

The war memorials, he added, were a community consideration and the Council would need to take in to account customer practice in certain locations where this could be a departure as currently only three of the war memorials displayed the Union flag permanently whereas the other 11 only did this on designated days.

Rising to support the proposal, Councillor P Smith hoped that if it was agreed then he would encourage people who had taken it upon themselves to fly flags from street furniture, to refrain from doing so.

If this proposal was agreed, Councillor T Smith felt it would rectify a decision that he believed was wrongly made in 2005 to move to flying the flag on designated days. It was right and appropriate to fly the flag at certain locations and he welcomed that consistency would be brought to the flying of the flag at war memorials right across the Borough. The survey had been overwhelmingly in support of the proposal and that had to be respected.

Expressing strong feelings of disappointment, Councillor Boyle felt that if the proposal would be agreed as this particular issue was 'the beast that had to be dealt

with' in this Council but that did not make it right for people to abuse the flying of the Union flag. The policy had been settled for 17 years and he accused the DUP and UUP of being spooked by the 'Pied Piper' that was Councillor Cooper, as the single TUV member of the Council. He felt the Union was safe and the flying of the flag on designated days was already well supported but this was turning the building in Newtownards to an 'only one side of the community welcome' facility. Over the years he felt he had crossed many lines in many places to build relationships in the Borough. He didn't need a flag to know who he was and felt it was sad that Unionists were being threatened by other Unionists, and the likes of the UUP and DUP were being rolled over instead of doing the work they really wanted to do. This would be a retrograde step and the Council would be starting all over again. He warned that Council would be making a big mistake.

Adding further objection, Councillor Irwin had been concerned by an undertone in the debate and believed there had been a comfortable assumption from some Members that the majority of Ards and North Down was Unionist. She felt there was a wilful dismissal of a majority of people in the Borough that did not prescribe to either Unionism or Nationalism or any form of symbols or flags being used to mark out an area or belief. The Alliance Party had always supported designated days because it was a comfortable compromise.

Concurring with those comments, Alderman Wilson asked the consultant, Mr Kremer, if he felt that Council officers should be guiding Members on this. Mr Kremer said he had differentiated between the two decisions, in terms of Church Street and war memorials, with one being a place of employment and the other being a community consideration. To conflate the two would be tricky as the arguments for both were very different, but in terms of officers providing guidance, that was something that needed to be debated.

Councillor S Irvine reflected on the strong feelings of his late predecessor, Alderman Menagh, who had supported the original motion to fly the flag 365 days. In response to claims from Councillor Boyle that the DUP and UUP had been spooked by the TUV proposal, speaking as an independent he said he understood that all Unionist members and parties of the Council had reached a consensus of working together to support this.

Rising to support, Councillor Adair emphasised he was supporting this of his own free will and expressed disappointment, feeling that the Alliance Party had turned it in to a 'Protestant versus Catholic' debate. He said that the Union Jack included the cross of St Patrick and he was only calling for the flying of his nation's flag, just as the national flag of the Republic of Ireland was flown in that country permanently on Government buildings. The soldiers who had laid down their lives for their country had not fought on designated days, so the flag should not be displayed on those terms either. In terms of comments about a shrine in Church Street, he stressed that the only person he worshiped was God and the Church Street images and memorabilia merely reflected what other nations displayed in their government buildings to commemorate their own respective leaders.

Councillor Kennedy was deeply disappointed by the tone of others who he felt had attempted to drag the issue in to the gutter. He said the Union Flag was not an

emblem, it did not belong to any community but it was the flag of the nation. The freedoms under that flag were the reason why Members had the right to express these differences. Unfortunately there was an attempt to turn it in to a tribal symbol and sectarianise it in order for people to justify their positions. While he respected the opposing views of Councillor Boyle as a nationalist, he accused the Alliance Party of being used by Sinn Fein and the IRA, standing side by side with them on the matter.

Councillor Walker responded to those comments and said he was not a Republican and believed sincerely in the success of the country in which we lived for everyone and took great exception to the comments. He asked if Council owned the land around the war memorials and the Chief Executive confirmed that he believed that to be so. Councillor Walker further queried who would decide exactly where the flag would be displayed at the war memorials and if there would be consultation on where it would be placed.

The Chief Executive added that the practicalities, location and appropriateness were details that would be looked at if the proposal was agreed. Councillor Walker hoped that the community would have opportunity for input if it was approved.

Summing up, Councillor Cooper took on board the emotion that had been expressed over the issue and had full respect for the opposing views, particularly from his friend Councillor Boyle.

Pointing to comments made by Councillor P Smith, he wondered perhaps now if this would bring comfort to those in the community who had felt the need to fly the flag who were threatened by the incessant onslaught from the pan-nationalist front. This may have gone some way to negate that insecurity.

While flattered to be described as a piper for Unionism, he responded to comments from Councillor Boyle, that it was Unionism that allowed Members the freedom to have different opinions and to welcomed people into our great nation. That was something that should be celebrated not diminished. The Union Flag represented everyone and until the democratic wishes of the electorate changed, that should be reflected. He asked all Members to reflect on that, it was not about orange versus green but it was the national flag and he looked forward to seeing the flag being flown for everyone and not to diminish their identity or aspirations. That was the shared future he hoped everyone could aspire to.

On being put to the meeting, with 20 voting FOR, 13 voting AGAINST, 0 ABSTAINING and 7 ABSENT, the proposal was declared CARRIED.

The recorded vote was as follows:

FOR (20)	AGAINST (13)	ABSTAINED (0)	ABSENT (7)
Aldermen:	Aldermen:		Aldermen:
Armstrong-Cotter	McDowell		Carson
Irvine	Wilson		Gibson
Keery			Smith, M
McIlveen	Councillors:		

C26.01.2023PM

65

Councillors:	Boyle
Adair	Douglas
Blaney	Greer
Cathcart	Irwin
Chambers	McAlpine
Cooper	McKee
Cummings	McRandal
Edmund	Moore
Gilmour	Morgan
Irvine, S	Walker
Kennedy	Woods
MacArthur	
McClellan	
Smart	
Smith, P	
Smith, T	
Thompson	

Councillors:
 Brooks
 Dunlop
 Johnson
 McKimm

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Cooper, seconded by Councillor T Smith, that Council, having taken into account the final draft EQIA report attached at Appendix 3, approves the proposal to:

- (i) Amend its flag policy to include the flying of the Union Flag at every war memorial all year round; and
- (ii) Amend its flag policy to include the flying of the Union Flag at the Church Street, Newtownards Council building, all year round.

19. SEALING DOCUMENTS & 20. TRANSFER OF RIGHTS OF BURIALS

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Chief Executive stating that

RESOLVED: - (On the proposal of Councillor McClellan, seconded by Alderman McIlveen)

THAT the Seal of the Council be affixed to the following documents:-

- (a) Grant of Rights of Burial: Nos 14500-14545
- (b) Duplicate Grant of Right of Burial, Clondeboye cemetery section BX grave 751
- (c) Deed of Rectification of 14 Church Street, Greyabbey, Newtownards, BT22 2NQ
Parties - Ards and North Down Borough Council and Andrew McNeice and Angela McNeice

- (d) Deed of Exchange – Ards and North Down Borough Council and NI Water
- (e) Form of Declaration to accompany Notice of Application for renewal of a liquor licence – Carnalea Golf Club
- (f) Transfer/Assignment Loughview cemetery Section B graves 112 & 113 Totton to Totton

21. NOTICE OF MOTION STATUS REPORT

(Appendix X)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Chief Executive attaching a Status Report in respect of Notices of Motion.

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

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

22. NOTICES OF MOTION

22.1. Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Wilson and Councillor Douglas

This Council acknowledges the environmental and health benefits associated with the recent increase in cycling and declares Ards & North Down a cycling friendly borough. The Council also recognises that people who cycle are among the most vulnerable road users, and tasks officers with producing a report detailing ways in which we can help improve safety. The report should include possible sources of funding, potential partnerships, and ways in which we can promote good relations between users of different forms of transport.

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

22.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Woods and Councillor Dunlop

That this Council notes its declaration of a climate emergency in 2018 and the passage of the Climate Change Act 2022; agrees the need to reduce emissions to ensure happy and healthy communities and engages with community and government partners with the aim of piloting 'car free' days in our City, towns and villages.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Woods seconded by Councillor Dunlop that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Corporate Services Committee.

22.3. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Irwin and Councillor Walker

That this Council values the contributions and opinions of our younger residents and works to engage with them to ensure we represent their views alongside those of other sectors in our community. Officers are tasked to identify at least one issue during 2023 for full consultation with Youth Voice and subsequently provide a report outlining possible roadmaps that might lead to the development of a Youth Council. Additionally, this Council agrees to extend an invitation to Youth Voice to make a deputation to outline the work they are undertaking.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Irwin seconded by Councillor Walker that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Corporate Services Committee.

22.4. Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman McIlveen and Councillor Cathcart

Building on the practice of other council areas, that this council tasks officers to liaise with DfI Roads as a matter of urgency to offer its assistance in providing self-service grit piles for residents and to post locations of such grit piles on the council website.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen seconded by Councillor Cathcart that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Environment Committee.

22.5. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Adair and Councillor Edmund

That this Council writes to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Infrastructure expressing concern that the provision of a footpath at Shore Road Ballyhalbert is currently not considered a priority by the Department following the completion of a feasibility study which demonstrated need. That the Council highlights the road safety concerns raised by residents for pedestrians using the Shore Road from the village to the residential developments including Park Homes and St Andrew's. That Council requests that the Department for Infrastructure makes the installation of a footpath a priority and commits to deliver the scheme as a matter of urgency.

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

22.6 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor T Smith and Councillor Brooks

This Council supports local residents who have started a petition which calls for a pedestrian crossing on Moat Street, Donaghadee, near to the Spar store. This road

can be extremely busy and residents have real safety concerns when trying to cross it. Not only do many people use this area to cross to shop at the Spar store, others need to cross the road to get children to and from the local schools.

This Council will write to the Department of Infrastructure and call on them to listen to local residents, take on board their concerns and take the necessary steps to install a pedestrian crossing in this vicinity.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor T Smith seconded by Councillor Chambers that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Corporate Services Committee.

22.7 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Moore and Alderman McDowell

This Council notes its previous sponsorship of the Community Asset Transfer request from Branch Out Community Group and welcomes the agreement from DfI to lease the woodland area to the group for 1 year. Officers will:

- Write to DfI to express council's support for the work of Branch Out on the DfI-owned site and how it complements The Big Plan for Ards and North Down.
- Write to the EA to express council's support for their work on the EA-owned site, adjacent to the woodland.
- Bring back a report, identifying what can be offered to support the work of Branch Out including, but not limited to, providing advice, support, equipment and finance.
- Engage directly with Branch Out to identify what support is needed.

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

22.8 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cummings and Alderman Armstrong-Cotter

This Council honours the 50th Anniversary of the UDR CGC Greenfinches following the introduction of the Ulster Defence Regiment Bill in July 1973, which permitted the recruitment of women into the regiment, recognising those who joined within the Borough, and brings back a report to outline how the Corporate Services Committee can work with local UDR Associations along with other relevant bodies to support anniversary events in the Borough.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Cummings seconded by Alderman McIlveen that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Corporate Services Committee.

22.9 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Morgan and Councillor McRandal

The prolonged cold weather spells just before Christmas and last week resulted in icy, slippery, and dangerous footpaths and car parks in the Borough's City and town centres. It is not acceptable that in such circumstances the Council does not have a

plan or the resources or facilities to grit these areas to enable residents to walk safely to and from the main shopping areas or fall when they step out of their cars onto ice. It is proposed that officers 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.

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

22.10 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor McAlpine and Councillor Greer

That this Council agrees to write to the Department for Communities to request confirmation of what action can be taken by their Historic Environment Division to protect Kircubbin Harbour, a listed Historic Monument of Northern Ireland from neglect and lack of maintenance by its private owner and to encourage the Department to utilize those powers to fix Kircubbin Harbour before further collapse and damage occurs to it or the nearby public road.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McAlpine seconded by Councillor Boyle that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Planning Committee.

Circulated for Information:

- a) NI Housing Council January 2023 Bulletin and Minutes dated 8th December 2022 (copies attached)

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor Cathcart, that the items be noted.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen seconded by Councillor McClean that the public/press be excluded from the undernoted items of confidential business.

23. REQUEST FROM NI WATER TO USE THE COASTAL PATH AT STRICKLANDS FOR ACCESS TO CARRY OUT EMERGENCY WORKS AT CARNALEA

(Appendix XI – XIII)

****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)

24. EXTENSION OF THE OFFICE FURNITURE CONTRACT (FILE PRO104)

****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)

25. TENDER AWARD FOR INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES (FILE AUD01)

****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)

26. RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION IN RELATION TO THE NORTHERN IRELAND PROTOCOL OPSS

(Appendix XIV – XVI)

****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)

27. RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION IN RELATION TO PRIORITY SURGERY - DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

(Appendix XVII)

****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)

28. TENDER FOR CONWAY SQUARE SEATING****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)****29. EXTENSION OF THE BANGOR MARINA OPERATING CONTRACT******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)****READMITTANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRESS****RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Edmund, seconded by Councillor McClean, that the public/press be readmitted to the meeting.****TERMINATION OF MEETING****The meeting terminated at 12.40am.**

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Planning Committee was held (hybrid) on Tuesday 7th February 2023 at 7.00 pm via Zoom and at Council Offices on Church Street, Newtownards.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Alderman Gibson

Aldermen: Keery
McIlveen

Councillors:	Adair	McKee (via Zoom)
	Brooks	McRandal (via Zoom)
	Cathcart (via Zoom)	P Smith
	Kennedy (via Zoom, 19:09)	Thompson
	McAlpine	Walker (via Zoom)
	McClellan	

Officers: Director of Planning (A McCullough), Head of Planning (G Kerr), Planning Managers (Paula Kerr and Andrea Todd), and Democratic Services Officers (R King and S McCrea)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillor Brooks and Councillor Moore.

NOTED.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

NOTED.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6th DECEMBER 2022 (Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Minutes of the meeting held on 6th December 2022.

RECOMMENDED that the minutes be noted.

AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Keery, that the minutes be noted.

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

4.1 LA06/2022/0679/F – EXTENSION OF BUSINESS TO INCLUDE PERMEABLE STORAGE YARD, NEW EGRESS, FENCING (RETROSPECTIVE) AND PROPOSED LANDSCAPING FOOTPATH, VEGETATION AND ALL ASSOCIATED WORKS (Appendices II-IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report outlining the planning application.

DEA: Newtownards

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

Proposal: Extension of business to include permeable storage yard, new egress, fencing (Retrospective) and proposed landscaping, footpath, vegetation and all associated works

Site Location: Lands approx. 10m West of 29 Jubilee Road and 15m South of 84-96 Ardmillan Crescent, Newtownards

Recommendation: Approval

The Planning Manager advised Members that LA06/2022/0679/F was an application for the extension of a business to include a permeable storage yard, new egress, fencing (retrospective) and proposed landscaping, footpath, vegetation and all associated works. The site was located at lands approximately 10m west of 29 Jubilee Road and 15m South of 84-96 Ardmillan Crescent, Newtownards.

The business which the application related to was Surfescapes Group Ltd, a hard and soft landscaping supplier. There was an enforcement case pending the outcome of this application LA06/2022/0268/CA and it was being presented at committee at this meeting as there had been 10 objections received from 9 separate addresses.

These objections had raised the following concerns:

- Impact upon residential amenity
- concerns about the relocation of the path that cuts through the site
- access to land to rear of Ardmillan Crescent
- Flooding

These issues were dealt with in detail in the planning report. NIW, DFI Roads and Environmental Health were consulted and had no objections to the proposal. Environmental Health required a condition to be added to any permission limiting opening hours and deliveries to between 8am and 6pm.

The site was located within the settlement limit of Newtownards and was designated as a site for existing industry in the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015.

The plan considered it necessary to safeguard existing industrial land within settlements from competing uses under Policy IND1. This policy helped maintain the overall level of industrial provision and in line with the RDS would allow for a continuous supply of land for employment purposes.

The proposed use (of which most was retrospective) was for an industrial use (B4) of land zoned for existing industry and as such, the proposal was in line with the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015. The relevant policies that were to be considered for this proposal were the SPPS, PPS2 Natural Heritage, PPS3, Access, Movement and Parking, PPS4 Planning and Economic Development, and PPS15 Planning and Flood Risk.

The proposal met all of the relevant policy requirements. There was no significant loss of adjacent residential amenity bearing in mind that this site was zoned for existing industry. The use of the site as a permeable storage yard was a suitable use and given the zoning, it was appropriate for the site.

With regard to the visual impact of the application on the character and appearance of area, the nature and scale of the works were in keeping with the surrounding area. The path through the site was not a public right of way and was privately owned land. The proposal included a footpath that offered the public and residents an alternative route to this path. Access to rear of Ardmillan Crescent had been included within this proposal. This also involved privately owned land in the applicant's control. The applicant was under no obligation to leave this access way/buffer and could have included this land in the proposal but has left an access for the residents' use. The site was not located within an area of flooding and the nature of the site usage would not exacerbate flooding. Landscaping had been proposed and hedge planting outside the fence to the rear of the Ardmillan properties.

No lighting scheme had been proposed- however DFI Roads required a condition for lighting regarding streetlights for the proposed footpath.

In summary, this was an industrial use on land zoned for industry, it complied with policy and did not cause any significant negative visual impacts for the area nor did it cause any significant loss of residential amenity given its zoning in the plan.

Approval was recommended.

(As no Members indicated a wish to speak on the Planning Manager's presentation, Mr Andy Stephens of Matrix Planning was invited to join the meeting to present his supporting statements to the application at 19:10 alongside the owner, Mr Hopkins and Claire Holmes, Business Manager of Servicescape Group.)

Mr Stephens thanked Members for the opportunity to speak and welcomed the Officer's recommendation of approval which would allow for an underutilized zone into positive economic use for an established local business. It would allow for Servicescape Group to continue investment in their premises, growth plans and add to local employment. Mr Stephens referred to the Case Officer's report as robust and comprehensive, engaging with all relevant matters in a balanced approach. It confirmed the proposal was compliant with all aspects of the Local Development

Plan, related policies and that there were no sustainable objections from statutory consultees in regards to traffic, biodiversity, drainage or residential amenity grounds. All evidence supplied and responses from statutory agencies would indicate a lack of demonstrable harm and that planning permission should be granted.

Upon completion of Mr Stephen's presentation, Alderman McIlveen noted the existing pathway not being a public right of way and that a new pathway had been accommodated. With the Case Officer's suggestion of streetlighting, Alderman McIlveen asked if the pathway was to be adopted by the Department for Infrastructure.

Mr Stephens advised that this was to be the case and that DfI had streetlight columns in place but no footpath and as such, the applicant, at his own expense was going to place an adopted footpath circa £150k, a plan that was agreeable to DfI. The original pathway had been constructed many years ago on the land that was then owned by the Herron Brothers and was unadopted. The applicant had sought advice from both Mr Stephens and Simon Chambers prior to acquiring the land.

Alderman McIlveen queried the gap of land between the proposed land and existing properties as well as what security may exist for the land. Mr Stephens advised this land had been left undisturbed for residents and having met with them on several occasions, it was discovered that though residents may not have had fences or gates, they wished to have access for garden maintenance. As such, the applicant's proposal provided a 1.5 metre wide strip with some buffer planting. In addition, some residents had complained of antisocial behaviour in the area so the applicant also provided a locked gate for which residents had keys to assist with such problems which would mean the privately owned land would be controlled by residents.

Councillor McAlpine asked if there were any plans for building on the zoned land and what height pallets would be stacked to. Mr Stephens explained that at the moment, it was purely hardstanding for storage and distribution. In regard to pallets, they would be stacked no higher than fencing with reasons such as Health and Safety obligations to employees and to protect products from damage. In following up, Councillor McAlpine asked if any spare land was left to allow for locals to exercise dogs as had been the case in the past. Mr Stephens explained that there was still a piece of amenity space to the north of the footpath/land to the left of Ardmillan.

Councillor Cathcart was pleased to see the footpath was tarmacked as he had envisaged a dirt path and was curious who had originally placed a footpath through private land. Mr Stephens was unaware as to the origins of the path's placement but was able to assure Members that the original path was not adopted or maintained and was a trip hazard in its existing state.

Councillor P Smith asked if additional lighting or CCTV was to be installed given concerns of light pollution. Mr Stephens explained that lighting and CCTV existed already on the corner of No. 29 and that there were no plans for any additions. The only additional lighting was that which was to be placed on the adoptable footpath by DfI, however that was far enough away from dwellings on the roadside.

Alderman McIlveen proposed, seconded by Councillor P Smith that the recommendation be adopted, and approval be granted.

Alderman McIlveen found the application satisfactory and spoke of the additional works carried out by the applicant to allay concerns and provide elements of community betterment through the installation of a foot path and additional lighting.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor P Smith, that the recommendation be adopted and that planning permission be approved.

4.2 LA06/2020/0558/F DEVELOPMENT OF 4. NO DETACHES HOUSES WITH DETACHES GARAGES AND ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING AND ANCILLARY WORKS – LANDS ADJACENT TO AND NORTH-EAST OF 3 WARREN AVENUE, DONAGHADEE
(Appendices V-VII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report outlining the planning application.

DEA: DEA: Bangor East & Donaghadee

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

Proposal: Development of 4 no. detached houses with detached garages and associated landscaping and ancillary works

Site Location: Lands adjacent to and north-east of 3 Warren Avenue, Donaghadee. Access via Warren Avenue to Warren Road

Recommendation: Approval

The Planning Manager explained that LA06/2020/0558/F was in regard to a development of 4 No. detached houses with detached garages and associated landscaping and ancillary works, upon lands adjacent to and north-east of 3 Warren Avenue, Donaghadee. The application had been brought before Planning Committee as six or more individual objections contrary to the officer's recommendation to *approve* had been received.

The site was located adjacent to the coast off the Warren Road, within the settlement limits of Donaghadee and accessed via the private lane, Warren Avenue which already served a number of existing dwellings. The area was characterised predominantly by larger detached and semi-detached properties however there was a wide variety of plot sizes and densities within the immediate area.

The site itself was an area of rough grassland with largely undefined boundaries except for a hedgerow which ran along part of the northern boundary. The site was relatively level throughout with just a very gentle slope downwards towards the coast. There were a number of dwellings adjacent to the site sitting on higher ground to the north including Nos. 12, 16 and 18 Warren Drive. In terms of the wider context of the area, existing house types in the immediate area ranged from bungalows to substantial 3 ½ storey buildings. The application as originally submitted was for 5 detached dwellings, however, the Planning Department considered this to be an

excessive amount of development for the site when considered within its context by way of the small plot sizes proposed, higher density and lack of spacing between the dwellings. The scheme was amended by the applicant at the request of the Planning Department reducing the development to 4 detached dwellings culminating in the newer proposal having larger plot sizes and much improved spacing between the units. The development would also have a density of 11 dph which was comparable to existing densities found within the area.

An example was provided of a recent development at 35 Warren Road for 6 dwellings to the south of the application site was of the same density as the proposal also at 11 dph. There were also other longer established residential developments adjacent to the site which already had a higher density than the proposed development at 14 dph and 22 dph. Planning permission had also been granted for a single dwelling to the north of the site with a density of 10.5dph. Given that the proposed density of 11dph was very much in line with existing densities in the area, the Planning Department was content that the proposal met the policy requirements of PPS7 in this respect. The development would also not result in any unacceptable dominant impact on the coastline given that it would not sit any further forward than other existing and approved development along this stretch of the Warren Road.

The dwellings themselves while contemporary in style, had been designed to have a simple linear form with a render finish and natural slate roofs. The height of the dwellings at 8m would also be comparable to other surrounding two storey dwellings. No significant increase in ground levels were proposed and the dwellings would still sit well below the existing dwellings to the north which already sat on higher ground and would also have similar finished floor levels to the approved single dwelling to the north and the new dwellings at 35 Warren Road to the South.

A landscaping scheme had also been submitted showing a new hedgerow to be planted along the western boundary of the site and shrub and tree planting throughout. Post and wire fencing would define the boundaries of the two sites closest to the coast to maintain the open character of this area close to the coastline. As a further safeguard, it had been recommended that approval was subject to conditions withdrawing permitted development rights which would have ensured that no additional extensions or ancillary buildings could be erected within the curtilage of the dwellings without full consideration under a planning application. The Planning Department was content that the revised scheme reflected the established built form and densities found within the immediate area and thence complied with Planning Policy statement 7 in this respect.

However, a total of 8 objections had been received from 6 separate addresses in relation to the proposal. The main concerns raised included:

- Environmental impact on the coast
- Visual impact on the coastal area and overdevelopment of the site
- Safety of pedestrians using right of way to access the beach
- Traffic impact, road safety and parking
- Impact on the residential amenity of 1 and 3 Warren Avenue
- Cumulative impact of proposed development alongside other previously approved development.
- Flood risk

All of these concerns had been considered in detail in the planning report and all consultees were content with the amended proposal.

With regard to environmental impact, while the site was in close proximity to the coastline, both Shared Environmental Service and NIEA were content that the development would not result in any adverse impact on European Sites or other natural heritage interests subject to approval of a final CEMP prior to commencement and retention of a 10m buffer between the development and the designated sites. DFI Rivers was also content that the development would not be subject to flood risk as the site lay above the 1 in 200 year coastal flood plain. As for visual impact on the coastal area, it was not considered that the development would cause any adverse impact. The two dwellings closest to the coast were to be set back 15m and 25m and would come no closer to the coastline than other existing and approved dwellings along this stretch of Warren Road.

In addition, the development would not result in any unacceptable adverse impact on the residential amenity of existing dwellings being located between 29 – 45m from Nos. 12, 16 and 18 Warren Ave to the north and between 50-80m away from Nos 1 and 3 Warren Ave to the SW, well in excess of the recommended 20m separation distance set out in Creating Places Guidelines. In terms of road safety and parking, DFI Roads were consulted and had raised no road safety concerns with regard to the use of the existing access. Adequate in curtilage parking would also be provided with 3 spaces per unit in line with the recommended standards.

It was acknowledged that there had been a number of planning approvals for residential development in the immediate area in recent years including the 6 dwellings at 35 Warren Road, 8 apartments at 6-8 Warren Avenue and an additional single dwelling to the rear of 18 Warren Avenue however it was not considered that these developments when read together with the proposed development, would result in any adverse cumulative impact on the area.

In summary, this proposal for 4 detached dwellings was considered to be acceptable in the context of both the Development Plan and the relevant regional planning policies. All of the statutory consultees were content with the proposal and all representations had been carefully considered. On this basis, it was recommended that full planning permission should be granted subject to the conditions that had been set out in the case officer's report.

Upon completion of the Planning Manager's presentation, Councillor P Smith recalled comments made upon climate change and coastal erosion not being reasons to deny the planning application. With other dwellings being in closer proximity to the coast than the proposed application, he was curious as to whether issues surrounding rivers and flood plains would be ongoing matters for sites such as this in the future despite recommendations for approval.

The Planning Manager explained that every application would be subject to different parameters in regard to coastal flood plains but that the Planning Department on this occasion had felt the application was outside of both contemporary and climate change flooding. Councillor P Smith queried the distance of the plots to the coast

and to what extent the drop between the two was. The Planning Manager directed Members to the proposed layout which showed that buildings were staggered with the closest being approximately fifteen metres from the water's edge whilst others were approximately 25 metres distance away whilst the drop between plot and coast was more of a gradual slope.

Councillor McRandal asked if the right of way to the coastline would be maintained and uncompromised. The Planning Manager advised that objectors had raised that same concern in regard to rights of way though it had been confirmed that the applicant possessed full ownership of the plot site and no public right of way existed.

Councillor McRandal referred to page 17 of the report and the final paragraph of, 'designated sites,' wherein mention was made of adverse effects. He asked if this was with regard to conditions 8 and 9 found on page 25 of the report, which the Planning Manager confirmed and added that it also included condition 12 which related to the 10 metre buffer requirement between the development and coast.

Councillor McAlpine, in relation to the building line, asked how other buildings had been built in such close proximity to the sea and if any drawings existed that would provide clarity. The Planning Manager advised that the presentation Members had been shown did not provide oversight of the whole coastal area but was able to provide information on 35 Warren Road that sat closer to the coast and approval for a single house that was to sit even closer than this evening's proposition. As for other houses in the area that sat closer again to the coastline, these had been in situ for many years and Officers were satisfied that the staggered-line approach of this proposal would allow the houses to be positioned at a reasonable distance.

(Donald Donaldson was invited to join the meeting at 7:36 pm to begin his presentation to Members).

Mr Donaldson spoke on behalf of Mr Geddis (the applicant), advising Members that the recommendation to approve was welcomed. The proposal consisted of four houses on a plot of land, the area of which was just under one acre. This had been reduced down from five houses at the behest of Planning Officers and was within the development limit of Donaghadee. In relation to PPAS7, the proposal respected character and density. No objections existed from consultees though it had attracted some local objections which had been addressed through responses. Mr Donaldson referenced Councillor P Smith's earlier questioning in relation to flooding, confirming that 100-200 years flood risk level equated to 3.5 metres. The proposal height was for 4.3 – 4.7 metres which was substantially above the coastal flood-risk and 15 to 25 metres back from the shore. The distance of the proposed houses from the coast was further than No. 18 to the north and some houses being developed near No. 35 which sat within 7-8 metres of the coast.

(Mr Donaldson was returned to the public gallery at 7:39 pm).

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Keery, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that the recommendation be adopted and that planning permission be approved.

4.3 LA06/2022/0999/LBC – ERECTION OF PLAQUE ON FRONT ELEVATION OF ARDS ARTS CENTRE, TOWN HALL, CONWAY SQUARE, NEWTOWNARDS

(Appendices IIX-X)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report outlining the planning application.

DEA: Newtownards

Committee Interest: Council Application

Proposal: Erection of plaque on front elevation

Site Location: Ards Arts Centre, Town Hall, Conway Square, Newtownards

Recommendation: Consent

The Head of Planning explained that the application before Members this evening was for consent of the placing of a plaque which would offer information on the Viscount of Castlereagh, second Marquess of Londonderry on the front elevation of the Newtownards Town Hall (Ards Arts Centre). The building was grade B2 listed and as such, consent was required and a consultation with HED. An image was supplied to show where the location of the plaque would be; situated just below the first window of the first floor to the right of the main doors.

RECOMMENDED that Council consent to placement of the plaque.

Alderman McIlveen proposed, seconded by Councillor Adair that the recommendation be adopted, and approval be granted.

Alderman McIlveen was pleased to propose the plaque and both he and Councillor Adair spoke of the importance in remembering important, historic individuals. Councillor McAlpine was also pleased for the same reasons but wanted to clarify if the plaque was going to be readable from ground level given its suggested location on the side of the building. The Planning Manager advised that plaques tended to be clear from the ground and that a balance of locating one had to be struck given the value of the building.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Adair, that the recommendation be adopted and that consent be granted.

5. UPDATE ON PLANNING APPEALS

(Appendices XI-XV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Head of Planning detailing the following:

Appeal Decisions

1. The following appeal as dismissed on 23 November 2022.

PAC Ref	2021/A0155
Application ref	LA06/2019/1176/O
Appellant	Ray Jackson
Subject of Appeal	Two dwellings and garages
Location	Lands between 59 Thornyhill Road and 44 Ballymacashen Road, Killinchy

The Council refused this application on 08 November 2021 for the following reasons:

- i. The proposal was contrary to the SPPS and Policy CTY1 of PPS 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.
- ii. The proposal was contrary to the SPPS and Policy CTY8 of PPS 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside, in that the proposal did not constitute a small gap sufficient only to accommodate up to a maximum of two houses within an otherwise substantial and continuously built-up frontage, and would, if permitted, add to the ribbon of development along the Ballymacashen Road.
- iii. The proposal was contrary to the SPPS and Policy CTY14 of PPS 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside, in that the dwellings would have, if permitted, result in a suburban style build-up of development when viewed with existing and approved buildings and would add to a ribbon of development which would therefore have resulted in a detrimental change to further erode the rural character of the countryside.

A previous appeal in relation to refusal of the same proposal on the same site (LA06/2017/1416/) was dismissed in June 2019 as it was considered that the gap could accommodate more than two dwellings and therefore did not constitute a small gap site for the purposes of Policy CTY 8.

The appellant then constructed a small shed in an attempt to lessen the gap and sought a Certificate of Lawfulness regarding that building falling under permitted development. However, he then carried out changes to that building which meant that what existed was not lawful and could not therefore be weighed in the consideration of the policy requirements.

Irrespective of whether the above building was to be deemed lawful, the Commission sustained the Council's other reasons for refusal.

2. The following appeal was dismissed on 29 November 2022.

PAC Ref	2021/A0053
Application ref	LA06/2020/0709/F
Appellant	Mr Michael Cleland
Subject of Appeal	Increase in domestic curtilage and retention of store

Location	Land immediately to the north of 39 Florida Road, Killinchy
----------	---

The Council refused the above application on 05 May 2021 for the following reasons:

- i. The proposal was contrary to the SPPS and Policy CTY 1 of PPS 21 in that there were overriding reasons why this development is essential in this rural location and could not be located within a settlement.
- ii. The proposal was contrary to the provisions of the SPPS and Policy CTY 13 of PPS 21 in that the proposal would, if permitted, fail to be visually integrated into the surrounding landscape and will result in a prominent feature in the landscape because the design of the building is inappropriate for the site and its locality.
- iii. The proposal was contrary to Policy CTY 14 of PPS 21 in that the building would, if permitted, result in the creation of ribbon development and would therefore result in a detrimental change to the rural character of the countryside.
- iv. The proposed building was contrary to Policy EXT 1 of PPS 7 as the proposal lies outside the domestic curtilage of the existing dwelling known as 39 Florida Road, it was not considered subordinate or sympathetic to the appearance of the main dwelling, and if permitted would result in development that is detrimental to the character of the local area.

The appellant tried to argue that the area on which the shed was situated was part of the original curtilage as approved for the dwelling; however, the Commissioner considered the orthophotography supplied by the Council which showed the land as being outside the established curtilage and in agricultural use in conjunction with adjacent land, alongside the fact that the appellant chose to make a planning application for an increase in domestic curtilage.

As the Commissioner considered that the land on which the shed was situated as agricultural, permission was required for the change of use from agricultural use to residential use, and as such the Council's fourth reason for refusal in respect of PPS 7 was not relevant, but considered that if it were, the shed would not comply.

In respect of the design of the shed, the Commissioner considered the shed to be of a design that is common the countryside, and that with additional planning the building could be adequately integrated into the surrounding landscape, and as such the Council's second reason for refusal was not sustained.

The Council's third reason for refusal in respect of detrimental impact on rural character was upheld, and as such the appeal was dismissed.



3. The following appeal was dismissed on 05 January 2023.

PAC Ref	2021/A0084
Application ref	LA06/2020/0874/O
Appellant	Ms Beverley Healy
Subject of Appeal	Site for dwelling
Location	Lands immediately to the side and rear of No.36 Lisbane Road, Kircubbin

The Council refused the above application on 30 July 2021 for the following reasons:

- i. The proposal was contrary to Policy CTY2a of PPS 21, New Dwellings in Existing Clusters in that the cluster did not appear as a visual entity in the local landscape, the cluster was not associated with a focal point and was not located at cross-roads and the dwelling would, if permitted, significantly alter the existing character of the area and visually intrude into the open countryside.
- ii. The proposal was contrary to Policy CTY1 of PPS 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.
- iii. The proposal was contrary to Policy CTY14 of PPS 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside, in that the dwelling would, if permitted, result in a detrimental change to the rural character of the countryside and add to a ribbon of development.
- iv. The proposal was contrary to Policy AMP 2 of PPS 3, Access, Movement and Parking, in that it had not been demonstrated that the access to the public road would not prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of traffic.

While it was acknowledged that there was a grouping of mainly roadside development, the Commissioner considered that it was not a cluster and that the proposal failed to meet any of the criteria listed in CTY2a of PPS 21.

The appellant expressed the view that the present definition of a cluster within regional planning policy was too strict, prohibiting natural local growth, however, the Commissioner considered that this appeal was not the forum for requesting changes to regional planning policy as it was a matter for the Department for Infrastructure.

The Commissioner considered that the approach to the appeal site did not read as a cluster but appeared more as a ribbon of development along the Lisbane Road. With the proposal being located at the end of this ribbon of development it would in effect extend it. There was no focal point such as a social/community building/facility at this location and the site was not located at cross-roads.

The Commissioner also considered that the proposed development would be detrimental to the character of the countryside. In relation to the access arrangements for the site, the appellant could not demonstrate that the proposal would not prejudice the safety and convenience of road users or significantly inconvenience the flow of traffic.

As the proposal did not meet any of the listed criteria within CTY2a it was not one of the specified types of development considered to be acceptable in the countryside under Policy CTY 1 and therefore the Commissioner considered that the Council's four reasons for refusal were sustained.

4. The following appeal was withdrawn on 15 December 2022.

PAC Ref	2022/A0080
Application ref	LA06/2019/0518/O
Appellant	David Bryce
Subject of Appeal	Refusal Re: Off-site replacement dwelling and garage (existing building to be retained for ancillary use to the main house)
Location	25m North of 22 Lisbane Road, Comber

New Appeals Lodged

5. The following appeals were lodged in December 2022, and January 2023.

PAC Ref	2022/A0161
Application ref	LA06/2021/0975/O
Appellant	Arlene Aston
Subject of Appeal	Single dwelling (equestrian business)
Location	Land adjacent to and to SW of 3 Castle Meadows, Carrowdore

PAC Ref	2022/A0170
Application ref	LA06/2021/1465/A

PC.07.02.2023

85

Appellant	British Telecom Plc
Subject of Appeal	2 No. digital 75" LCD screens, one on each side of the Street Hub unit
Location	Footpath outside the Courthouse 16 Quay Street, Bangor

PAC Ref	2022/E0045
Application ref	LA06/2022/0128/CA EN/2022/0129
Appellant	Samuel Townsley
Subject of Appeal	Alleged: 1. Unauthorised extension to dwelling; 2. Unauthorised extension to domestic curtilage and creation of hardstanding; 3. Unauthorised domestic store within extended domestic curtilage
Location	Land at 86 Ballydrain Road, Comber

PAC Ref	2022/A0184
Application ref	LA06/2021/0375/O
Appellant	John McKee
Subject of Appeal	2 detached dwellings with garages and ancillary works
Location	Lands located between nos. 20 and 20A Lower Balloo Road, Groomsport and no. 160 Springwell Road, Bangor

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

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Keery, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that the recommendation be adopted and report be noted.

6. NOTICES OF MOTION

(Appendices VIII – XXI)

6.1 NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR IRWIN AND COUNCILLOR MCALPINE

That this Council requests officers bring back a report on the possibility of serving an Urgent Works Notice on the owners of Ballyrolly House, Millisle, in light of its status as a Grade B2 listed building which is in a perilous state

(Councillor Irwin was admitted to the meeting at 19:46 to speak on the Notice of Motion.)

Councillor Irwin explained the history of Ballyrolly House in that it had been used to house Jewish children who had been displaced by World War Two with the local area of Millisle having been a sanctuary for many people. In 2014, through work of an Alliance party colleague, the building had been granted listed status for the purpose of maintaining the building for future generations to visit. However, Councillor Irwin believed the house had fallen into a state of repair with damage to the render and roof; reasons which she believed necessitated a need to raise a Notice of Motion in the hope of an Urgent Works Notice being issued. She alleged that the property owner had been unwilling to make use of available funding streams despite contact having been made. In an Urgent Works Notice being placed, Councillor Irwin thought that the Council could ensure works were carried out and that any associated costs could be recouped from the owner. Before that could take place, she wished for a report to be commissioned in order to discover those costs.

Councillor McAlpine spoke of growing up in North Belfast where she had attended the Belfast Royal Academy and remembered that a number of Jewish people resided there also. Approximately a year ago, a number of individuals accompanied Councillor McAlpine for an 80th anniversary planting of a tree by the grandson of an individual who had availed of Ballyrolly House at which time she had heard much of the history of both the house and the local community's efforts in providing much needed sanctuary. With such a rich history, Councillor McAlpine also wished to secure the safety of the building's future.

Alderman McIlveen understood the reasoning of wishing to keep Ballyrolly House in good condition but was uncomfortable with the problem having been identified by way of a Notice of Motion which singled out an individual. He asked if any steps had been made to speak with Council Officers in regard to repair works as opposed to what was a very public domain in raising a Notice of Motion at this evening's meeting. The Director of Prosperity advised that the listing of Ballyrolly House had been brought about by the work of ex-Councillor Muir and that Officers were aware of the issue with Ballyrolly through previous correspondence in that regard.

Alderman McIlveen asked if a Notice of Motion would be required for communication with the HED to which the Director of Prosperity replied that it would not usually be the case although assumed the Notice of Motion had been brought to the Committee due to the potential significant costs and there was no money in the budget for an Urgent Works Notice thence the request a report on costs and the potential to recoup. Alderman McIlveen did not believe the correct process had been followed as the owner and his address were easily identifiable from the Notice of Motion and explained that enforcement had a private nature about it which was directly in opposition to the way in which this item was presented this evening.

The Director of Prosperity advised that a Building Preservation Notice had been brought before and heard in public, though Alderman McIlveen interjected to state that it had not been an enforcement matter and reiterated the public versus private approaches. The Director of Prosperity did not believe it was a technical planning matter but HED's remit in regard to disrepair and advised that there was no onus on anyone who owned a listed building to ensure it was kept in good condition and

therefore the owner was not in breach of planning control, therefore this was not considered an Enforcement matter.

Alderman McIlveen was concerned given that the matter could have been dealt with more quietly and as such was unsure as to how he would vote despite understanding the reasoning behind the Notice of Motion.

Councillor Adair agreed with Alderman McIlveen, understanding the sentiment of the Notice of Motion but that it had not been the correct approach. He spoke of the owner's good relationship with the Millisle District Community Association and efforts in promoting local history.

Councillor McRandal referenced a Community and Wellbeing Committee within which an address had been identified in Holywood whilst not in committee and stated that he did not understand the point given similarities between it and this item.

Alderman Gibson thought that this subject had reached the Planning Committee earlier than it should have as there was some criteria that had to be met to reach an Urgent Works Notice stage. If the house was in a dangerous state, Building Control may have been involved and he was not sure it was strictly a Planning Committee matter. He understood Alderman McIlveen's points and advised of the unusual nature of having an Urgent Works Notice at Planning even if perhaps it was the correct process.

Councillor Cathcart referenced Councillor McRandal's earlier statement in relation to a Holywood address being discussed in public, explaining that it was irrelevant as it was an Environmental Health Officer carrying out statutory duties that had been passed onto the Council whilst this Notice of Motion had missed that step. He asked what the normal process was for an Urgent Works Order and what general practice would dictate in the event of complaints being raised with Council in relation to the upkeep of a building.

The Director of Prosperity advised that they would normally be brought to the attention of the Council by the HED or general public. Discussions had taken place with the HED as it had the power under Planning legislation to serve notices but its view had been to reserve that power for buildings under Council ownership. Councillor Cathcart shared the concerns of his colleagues regarding the public nature of raising the issue through a Notice of Motion.

Councillor P Smith believed the Notice of Motion inferenced a want to weatherproof the building and stop building collapse. In relation to the DfC guidance, a process was to be followed that included warning letters and the owner being given the opportunity to take charge of works themselves and it was only after numerous letters calling for action that the Council could inform the owner that it would take action which the owner could appeal. He explained that the process was quite long to reach the conclusion of Council carrying out works and recouping costs from an owner, with recouping of such costs being at the discretion of the Council. He understood the importance of the building but agreed with Alderman McIlveen's suggestions of engaging with the owner first before raising the issue to the likes of an Urgent Works Notice. He suggested to the proposer that it was wise to not start at

the end point of the process and take a couple of steps back and engage with the property owner.

Councillor Thompson was disappointed with the Notice of Motion, citing that the owner had taken pride in promoting the local area, its history and facilitated visits to the farm on many occasions. With such efforts, he thought the Notice of Motion was very harsh and thought Members should be looking at ways to engage with the owner in a minimalist fashion.

Councillor Irwin thanked Members for their comments and advised them that the Notice of Motion was not asking for an Urgent Works Notice to be agreed but for a report that sought to outline costs. Secondly, she explained the Notice had not been brought to the Council lightly and was uncomfortable with the direction of conversation as if the owner was being targeted.

(Alderman Gibson called for quiet in the Chamber whilst Councillor Irwin spoke.)

Councillor Irwin advised that contact had been made on many occasions and had been advised this was the next step. She hoped if the Notice of Motion was not supported that at least Officers would investigate the matter and reach out to the owner to see if urgent works could be agreed to. She reassured Members that contact had been made by HED whose advice was that this was the next logical step.

A recorded vote was taken on the basis of bringing a report with 5 FOR, 7 AGAINST, 1 ABSTAINING and 2 ABSENT. The results could be found below. As such, the proposal fell.

FOR (5) Aldermen	AGAINST (6) Alderman Keery McIlveen	ABSTAIN (1) Alderman Gibson	ABSENT(2)
Councillors McAlpine McKee McRandal P Smith Walker	Councillors Adair Cathcart Kennedy Thompson		Councillor Brooks Moore

With 5 voting FOR, 6 AGAINST, 1 ABSTAINING and 2 ABSENT, the proposal fell.

(Councillor Irwin was returned to the public gallery at 8.15pm)

By way of vote... the Notice of Motion fell.

6.2 WITHDRAWN

7. PLANNING SERVICE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2022

(Appendix XVI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Head of Planning detailing the following:

The Planning Service's Budgetary Control Report covered the 9-month period 1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022. The Service's net cost was showing a £35k (3.2%) underspend – box A on page 2.

Explanation of Variance

The Planning Service's budget performance was further analysed on pages 4-6 into 3 key areas:

Report	Type	Variance	Page
Report 2	Payroll Expenditure	£103k adverse	2
Report 3	Goods & Services Expenditure	£117k favourable	2
Report 4	Income	£21k favourable	2

Explanation of Variance

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

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Payroll	103	The National & Local Pay Agreements were greater than budgeted increase. This impacts all Council Services.
Goods & Services	(117)	Savings on consultancy as some projects not progressing as planned (£70k). Other underspends include - mileage (£14k); tree services (£13k); advertising (£11k).
Income	(21)	Planning fees £26k. Property Planning Certificates (£47k).

REPORT 1 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT						
Period 9 - December 2022						
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance	
	£	£	£	£	%	
Planning						
330 Planning	1,041,258	1,076,000	(34,742)	1,499,900	(3.2)	
Total	1,041,258	1,076,000	A (34,742)	1,499,900	(3.2)	
REPORT 2 PAYROLL REPORT						
	£	£	£	£	%	
Planning - Payroll						
330 Planning	1,689,009	1,585,800	103,209	2,114,500	6.5	
Total	1,689,009	1,585,800	103,209	2,114,500	6.5	
REPORT 3 GOODS & SERVICES REPORT						
	£	£	£	£	%	
Planning - Goods & Services						
330 Planning	143,524	260,700	(117,176)	412,900	(44.9)	
Total	143,524	260,700	(117,176)	412,900	(44.9)	
REPORT 4 INCOME REPORT						
	£	£	£	£	%	
Planning - Income						
330 Planning	(791,274)	(770,500)	(20,774)	(1,027,500)	(2.7)	
Totals	(791,274)	(770,500)	(20,774)	(1,027,500)	(2.7)	

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor P Smith, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the recommendation be adopted and report be noted.

8. VERBAL UPDATE ON PLANNING PORTAL REPLACEMENT

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Keery, that the recommendation be adopted and report be noted.

The Chair advised Members that Gail Kerr had been appointed as acting Head of Planning whilst Ann McCullough held the Interim Director of Prosperity role. The Chair invited the Head of Planning to provide a verbal update on the Planning Portal.

Members would be aware of media coverage and associated difficulties of implementing the new system over the last few weeks. There had been more issues than anticipated and it had taken longer to get them resolved. Dfl had provided assurances that they were working as hard as possible with Terraquest to identify the root cause of the issues and to implement appropriate changes. Terraquest had been making changes, known as hot fixes in order to resolve those issues as quickly as possible and the latest hot fixes had been applied on Monday and Wednesday of last week to address issues with documents and representations that were marked for publication. Those had not been pulling through to the planning register and

consultee hub. A further plan had been agreed with Terraquest that would provide a series of updates and hot fixes to the portal every two weeks beginning 9th February to 6th April 2023. Those would seek to address the large number of issues either from Go Live or User Acceptance Testing. Heads of Planning had received a list of issues along with an indication of when they would be resolved. There was a clear understanding of what issues would be addressed on February 9th and general understanding of what would be included on 23rd February 2023. Agreement would be reached with Terraquest and all other Councils to agree the priorities and date for resolution.

The Royal Ulster Architectural Society and the Construction Employers Federation had each written separately to Dfl which had responded in writing and through in-person meetings. Dfl had provided lines to take in the form of FAQs to all consultees and the list of planning agents contacted before Go Live. This information was also available on the Dfl website and the Council's own website. This had been circulated to Members earlier that day for information.

Alderman McIlveen proposed, seconded by Alderman Keery, to note.

Alderman McIlveen said that on this side of the planning portal, there had been issues which had been noticeably getting easier, but he hoped that the hotfixes would make it much more user friendly, most importantly for the planners and the ability to accept online applications. He noted that there had been concern previously that the new portal had been rushed through in the end and had felt there needed to have been a bit of an overlap that would have allowed the issues to be ironed out.

Councillor Cathcart congratulated the officers on their new posts. In terms of the portal, he had found it easier to find items and wondered how the planners had been finding it and if it had been as difficult as suggested by the media.

The Head of Planning said officers had found several challenges initially but internally there was an excel spreadsheet list that was fed through to the project lead. That was seen as a 'glitch list' and there had also been close liaison with consultees who had reported that they were unable to access the documents despite them being uploaded. That was a Council-wide issue, but it was hoped they would be corrected and the portal would become user friendly. There would also be workshops set up for agents.

Councillor Cathcart looked forward to further feedback to see issues being addressed. He hoped that this would speed up the planning process.

NOTED.

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 8.25 pm.

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, 8 February 2023 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Alderman McDowell

Aldermen: Armstrong-Cotter
Carson (Zoom)
M Smith (Zoom)

Councillors: Boyle (Zoom) Johnson (Zoom)
Cathcart (Zoom) MacArthur
Cummings McAlpine (Zoom)
Edmund McKee (Zoom)
Greer (Zoom) Smart (Zoom)
Irwin (Zoom) Woods (Zoom)

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

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

NOTED.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of Interest.

NOTED.

3. ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT (UP TO DEC 22)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that the Environment Directorate's Budgetary Control Report covered the 9-month period 1 April 2022 to 30 December 2022. The net cost of the Directorate was showing an overspend of **£896k (5.1%)**. Covid, electricity, gas and vehicle fuel cost pressures had been mitigated by transfers from the Council's Ear-Marked Reserve (£767k).

Explanation of Variance

Environment's budget performance was further analysed into 3 key areas:

Report	Type	Variance	Page
Report 2	Payroll Expenditure	£1,036k adverse	3
Report 3	Goods & Services Expenditure	£978k adverse	3
Report 4	Income	£1,117k favourable	3

Explanation of Variance

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

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Payroll	1,036	Environment HQ - Covid related - £183k ¹ (this is offset by Ear-Marked Fund transfer in the Council BCR). The National and Local Pay Agreements were greater than budgeted increase - £945k. This impacts all Council Services.
Goods & Services		
Waste & Cleansing	(228)	Waste disposal costs. Tonnages down on budget – Landfill 1,220 tonnes; Blue bin waste 460 tonnes; Organics type 1 waste (garden) 1,108 tonnes; Organics type 2 waste (food) 1,479 tonnes.
Assets & Property	1,217	Electricity - £350k ¹ Gas - £70k ¹ Vehicle fuel - £164k ¹ (The above are offset by Ear-Marked Reserve transfers). Vehicle maintenance - £186k Property Maintenance - £110k – increased reactive maintenance. Technical Services - £355k – refurbishment work, compliance work
Income		
Waste & Cleansing	(223)	Arc21 recycled waste income – (£197k).
Assets & Property	(205)	Wind turbine (£196k)

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Regulatory Services	77	Building Control - (£139k) – plan fees (£83k); property certificates (£37k). Licensing - £144k – Off street car parks £95k; Licensing £34k. Neighbourhood Environment - £72k – fines.
Earmarked Reserve	(767)	Transfer from Earmarked Reserve to mitigate covid, utility and vehicle fuel cost pressures.

¹ Funds from the Earmarked Reserve had been released to mitigate those exceptional costs to date. That would be kept under review as the year progressed.

REPORT 1 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT					
Period 9 - December 2022					
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance
	£	£	£	£	%
Environment					
200 Environment HQ	360,968	139,900	221,068	188,500	158.0
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	12,230,516	11,815,500	415,016	15,539,800	3.5
220 Assets and Property Services	6,399,749	5,406,600	993,149	7,174,200	18.4
230 Regulatory Services	364,461	330,400	34,061	456,000	10.3
Earmarked Reserves	(767,000)	-	(767,000)	-	-
Total	18,588,693	17,692,400	A 896,293	23,358,500	5.1
REPORT 2 PAYROLL REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Environment - Payroll					
200 Environment HQ	303,693	117,000	186,693	156,800	159.6
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	6,337,738	5,472,400	865,338	7,295,500	15.8
220 Assets and Property Services	1,490,689	1,509,200	(18,511)	2,017,000	(1.2)
230 Regulatory Services	1,495,774	1,493,500	2,274	1,991,500	0.2
Total	9,627,894	8,592,100	B 1,035,794	11,460,800	12.1
REPORT 3 GOODS & SERVICES REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Environment - Goods & Services					
200 Environment HQ	57,275	22,900	34,375	31,700	150.1
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	6,854,135	7,082,000	(227,865)	9,237,500	(3.2)
220 Assets and Property Services	5,884,381	4,667,300	1,217,081	5,961,700	26.1
230 Regulatory Services	472,754	518,100	(45,346)	725,900	(8.8)
Total	13,268,545	12,290,300	C 978,245	15,956,800	8.0
REPORT 4 INCOME REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Environment - Income					
200 Environment HQ	-	-	-	-	-
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	(961,356)	(738,900)	(222,456)	(993,200)	(30.1)
220 Assets and Property Services	(975,321)	(769,900)	(205,421)	(804,500)	(26.7)
230 Regulatory Services	(1,604,068)	(1,681,200)	77,132	(2,261,400)	4.6
Earmarked Reserves	(767,000)	-	(767,000)	-	-
Totals	(4,307,745)	(3,190,000)	D (1,117,745)	(4,059,100)	(35.0)

RECOMMENDED:- that the Council notes this report.

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

4. REGULATORY SERVICES SERVICE PLAN REPORT Q2 22/23

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing that Members would be aware that Council was required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil that requirement Council approved the Performance Management Policy and Handbook in October 2015. The Performance Management Handbook outlined the approach to Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan Towards 2024 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually (for publication 30 September 2022)
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2022)

The Council's 18 Service Plans outlined how each respective Service would contribute to the achievement of the Corporate objectives including, but not limited to, any relevant actions identified in the PIP.

Reporting approach

The Service Plans would be reported to relevant Committees on a quarterly basis as undernoted:

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Quarter 1 (Q1)	April – June	September
Q2	July – September	December
Q3	October – December	March
Q4	January - March	June

The report for Quarter 2, 2022-23 was attached.

Key achievements:

- Despite being significantly reduced in staff resource during the period, the NET enforcement team had continued to target and patrol identified 'hot spot' areas in the Borough for littering and dog fouling. Two new temporary enforcement officers would join the team from January 2023, facilitated by a revised approach to recruitment processes.

Emerging issues:

- The percentage of Building Control online applications received was down from 75% to 69.4%, although that had been attributed to the large number of paper applications received from The Stove Yard during the reporting period.
- The level of NET service requests saw a drop of around 26% over the period.
- The environmental education programme delivered through the NET was being developed at present, for roll out in the 2023/24 financial year.

- Dog awareness sessions in schools and training classes had now concluded for the calendar year 2022 and further classes were planned for January – March 2023. Deployment of an external provider to deliver the programme would not continue in the coming year, as part of the Council's estimates process.

Action to be taken:

- Continue to work with DfI to find a resolution to the legal impediment to introduction of a new Car Park Order for the Borough's car parks and progress implementation of the Car Park Strategy.
- Progress the tender for a new Car Park enforcement contract that was directly managed by the Council.
- Continue to explore ways of recruitment and retention of staff within the service in response to labour market shortages.
- NET exploring QR code methodology to enhance customer satisfaction survey participation.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

Councillor Boyle noted that the report had come from the Head of Regulatory Services and noted that at present that role was vacant within the Council. The Director informed the Committee that that matter had been covered in a recent report to the Corporate Services Committee under the budget setting process. Currently the role and responsibilities which had been held by the Head of Regulatory Services would be covered temporarily by three Senior Unit Managers within the Environment Directorate. The report presented was in the context that those members of staff were fulfilling necessary Head of Regulatory Services post duties and that this would be kept under review going forward.

Councillor Woods asked about staffing levels within the Neighbourhood Environment Team and was informed that new staff had been recruited recently and that the full complement had been reached, which should help with the ability to reach service outcome targets in the future.

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

5. ATTENDANCE AT ROAD TRANSPORT EXPO 2023

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing that Members may be aware that the Council's current budget for maintaining the fleet operation was in excess of £2 Million.

In order to continually keep ahead of changing legislation and avail of efficiency savings wherever possible it was essential to keep updated with recent advances within the sector.

The Road Transport Expo was a new show (started in 2022) for Truck Fleet Operators. More than 170 exhibitors took part last year. Those included mainstream truck and trailer manufacturers through to specialist heavy haulage and recovery.

The Council had previously sent the Transport Manager and his assistant to a similar show, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Transport Manager would be keen to attend again this year to obtain information on new products in relation to green fleet, fuel efficiency, telematics, tracking and communications for the fleet.

Information obtained would help ensure the specifications within our tender documents were up to date and contained all relevant technological advances.

Due to rising costs, it was proposed to send just one staff member rather than the historically proposed two. The total cost for one staff member to attend the event would be in the region of £500.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the expenditure associated with sending one member of staff to the Road Transport Expo 2023.

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

Councillor Cummings believed that it was important that the Council took a prudent approach in relation to its fleet of vehicles and reduce costs where possible. He asked for an indication of how long on average vehicles were retained and if the Council was aspiring to have a fleet that was totally electric.

In response the Head of Assets and Property Services informed the Committee that the Council had in place a vehicle replacement policy which tended to suggest replacement should occur every seven years on average. In terms of renewable energy sources to power vehicles the Council was also looking at other renewables options along with electricity.

Councillor Cummings thanked the officer and thought that the relatively modest figure to attend the event would be worthwhile in answering some of the questions the Council would have in looking to the future.

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

6. PROPOSED DEPOSIT RETURN SCHEME FOR DRINK CONTAINERS

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

Publication of Government Response to second Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) consultation

The UK Government, Welsh Government and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) in Northern Ireland had published their response to the second consultation on Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

The key highlights from the response were:

- The Deposit Return Scheme would be introduced from October 2025.
- Single-use drinks containers from 50ml to 3 litre containers would be in scope of the Deposit Return Scheme.
- Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles, steel cans and aluminium cans would be included for England, Northern Ireland, and Wales.
- Glass bottles would be included for Wales only.
- A Deposit Management Organisation would be appointed to manage overall operation of the Deposit Return Scheme.
- Retailers selling in scope containers in store would be required to host a return point, where consumers could return the empty container and be given their deposit refund, subject to some specific exemptions that retailers could apply for. Where containers were sold online, it was intended to require large grocery retailers to offer consumers a takeback service for those containers.
- The consultation response presented further detail that would be set out in legislation. The legislation would place obligations on producers of in scope drinks containers, retailers, and the Deposit Management Organisation.

What is a Deposit Return Scheme?

A Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) was a system where consumers were charged a deposit up-front when they buy a drink in a container that is "in scope" of the scheme. The deposit could be redeemed when the empty container was returned to a designated return point.

It would boost recycling levels, reduce littering, and promote a circular economy. Deposit return schemes were a well-established feature across Europe and the world. They often focused on single-use drinks containers, with the most effective schemes achieving collection rates of over 90%.

What is the role of the Deposit Management Organisation?

The Deposit Management Organisation (DMO) would be responsible for managing the overall operation of the Deposit Return Scheme. The DMO would be appointed by Government through an application process.

The Deposit Management Organisation would be an industry-led organisation. The DMO would be made up of a consortium of industry representatives with membership of organisations which represented drinks producers, retailers, importers and logistics.

The DMO would be required to ensure the collection targets were met. The collection targets would be introduced in a phased manner. In year one, at least

70% of in-scope containers that producers placed on the market must be collected. In year two, that would increase to 80%, and then 90% from year three onwards.

The DMO would be responsible for setting the deposit level.

Next Steps

Deposit Return Scheme regulations: DEFRA were developing the regulations for the Deposit Return Scheme which reflected the policy outcomes set out in the consultation response. The Governments would take secondary legislation through the UK Parliament and the Senedd in Wales.

Deposit Management Organisation appointment: DEFRA intended to shortly begin engagement with prospective consortia interested in being the DMO. Later in the process, the UK Government, Welsh Government and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland would formally invite applications for the DMO as part of a fair and open process.

The full consultation and the government's response was available on www.gov.uk.

Comments

A lot of the detail on how the scheme would work on the ground was still work in progress. The separate Scottish scheme was due to go live in August this year and was likely to provide good learning experiences of what worked well.

Where local authorities collected 'in scope' drinks containers that ended up under their management through kerbside collection schemes, it remained unclear as to what mechanism would allow them to receive unredeemed deposits.

Government was pursuing an additional permitted development right for the siting of Reverse Vending Machines (RVMs) in each nation.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

Councillor Woods proposed the recommendation with an addition:

That this Council writes to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to clarify the next steps that are being taken in Northern Ireland on this scheme, requesting information on issues officers have raised, as well as what legislation is required to facilitate the DRS operating, if it is primary or secondary, if it must be passed by a NI Executive, and if our DRS could seek to include other materials.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Smart.

Councillor Woods explained that she had proposed to the Council that a Deposit Return Scheme be established in Northern Ireland way back in 2017. It was

frustrating that Northern Ireland would need to wait until 2025 for something to be introduced for single use drinks containers, as well as PET bottles, steel and tin cans. It was also unfortunate that glass bottles would not be introduced for Northern Ireland and there were no proposals to deal with harmful polystyrene as well as single use disposable hot drinks cups.

She suggested that a proper strategy needed to be put in place to deal with waste so that the population in this region did not continue to ship and pass the problems that it created onto other countries, people, and the environment to cope with. It was disappointing that successive governments had failed to grasp the enormity of the wasteful situation being faced.

She considered that more detail on how this would operate in practice was needed and hoped that that would be issued as soon as possible. The legislation would place obligations on producers of in scope drinks containers, retailers and the Deposit Management Organisation. It was unclear, however, if that legislation would apply to Northern Ireland, given the fact that there was no functioning Assembly in place. She explained that she had written to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to clarify the next steps. She did welcome the report as a first step following much lobbying and campaigning.

Councillor Smart was happy to support the amendment and shared Councillor Woods' frustration that progress was not being made quickly enough. He asked about feedback from other parts of the United Kingdom, such as Scotland which was further along the process. The Head of Waste and Cleansing Services informed the Committee that there was no information available to date and the changes in Scotland had not yet begun.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Woods, seconded by Councillor Smart, that the recommendation to note be adopted and that this Council writes to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to clarify the next steps that are being taken in Northern Ireland on this scheme, requesting information on issues officers have raised, as well as what legislation is required to facilitate the DRS operating, if it is primary or secondary, if it must be passed by a NI Executive, and if our DRS could seek to include other materials.

7. PROPOSED STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING POLICY

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing that Members would be aware of its legal responsibilities in regard to allocation of street names and numbering, as set out in Article 11 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1995. To date practices had reflected the practice and policy positions of the legacy Councils, and current practice generally. The document attached established a policy for the new Council and was based upon legacy policy and practices as well as models of established best practice elsewhere. It would provide the Council with an objective process for fulfilling its

defined legal obligations in regard to street naming and numbering and provide a benchmark against which to base its decisions in regard to those matters.

Particular consideration was required in relation to Appendix 1 in relation to Dual Language signage, and the fact that the Council currently had no policy in that regard.

RECOMMENDED that the attached Street Naming and Numbering Policy be adopted by the Council.

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

Councillor Boyle referred to the appendix which had been attached to the report regarding street naming and dual signage and asked for clarity on that matter.

The Director, supported by the Building Control Services Manager explained the differences in two possible situations. Firstly, where residents wanted to rename a street within the Borough and secondly, where residents in a particular street wished to have the street name displayed in two languages. There was a Council prescribed process for each situation as set out in the policy.

Councillor Woods felt that it was important to take account of the history of an area when new developments were being constructed and streets were being named and wondered if that could be put into a policy. The Building Control Services Manager explained that that was already included in the policy but noted that it could be difficult where development was being carried out in areas with no clear historical references available. In all situations the Council had an input in giving approval to new street names in the Borough.

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

8. TRIAL OF SURFACE MARKINGS AND SIGNAGE FOR EXISTING DOGS ON LEAD AREA

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing that all dog owners had a responsibility to ensure the welfare of the dog in their care and to make sure that their dog did not become a problem to themselves or other people. The laws that existed in relation to dogs such as the Dog Control Order regime under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Dogs (Northern Ireland) Order 1983, do so primarily to ensure that people and dogs could live happily and safely together.

The legacy North Down Borough Council created a Dog Control Order in relation to dogs on leads for ten specified areas including Ballyholme Promenade. That was recorded as the North Down Borough Council Dog on Leads (Promenades and Gardens) Order 2013.

Offence:

(1) Any person in charge of a dog was guilty of an offence if, at any time, on any land to which the Order applied the person did not keep the dog on a lead of not more than 2 metres in length, unless-

- the person had a reasonable excuse for doing so; or
- the owner, occupier or other person or authority having control of the land had consented (generally or specifically) to the person failing to do so.

(2) For the purposes of this Article a person who habitually had a dog in their possession shall be taken to be in charge of the dog at any time unless at that time some other person was in charge of the dog.

There were difficulties in providing balanced enforcement measures in relation to that issue across the Borough due to a lack of signage and uniformity of approach.

Signage Trial

As a trial exercise, officers proposed the provision of additional signage and surface markings on the already designated route on Ballyholme Promenade between Banks Lane and the yacht club. That would provide an opportunity to monitor the impact of signage upon compliance levels in a relatively compact area.

The limited trial could be funded from existing budgets and if successful the approach could be considered for future roll out and any subsequent review of dog control orders across the Borough.

The area may be subject to future coastal path alterations however, following consultation with Head of Parks and Cemeteries, it was anticipated that that would not impact on the trial during any planned lead in or enforcement periods.

The fixed penalty amount for the offence was the same as for fouling and littering offences and was the subject of review under the newly implemented Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2022.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

Councillor Edmund welcomed the report and thought that this was an excellent idea to have markings rather than fences since it provided more freedom in his opinion, and he hoped that the trial would be successful.

Councillor MacArthur was in agreement and welcomed the initiative as a pilot and responsible dog ownership generally. She asked the Director about the existing ten

designated areas and if there would be consideration given to extending those. She had been contacted by a resident of the Borough who was disabled, and that person's dog was often being aggravated by other dogs who were not on leads leading to a feeling of vulnerability. She therefore supported the move.

The Council would be looking at its byelaws with a view to rationalising those and would report to the Environment Committee assessing the outcome of that review; a review of areas covered by Dogs on Leads Orders could be included as part of that. Councillor Cathcart very much welcomed the markings trial and the review of the areas designated for control, and asked officers to also look at byelaws for cyclists on the coastal paths of the Borough.

Councillor McKee did not have the information about why dog control was necessary in these areas and why dogs were required to be on leads, and that lack of information or evidence made him uncomfortable in making any decision. The Director drew his attention to the introductory paragraph of the report for owners to ensure that their dog did not become a problem to others. Legislation was in place to ensure that people and dogs could live happily and safely together. While owners may trust their own dogs, other people might be apprehensive, and the locations already listed in the Borough had only been designated after a prescriptive consultation process.

He went on to say that the signage trial was aimed at encouraging better compliance with existing legal controls, so no decision was being sought from Council about the current legal status.

Following from that Councillor Woods asked when the consultation process had occurred for the Ballyholme area and was advised that that was a legacy North Down matter and pre 2015 but was still a legal requirement. She went on to ask about how many complaints had been received for noncompliance with the current restrictions and the Director indicated he did not have that information to hand but that it could be provided to her directly. She wondered if the Neighbourhood Environment Team would focus more time in that area than previously, to the detriment of other parts of the Borough. It was noted that this was a genuine and real issue and Ballyholme was a popular and heavily trafficked location and if problems were likely to occur, they were more probable in that place.

Councillor Woods stated that she would welcome more facts to enable her to reach a decision. She proposed an amendment;

To defer a decision until information is received as follows:

- How many complaints if any or issues that have been raised with Council on compliance with the current restriction at this location?
- How is this to be enforced and monitored by Council?
- Is NET to be deployed more so here as opposed to other areas with dog control orders in force?

Councillor McKee seconded the amendment.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter referred to a similar situation in Londonderry Park, Newtownards and she was of the understanding that some parts of the Borough had more enforcement activity than others. She did not understand the issue that was being made with the amendment and could not grasp the need to bring back further information next month. Information could be provided directly and if necessary further questioning could take place at the Council meeting later in the month.

Councillor Smart stated that he did have some sympathy for the concerns of Councillor Woods and Councillor McKee but this was an established dogs on leads control area and he was therefore happy to let the report proceed.

When Councillor Woods amendment was put to the vote 4 voted FOR the amendment and 10 voted AGAINST, so the amendment FELL.

Councillor Cummings spoke as a former dog handler and had a particular interest in the report. He welcomed the proposal coming forward especially since the Dog Walkers Scheme had been lost. In his opinion no dog in a confined area was totally under an owner's control and that was a given no matter what the environment. It was right and proper in his view that this direction be given and also in terms of monitoring of the type of lead used. He stated that there was widespread use of extendable leads which were intended for dog training purposes only. He looked forward to the scheme being rolled out.

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

9. INCREASE IN FIXED PENALTY LIMITS FOR LITTERING/DOG FOULING AND DOG CONTROL ORDER OFFENCES

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing that Members would recall that in August 2020, the Council agreed a Notice of Motion, which included a call to write at the earliest opportunity to the Minister for Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), to request the maximum amount payable under a Fixed Penalty Notice in respect of littering and dog fouling offences be increased from the current limit of £80 to £250.

In accordance with the decision of Council, a letter was sent to the then DAERA Minister. A response was received at the time, confirming that the Department was reviewing the effectiveness of the current powers and fines.

The Council's lobbying position on the matter was in keeping with that of the Great Britain lobby group Clean Up Britain as well as Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful (KNIB), the lead charity organisation advocating for a cleaner, greener and more sustainable Northern Ireland.

In May last year, the Council received an update from senior Departmental officials indicating that they had already begun work on preparation of the necessary Regulations which would ultimately increase the maximum FPN to £200.

2.0 Fixed Penalty Increase

The Environmental Offences (Fixed Penalties) (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2022

Regulations made on 8 December 2022 came into force on 30 December 2022 and amended the previous 2012 regulations. The effect was to alter the amount of a fixed penalty capable of being specified by a district council for a fixed penalty under:

- (a) Article 6 (6A) (a) of the Litter Order i.e., Littering and
- (b) Section 44 (1)(a) of the 2011 Act insofar as it relates to an offence under a Dog Control Order set out in Schedule 1 to the 2012 Regulations i.e., offences including dog fouling, dog off lead in designated area etc.

and specifying that it shall be not less than £50 and not more than £200.

3.0 Current Situation

The existing Council decision set the level of fine at £80 with a reduction to £60 if paid within 14 days of issue. The higher level remained for a further 14 days after which the Council may bring the matter to court. Currently about 90% of issued penalties were paid at the discounted rate and the Council retained 100% of fixed penalty income. Repeat offenders were rare.

There was no means of accepting part payment as a fixed penalty was an opportunity to discharge liability to prosecution and partial discharge could not be facilitated. There was no statutory requirement for an internal appeals system as the courts could provide an independent judgement any time after 28 days from issue.

In keeping with good practice, the Neighbourhood Environment Services Manager would review all disputed cases to double check that the necessary evidential standard was met in a case. Where financial hardship was reported, the Manager may extend the payment period to assist, however all cases not discharged by full payment of a fixed penalty must come before the court within six months or be statute barred.

4.0 Recommended New Fixed Penalty Level

In keeping with the Council's previously agreed Notice of Motion, it was recommended that the new Fixed Penalty amount set for the prescribed offences was set at the maximum now allowable under the new legislation that had been introduced i.e., £200. To promote the payment of fixed penalty fines, thereby avoiding recourse to court proceedings for relevant offences, it was also recommended that the discounted fee for payment within 14 days be set at £150 (a 25% reduction, in line with the existing 25% fine reduction for prompt payment).

5.0 Communications

It was planned that the NET would work with the Council's Corporate Communications team to promote the message that receipt of a littering fixed penalty notice would now cost offenders a lot more than previously and urging everyone to do the right thing with their litter/dog waste to avoid that heftier financial sanction.

RECOMMENDED that Members:

1. Note the information set out in this report.
2. Agree the new fixed penalty amounts of £200 (full) and £150 (discounted) for prescribed offences as set out in this report.

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

Councillor Smart was happy to propose and hoped it would be viewed as a crackdown on those who deliberately harmed the Borough in this way. While it was a pity that it had taken two and a half years for the legislation to happen the penalty seemed appropriate and would hopefully help reduce incidents of littering and dog fouling which was blighting the environment.

Councillor Cathcart was happy to second the recommendation and considered it to be long overdue. The new fines would help to ensure that the polluter paid and sent out the message that littering and dog fouling would not be tolerated.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter referred to the roll out of the increased charges and if signage would be necessary to inform the public of the new fines. The Director confirmed that information campaigns would be implemented, highlighting the penalties for littering and fouling offences. The Member referred to repeat offenders and the Committee was informed that repeat offences were more likely to end up in court without recourse to the opportunity to pay a further Fixed Penalty. Alderman Armstrong-Cotter asked for particular enforcement in the Borough's beauty spots. She had taken a walk with her family at Kiltonga and had been appalled by the littering in that beautiful area. The Director agreed that there were certain hot spot areas for littering, and urged Members and the public to get in touch with the Council Environmental Enforcement Team to report those areas – which would lead to targeting of enforcement resources and better apprehension of offenders.

Councillor Woods referred to the disparity between Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) and reports and the lower number of FPNs this year compared to the previous year. The Director explained that the Environmental Enforcement Team had been depleted for a period, with some 65% reduction in normal staffing levels, which had undoubtedly contributed to lower statistics for FPNs. He urged caution when making comparisons of FPN statistics in this way, as a means of assessing service effectiveness; the message had been clearly sent out that the Council was serious in addressing the matter and he would therefore be disappointed if the number of offences remained high and were not dropping due to behavioural changes brought

about by the Council's messaging and stringent enforcement campaign over a number of years.

Councillor Woods asked if the Council was receiving finance from this work and wondered if the cost of living had been factored into the figures. The Director agreed it was difficult to predict how the new penalty amounts would impact payment of fines, but it was hoped that the prospect of higher penalties would encourage more people to behave responsibly when it came to littering.

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

10. REVISION OF FLY-TIPPING STATUTORY ENFORCEMENT PROVISIONS

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing that Members may be aware that the Council was a signatory to a fly-tipping protocol, which set out agreement between Councils and DAERA regarding respective investigation and enforcement roles in cases of fly-tipping (illegal disposal of controlled waste on land which was not licensed for that purpose). In essence, the Council dealt with smaller scale deposits of fly-tipped waste (up to 20 cubic metres) and only deals with waste classified as hazardous if it was of a type that was accepted at its HRCs; in other circumstances NIEA assumed investigation and enforcement responsibilities.

Fly-tipping primarily arose from household and or commercial sources and both were controlled under a specific legal duty known as the waste '*Duty of Care*'.

To comply with the Duty of Care a person must take reasonable steps, based on the way in which they held waste, to:

- prevent the escape of waste or waste causing pollution or harm while they held it and ensure that those they transferred waste to had also taken steps to ensure that it did not escape whilst it was in their possession;
- provide written information which described the waste when they transferred it to another person, sufficiently well to allow them to comply with their duties;
- ensure that they only transferred waste to a person authorised to receive it;
- demonstrate that they had taken into account the Waste Hierarchy when making decisions on the management of their waste; and
- prevent contravention by other persons of duties they may have under other relevant legislation.

A Code of Practice produced by DAERA ([duty-of-care-code-of-practice-june2016.pdf](#) ([daera-ni.gov.uk](#))) covered the Duty of Care relevant to all aspects of waste management, and various specific obligations applied to different parties as set out in the Code depending upon their role in the handling and disposal of waste.

The Waste and Contaminated Land (Amendment) (2011 Act) (Commencement No.3) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022, implemented changes to waste enforcement arrangements.

2.0 New Enforcement Powers

2.1 Powers to Enforce Against Unauthorised or Harmful Deposit, Treatment or Disposal, of Waste Offences (Article 4 of Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997)

Previously, only DAERA was authorised to exercise enforcement functions in respect of prescribed offences relating to the unauthorised or harmful deposit, treatment or disposal of waste; Councils were now also authorised. New powers had been introduced to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs), of not less than £100 and not more than £400, for Article 4 offences. Councils would also now avail of the new FPN powers. It was recommended that the fixed penalty amount should be set at the maximum allowable i.e., £400. To promote the payment of fixed penalty fines, without recourse to court proceedings for relevant offences, it was also recommended that the discounted fee for payment within 14 days be set at £300 (a 25% reduction).

2.2 Powers to Enforce Against Waste Duty of Care Offences (Article 5 of Waste and Contaminated Land (NI) Order 1997)

Previously, only DEARA was authorised to exercise enforcement functions in respect of prescribed offences relating to waste duty of care; Councils were now also so authorised. Enforcement options now available to Council included the issue of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) for the offence of failing to comply with a duty to furnish duty of care documents; the amount payable was set at £300.

2.3 Powers to Require Removal of Unlawfully Deposited Waste

Previously, DAERA was not named as an enforcing authority in terms of powers to require the removal of waste unlawfully deposited on land; that power lay solely with Councils. Furthermore, there was no power to require removal and proper disposal of waste by the person who deposited it (rather that was restricted to the occupier or owner of the land).

The changes now brought about meant that both DAERA and Councils were empowered to serve notices to require removal and legal disposal of fly-tipped waste, as well as expanding the potential recipients of such notices to include the person who deposited the waste.

2.4 Cost Recovery

Councils would now also be able to ask the court to make an order requiring someone convicted of prescribed Article 4 and 5 offences, to pay a sum which appeared to the court not to exceed the costs arising from investigations of the

Council which resulted in the conviction. That was over and above the costs that the court could award to the Council under the Criminal Cases Act (Northern Ireland) 1968 (award of costs against accused).

3.0 Communications

It was planned that the NET would work with the Council's Corporate Communications team to promote those enhancements to the enforcement of fly-tipping sanctions and urge everyone involved to comply fully with the law to ensure that all waste was safely and sustainably managed. In particular, the legal obligations of householders to ensure that their waste was safely and legally disposed of would be highlighted – along with the potential for receipt of a hefty fixed penalty notice where they were found to have broken the law, including waste disposal 'duty of care' obligations.

RECOMMENDED to:

1. Note the changes to waste enforcement powers, as set out in this report.
2. Approve the Fixed Penalty amounts of £400 (full) and £300 (discounted) for Article 4 offences, as set out in this report.

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

Councillor Edmund welcomed the report and believed that the fine now matched the offence better, and he hoped that it might encourage some people to behave more responsibly.

Councillor Boyle agreed that nobody wanted to see fly tipping anywhere in the Borough and it was right that the Council take steps to discourage it. He believed the fines were realistic and hoped that people would be made to consider their actions more carefully.

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

11. Q3 ACTIVITY REPORT FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD ENVIRONMENT TEAM (1 OCTOBER TO 31 DECEMBER 2022)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing that the information provided in the report covered, unless otherwise stated, the period 1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022. The aim of the report was to provide Members with details of some of the key activities of the Team, the range of services it provided along with details of level of performance.

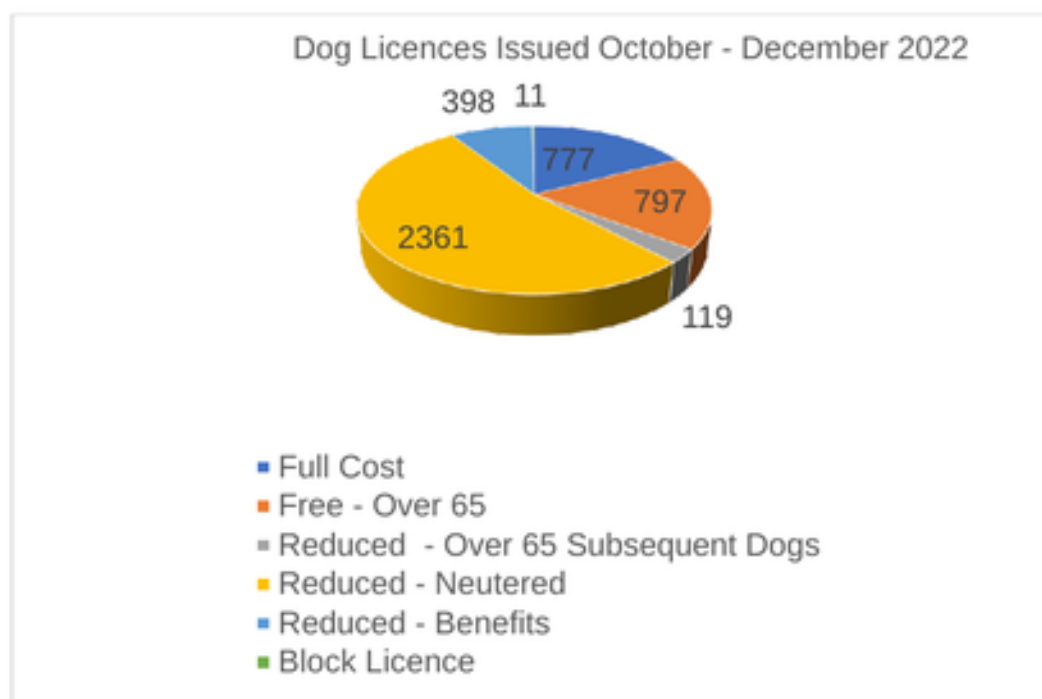
Applications to the Neighbourhood Environment Team

The Dogs (NI) Order 1983

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

	Period of Report October – December 2022	Same 3 months October – December 2021	Comparison
Dog licences issued during the three months	4,467	4,659	↓


Concessionary licences remained at 89% of dog licences issued over the period. That included the categories of neutering (£5) / over 65 (Free – first dog) / over 65 subsequent dog (£5) and income related benefits (£5). Standard dog licence £12.50 and block licence £32.

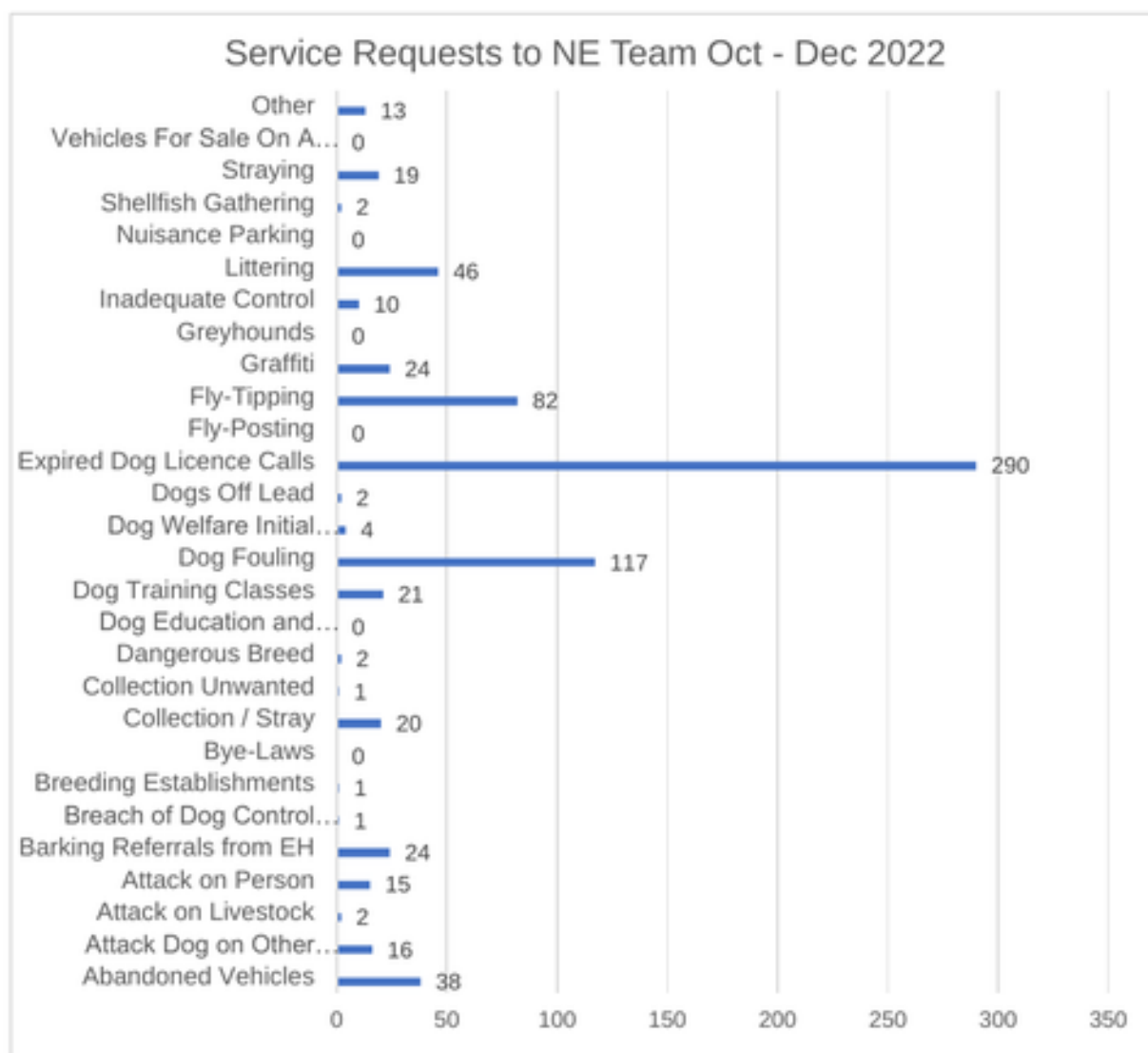


Investigations


The Neighbourhood Environment Team responded to a range of service requests. In terms of time spent, some types of service requests would be completed immediately whilst others required a longer-term strategy to find a resolution. The total number of service requests had been outlined together with a sample of the types of requests received.

	Period of Report October – December 2022	Same 3 months October – December 2021	Comparison
--	--	---	------------

Service Requests received the three months	750	831	
--	-----	-----	---



Non-Compliance Prosecutions

	Period of Report October – December 2022	Same 3 months October – December 2021	Comparison
Total Prosecutions	12	25	

The level of prosecutions during the same period last year included a back log of cases delayed by the court due to Covid-19.

Fixed Penalty Notices

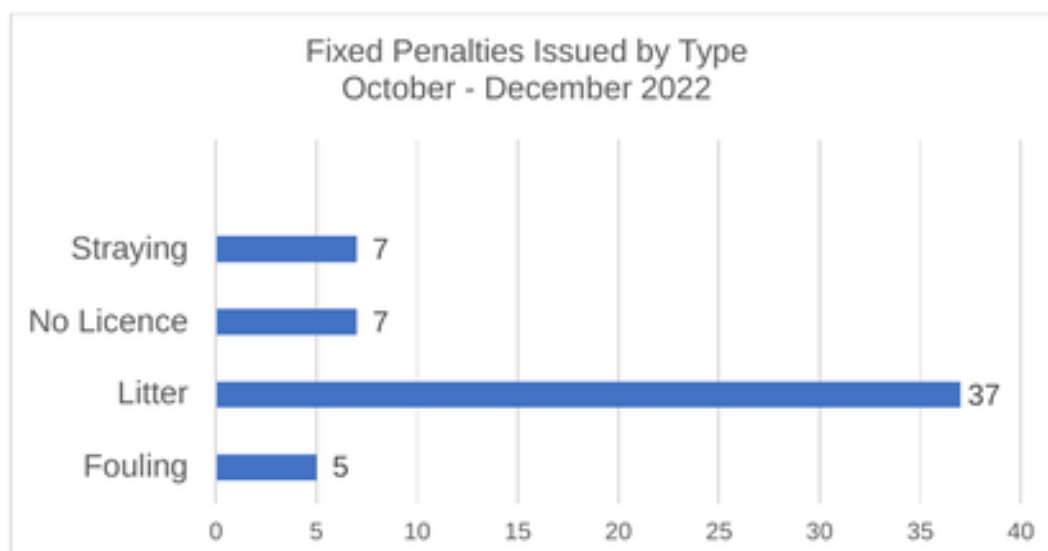
In addition to cases being prosecuted through the court, **56** fixed penalty notices had been issued in respect of various matters. That continued to demonstrate a sustained Council focus upon detecting and punishing those who persisted in committing environmental offences in the Borough and highlighted one patrolling outcome of the Neighbourhood Environment Team achieved despite an ongoing reduction in staffing levels due to sickness and vacant posts. Recruiting for Enforcement officers was ongoing during the period of report.

The main categories of fixed penalties was shown below. Other categories existed i.e., breach of dog control conditions, exclusion order and off lead offences. The offer of an £80 Fixed Penalty Fine was an opportunity to discharge liability to prosecution.

A payment period of 28 days was permitted. If paid within 14 days, the fine was discounted to £60. As staff recruitment and retention remained a challenge that had impacted on the number of notices issued during the quarter as it was not possible to maintain a daily enforcement patrol at times.

	Period of Report October – December 2022	Same 3 months October – December 2021	Comparison
Straying	7	22	
No Licence	7	59	
Litter	37	47	
Fouling	5	9	

The following graph illustrated the fixed penalty notices issued during the period of report by type:



Appendix A to the report provided a street level location for each of the penalty fines issued during the period of report 1 October to 31 December 2022.

Environmental Education Programme – Development (Project ELLA)

The Neighbourhood Environment Team was continuing to prepare an Environmental Education Programme during the financial year with a view to rolling out delivery in the next financial year subject to ongoing Recycling Community Investment Fund budget availability.

During the period of the report, the following environmental education activity took place:

A presentation entitled 'A 500-Million Year Journey' was delivered to the environment and history class from Action Mental Health. The talk was being developed to explain the processes that formed our local landscape and the need to protect it from negative human impacts.

The activity was part of the ongoing development of Project ELLA. (Environmental, Learning, Lifestyle and Action). The project sought to provide new and innovative solutions in the delivery of environmental education and awareness. It was hoped that the project would be launched officially in Spring 2023.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter stated that she had a matter which she would raise later in the meeting In Confidence.

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

12. LIVE HERE LOVE HERE SMALL GRANTS SCHEME 2022-23 GRANT ALLOCATIONS

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing that Members would be aware that the funding of the Live Here Love Here Small Grants programme, administered in partnership with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, was facilitated through the Recycling Community Investment Fund. The latter was financed from net waste processing savings accrued through the efforts of residents in household waste recycling, representing a form of 'pay-back' to local communities for their engagement in this crucially important aspect of the Council's role in creating a sustainable future.

Grant Allocations 2022-23

14 groups applied for funding in our Borough and £23,329.22 was allocated in grants this year.

Applications were reviewed by a panel of judges and grants were awarded for eligible expenditure under the scheme, as detailed in the table below.

A number of groups received less funding than requested due to ineligible items. Unsuccessful projects included ineligible projects, projects with no community involvement or on private land.

Applicant	Project	Award £
Ballywalter Community Action Group	Blooming Ballywalter by the Sea	1150
Millisle Youth Forum	Making an Entrance	2980
Bangor Foodbank and Community Support (BFCS)	Special Needs Garden for children and youth	1350
Comber Regeneration Community Partnership	Colour Comber 7	3000
Portaferry Community Services Ltd	Sails & Sounds Festival	0
Cloughey Heritage Group	Clean up the graveyard of our heritage buildings	1940
Boom Studios	Colour Bangor - Bingham Mall	0
Donaghadee Community Development Association	Donaghadee in Bloom	3000
Portaferry In Bloom	Growing safely for all ages and reusing green waste	0
Cloughey & District Community Association	Daffodils 2022	520
Ards Canal Path Community Group	The Rowans Rewilding Project	2691

Branch Out Community Group	Development of a permaculture food forest	2000
Hollywood Shared Town	Hollywood Community Garden	1700
St Mary's Primary School Eco Team	St Mary's Eco Team	2998.22

Successful applicants

Group name	Project title	Project Description
Ballywalter Community Action Group	Blooming Ballywalter by the Sea	Funding to continue to enhance the floral display in the village of Ballywalter, by commissioning a bespoke wall planter in keeping with coastal theme. Two planter areas each measuring 5ft x 8in. That would complement the existing rowboat feature and complete the project. Presently the wall where the new feature would be mounted was often targeted by offensive graffiti which impacted on all members of society and created a negative image within the village. The project aimed to improve that by developing the area in a positive way. The new feature along with the current floral display planters would be maintained by Ballywalter Community Action Group, Ballywalter Over 50's Gardening Club and Ballywalter Primary School.
Millisle Youth Forum	Making an Entrance	The creation of a welcoming entrance at the Moss Road/Main Street Car park which had two banks that were very badly overgrown and very unsightly. The car park was basically at the entrance to Millisle and the young people want to create a floral display which would be conducive to enhancing the village but would also be designed to create an area for pollinating insects. The area would be landscaped with wildflowers, shrubs and local flowers that would attract insects, bees etc and portray a welcoming image to the village.

Bangor Foodbank and Community Support (BFCS)	Special Needs Garden for children and youth	Creating a raised bed garden for children with special needs. The main goal of the garden was to make sure children with special needs had the same opportunities as their typically developing peers, because so often special needs kids were excluded from out-of-school activities. The gardening initiative was open to children of all ages, with and without disabilities, including those with developmental delays, cerebral palsy, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), multiple disabilities, mental illness, children on the autism spectrum, and children who are deaf or blind. The garden would provide a number of unique benefits to help in achieving success.
Comber Regeneration Community Partnership	Colour Comber 7	Replacement of old wooden planters due to wear and tear and the addition of tiered heavy duty self-watering plastic planters. Those planters required watering on a weekly basis which was time saving for volunteers who were watering the old wooden one up to 3 times per week. The new planters would be more suitable for trailing fragrant plants which in turn would attract more wildlife i.e., butterflies, bees etc. The 3 local Primary Schools would have a large input to the project as they would be coming along to help fill the planters and planting the wildflower beds in the town.
Cloughey Heritage Group	Clean up the graveyard of our heritage buildings	The group had been created to restore the old church building which had been empty for over 40 years. During the period the graveyard had been neglected and fallen into disrepair. The aim was to turn that neglect into a beautiful, greener space for the community. Wildflowers would be sown around the entire perimeter including shrubs and plants that were suitable for the coastal area. That would improve the look of the building entirely and become a place for the community to gather and reflect also encouraging bees, wildlife and making it a green space. It was not just about restoring the building but the pride and dignity the building and its surrounding brought to the community.

Donaghadee Community Development Association	Donaghadee in Bloom	Working closely with local Council (who would plant out own specific areas) the project involved the co-ordination of efforts by traders, individuals, schools and community groups to have floral displays in the town. The Council was planning * 4 "crowns" at the entrances to recognise and celebrate the Queen's Platinum Anniversary * some 60 hanging baskets, * 10 planters, planted by individuals and 10 planted by schools and groups. Planters were a mixture of standard flower containers and disused boats reflecting the town's maritime associations. * over 200 window boxes planted out by pupils of Killard House Special School and made available free to suitable premises in the town centre. Details of all the displays would be set out in a booklet available free from establishments in the town centre.
Cloughey & District Community Association	Daffodils 2022	Extend the daffodil planting throughout the village of Cloughey. Last season 6 sack-loads of daffodils were planted along a stretch of the Main Road in Cloughey. The display this Spring had been beautiful and commented on by all locals and visitors. It was hoped to extend that planting along the verges throughout the village.
Ards Canal Path Community Group	The Rowans Rewilding Project	The Rowans Rewilding Project aimed to create a small wooded area of native trees, shrubs and climbers on a large bare grassy area close to the centre of Newtownards. The goal was to plant trees and create a space for nature in a part of the town that was losing green spaces rapidly to development. We aimed to make that a "flagship" example of how unused green areas could be managed to benefit the community and the environment. By working with the local community and Council we would bring everyone together, to create a space to be proud of.
Branch Out Community Group	Development of a permaculture food forest	A permaculture food forest where people could forage as they needed. The site had already got a tree canopy of mostly natives but due to neglect the only other species were bramble, nettles and ivy. The funding would support the introduction of rainwater catchment and compost areas as there were no access to services in the area. The grassy path tended to get waterlogged in some areas so some improvements to that were required. We would also like to introduce wildlife feeding stations and bird baths.

Holywood Shared Town	Holywood Community Garden	HST in partnership with ANDBC & NIEA was creating a community garden. The funding would support purchase of a poly tunnel and tools for the garden (that included allotments, wild meadow, fruit growing, etc.) with a view to preparing the site in readiness for its cultivation. The overall goal was to provide a community space for growing and learning as well as enjoyment, and good mental health. The project was part of a larger initiative called Hollywood Green Spaces that involved establishing a community orchard, the restoration of the Dunville Kitchen Garden, and a network of green walks in the Hollywood district. The garden would host events to encourage local participation and awareness of sustainable growing, climate change, our planet's care.
St Mary's Primary School Eco Team	St Mary's Eco Team	The creation of an outdoor classroom area to facilitate outdoor learning particularly food growing and biodiversity related projects. The project would encourage the local community to work with the school to share their expertise and sense of pride in their local area. The project would support the connecting of young people to nature.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the allocations to successful applications for the 2022-23 LHLH Small Grant Scheme as set out in Section 2 of the report.

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

Councillor Boyle welcomed the report and was encouraged to see that there were fourteen groups applying for this funding including one school. Those were all voluntary groups and he commended the work that could be carried out across the Borough for the sum of £23k.

He believed that it was imperative that the Council kept its links with Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful and the Live Here / Love Here programme and continue to use the Recycling Investment Fund for such community initiatives.

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

13. NOTICE OF MOTION

13.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman McIlveen and Councillor Cathcart

Building on the practice of other Council areas, that this Council tasks officers to liaise with DfI Roads as a matter of urgency to offer its assistance in providing self service grit piles for residents and to post locations of such grit piles on the Council website.

Proposed by Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Cathcart that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Proposing the Motion Alderman McIlveen told the Committee that he had originally submitted it during the freezing conditions several months previously and had hoped that it would have been heard before now. He also hoped that the freezing conditions were over for this Winter. He was calling for grit to be made accessible to the Ards and North Down Borough in a similar way that it was to other Council areas across Northern Ireland where the Department for Infrastructure would deposit grit in particular sites which would be promoted through the Council website when freezing conditions returned. He called for a report to be brought back to the Council so that a decision could be made on how to take the matter forward. He was aware that many areas did not have grit boxes but that many people would be prepared to help themselves and their communities if grit was to be made available.

Councillor Cathcart was happy to second the Motion that had come on the back of a difficult period before Christmas. He had personally contacted the Department requesting grit boxes and had not yet had a positive response to that. The conditions during the cold snap had been atrocious and he had found it difficult to leave his own property. He thought that the Council needed to look at the process in place within other Councils and that the Council also work with the Department to resolve the situation in a manner that was reasonably cost effective or cost neutral.

Councillor Boyle added that he would support the Motion and would be interested to see what would come back from the Department. He gave credit for the work that had been done in rural areas but admitted that it might be different when compared to the more urban areas.

Councillor Smart commended the proposal and had been frustrated during the cold snap that volunteers had not been able to help others more vulnerable within their communities. He thought it was a huge opportunity for the Department to step up to the mark and he was sure that the public and the Council could play their part. He also encouraged the Council to play a role in keeping access to its own public facing buildings safe.

Councillor Edmund also added his support to the Motion that had been brought by his colleagues, it was sensible, and the safety of constituents needed to be made a priority.

Alderman McIlveen thanked Members for their supportive comments and agreed with Councillor Smart that he would like to see the Department stepping up in relation to these things and working with the Council in a way that it appeared to be working with other Council areas.

AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Cathcart, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

13.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Morgan and Councillor McRandal

The prolonged cold weather spells just before Christmas and last week resulted in icy, slippery, and dangerous footpaths and car parks in the Borough's City and town centres. It is not acceptable that in such circumstances the Council does not have a plan or the resources or facilities to grit these areas to enable residents to walk safely to and from the main shopping areas or fall when they step out of their cars onto ice. It is proposed that officers 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.

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

Proposing the Motion Councillor Morgan said that it was similar to the one that had just been heard and had been brought for the same reasons. She had only barely become a Councillor when she started receiving comments about the matter. She stated that icy pavements and car parks were very unsafe, and that people relied on being able to access schools, hospitals, doctors surgeries, sports centres and so on safely. Disabled car parking spaces particularly should be kept safe.

It appeared to her that the Council did not have the ability to grit these areas and questioned if that was good enough and could it be proud of that position. She believed it to be unacceptable. She knew that the Council wished to support people in carrying out their daily tasks, but she had heard that in towns such as Enniskillen and Ballymena the situation had been completely different.

She asked what the minimum criteria was and if Council staff could be redeployed to carry out gritting when freezing conditions set in. She called for a report with costs and options and hoped it would be innovative and thoughtful and also provide support to local businesses and the Chambers of Commerce to enable them to take initiative. While she recognised there was an expense involved, she suggested that it was rare to have prolonged freezing conditions in this part of the world.

Seconding the Motion Councillor McRandal spoke of his local experience where in Holywood three people had fallen in the Church Street car park in one morning. He had been in Enniskillen during that time and had noticed that all the pavements of the town had been gritted and he also wondered what the triggers were for taking positive action and what constituted a cold snap.

Councillor Cummings added his support to the Motion and referred to Comber car park which had been built on a pond, so a lot of water gathered there and the

situation in the ice had been horrendous. He was aware that the Council had a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department for Infrastructure and he hoped that that would be incorporated within the report. It was clear that the Council had taken ownership of the car parks and it would be helpful to know where it stood in these circumstances.

Councillor Cathcart agreed and although the Council had taken on the responsibility for car parks in 2015, he did not recall it being such a significant issue until this point.

Councillor McAlpine also added her support for the Motion and had used Cairnshill Park and Ride during that period and noticed that it had not been gritted and was not surprised to hear of people falling. She thought that it was important that the Council did grit car parks. The Director agreed that a report could be brought back but in relation to the point the Member had made. It was understood the Department treated car parks as it did pavements, which were not gritted; the Council position on car park gritting was therefore the same as the policy that had been in place prior to local government reform. The Department's position on that was reflected in the non-gritting of the Cairnshill park and ride car park, which was still controlled by DfI.

Councillor Boyle added his support and stated that some valid points had been made. Councillor MacArthur added that during the freezing period the Queen's Parade, Bangor, car park had had to be closed because cars were colliding with each other. She had been in Portadown that week and had noticed Council workers gritting paths alongside the Department for Infrastructure.

Councillor Morgan thanked her fellow Councillors for their constructive and helpful comments.

AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Morgan, seconded by Councillor McRandal, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

(Alderman Smith left the meeting at 10.00 pm)

RECESS 10.00 pm
RECOMMENCED 10.10 pm

At this point in the meeting the Director advised that the item of Any Other Notified Business would be taken in Committee due to some legal and confidential matters.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

14. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

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

15. COMMERCIAL WASTE CHARGING POLICY

*****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)

16. EXTENSION OF TENDERS

*****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)

**17. CAR PARKING ENFORCEMENT FUTURE PROVISION
UPDATE**

*****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/PRESS

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 10.42 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 and via Zoom, on Thursday 9 February 2023 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair:	Councillor Walker	
Aldermen:	Armstrong-Cotter McDowell	M Smith (Zoom) Wilson (Zoom)
Councillors:	Adair Cummings Dunlop (Zoom) Gilmour (Zoom)	Irvine, S Kennedy McKimm Morgan

In Attendance: Director of Place (S McCullough), Director of Prosperity (A McCullough), Head of Regeneration (B Dorrian), Head of Tourism (S Mahaffy), Head of Economic Development (C McGill) and Democratic Services Officer (R King)

1. APOLOGIES

The Chairman (Councillor Walker) advised that apologies had been received from Councillor Brooks and Councillor McClean.

NOTED.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dunlop declared an interest in the following items:

Item 3 - Donaghadee Commons Masterplan
Item 15 - Annual Evaluation Report Open House Festival 2022

NOTED.

(Councillor Dunlop, attending via Zoom, was excluded from the meeting having declared an interest in the following item – 7.03pm)

3. DONAGHADEE COMMONS MASTERPLAN (FILE RDP72) (Appendix I)

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

Background

Members would be aware that the Council agreed to appoint Consultants to undertake consultations to assist with the development of a Masterplan for the Commons in Donaghadee. Aecom was appointed and after a period of extensive internal and external consultation had finalised a Masterplan for the Commons.

As reported to the Regeneration and Development Committee on 9 June 2022, the finalised Plan gave a vision for a premium urban coastal park with enhanced features. The Commons was to be sensitively reimagined into a high-quality coastal parkland destination with activities, indoor and outdoor, and welcoming to everyone. A new network of trails to reach out across the foreshore, would aid with the integration of the Commons into the urban fabric of the Town. A destination with appeal for both locals and visitors alike, which will help leverage the public and private investment to support future development of the area.

Consultation results

As requested by the Council in June 2022, a further public consultation took place on 18th October 2022 with 50 attendees over 4 sessions held from 4.00pm – 8.00pm. Comments were also invited through the Council's website and via questionnaires, with 19 on-line responses received.

In line with the original consultation a significant number of positive views expressed with 78% of respondents supporting the Masterplan. In all of the sessions undertaken only one respondent raised the issue of the recycling centre relocation but was satisfied that there would be further consultation on the issue if/when this project was brought forward.

The consultation did not reveal any major changes to the existing draft Masterplan and several specific comments would be useful when progressing individual projects in the future. These projects would require further consultation as they were developed for suitable funding streams.

It was important to remember that the Commons Masterplan was a concept plan only. Projects coming from the Masterplan would require further detailed design, business cases and further internal and public consultation. If funding became available for any element of the Masterplan, Officers would bring back a report to the Committee prior to making any application.

RECOMMENDED that the Council agrees:

1. the Donaghadee Commons Masterplan; and
2. that Officers commence seeking funding opportunities to deliver the Masterplan.

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

Councillor Gilmour recognised that aside from the Chair, there were no Bangor East and Donaghadee DEA representatives in attendance who may have had their own

view on this. She felt it important though that where elements of the Masterplan were proceeding, the public should be fully consulted and brought along as part of the process. It was also important to learn from past experiences around design specifics, recalling durability issues with previous bin and footpath installations in the town.

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

(Councillor Dunlop was readmitted to the meeting – 7.05pm)

(Councillor Kennedy joined the meeting – 7.05pm)

**4. MINUTES OF PORTAFERRY STEERING GROUP 8
NOVEMBER 2022**

(Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

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

**5. ITEM DEVOLUTION OF REGENERATION POWERS AND
BUDGET (FILE RDP14)**

(Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place stating that at a recent meeting of the Council, Members were reminded that following the formation of the new Councils in 2015, the transfer of the Regeneration function and budgets was deferred and subsequently removed from the transferring functions. To date this position remained.

It was agreed that in the absence of a Minister for the Department for Communities that the Council should write to the Permanent Secretary of that Department highlighting its disappointment that this matter had not been resolved and enquiring if there was a process by which the transfer could be progressed.

The Council had received the attached correspondence from Mr Colum Boyle advising that the former Minister commenced some discussions concerning the transfer of the Regeneration functions and that SOLACE was undertaking some assessment of this. However, he confirmed that as any transfer would require new primary legislation, this could not be advanced without a functioning Executive and Assembly.

RECOMMENDED that that the Council notes the report and letter attached.

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

6. RURAL REGENERATION – OVERVIEW OF FUNDING AND PROJECTS

(Appendix IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place outlined as follows:

Background

As Members would be aware, in recent years the Council had been involved in the administration and delivery of funding under the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme and the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme. In addition, the Council received grant aid for projects from the Coastal Communities Fund and SEAFLAG. The following gave an overview of the outcomes and achievements of these funds in improving the quality of life for rural dwellers across the Ards and North Down area.

1. Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2014-2020

Background

In 2015 Ards and North Down Rural Partnership was formed to deliver the LEADER element of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme via its Local Development Strategy.

The Programme provided funding for projects across four different themes as follows:

- Rural Business Investment Scheme - To support and encourage the development of non-agricultural activities in rural areas for all micro and small enterprises. The programme's primary objective was to create new jobs.
- Rural Basic Services Scheme - To support the provision of improvements in social infrastructure that would provide access to basic services which were an integral part of and in line with the Council Community Plan and emerging priorities.
- Rural Village Renewal Scheme - To support the drafting and updating of integrated village plans and for the renewal of villages via capital investment to implement actions identified in village plans.
- Cooperation Scheme - To promote support for co-operation projects with other Local Action Groups which bring benefits to all areas.

The Council was allocated £3,150,000 of funding initially, and in 2019 received a further award of £1,088,769 from the Department. The Programme was completed in November 2022.

Summary of Programme Outcomes

- 78 projects completed across the four themes, which surpasses the original target of 65 as set out in the Strategy. 96 applications were received and processed by Programme staff.
- £3,862,087 of grant aid has been awarded to date, with one more project to complete in February 2023, which will take the total spend to £4,085,212. This

was more than the original project budget of £3,150,000 as the Rural Partnership availed of additional funding offered by DAERA.

- Total investment in the area equates to £6,858,081, which included the £2,772,869 of match funding provided for projects by individuals, limited companies, community groups and Ards and North Down Borough Council.
- To date, 45 Full Time Equivalent Jobs have been created, an increase of five more than the original target set. As businesses continued to grow, more jobs would be created. In addition, many more jobs had been safeguarded because of the funding provided.

Summary of Programme Benefits and Impacts

Scheme	Number of projects funded	Summary Impact
Rural Business Investment Scheme	31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivered £2,065,164 of investment (£769,709 of grant aid and £1,295,455 of match funding) - Helped to create at least 34 Full Time and 23 Part Time jobs - Supported the creation of seven new businesses - Enabled 23 existing businesses to develop, expand and recruit - Supported five business to start exporting
Rural Basic Services Scheme	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivered £1,496,536 of investment (£888,787 of grant aid and £607,749 of match funding) - Seven capital projects completed - which have impacted on a potential number of 12,225 people to date - These seven projects have provided much needed basic services to rural areas, such as improvements to physical and mental health, provision of enhanced community space, creation of community hubs and general improvement to quality of life
Rural Village Renewal Scheme	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivered £2,849,840 of investment (£2,089,537 grant and £760,303 of match funding) - 15 capital projects completed which impact on a population of 27,970 - These 15 projects include a wide range of themes such as improvements to community halls, play parks and community park enhancements, improved landscapes and infrastructure, and provision of more recreational opportunities for communities
Cooperation Scheme	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delivered £446,541 of investment (£337,179 grant and £109,362 of match funding) - Collaboration with the Inishowen Rural Partnership

2. Rural Business Development Grant Scheme

Background

In 2018 the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) approached the Council to run a pilot Rural Business Development Grant Scheme 2019/2020. The scheme was funded under DAERA's Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation Programme (TRPSI), which aimed to assist in tackling poverty and social isolation within deprived rural areas. This was a capital grant scheme which provided funding support for micro rural businesses from £500 up to a maximum of £4,999, at a 50% grant rate. The scheme had now operated successfully over the past four years, and it was anticipated it would continue to run on an ongoing basis.

Summary of Scheme Outcomes

84 Letters of Offer had been issued across the Borough under the Rural Business Development Grant Scheme to date. This included support for a wide range of businesses sectors, such as manufacturing, engineering, tourism, arts and crafts, personal training, horticulture, café's, graphic design, childcare and many more. The funding allowed these micro rural businesses to become sustainable and grow at a time when such businesses would struggle to do so without grant support.

The table below summarised the outcomes from the schemes which had operated annually from 2019-2022.

Year	Number of Applications	Letters of Offer Issued	Value of Letters of Offer Issued	Grant Aid Paid / To Be Paid
2019	14	8	£23,599	£17,715
2020	42	26	£74,456	£60,533
2021	27	25	£60,978	£51,802
2022	32	25	£65,003	£54,462
Total	115	84	£224,036	£184,512

3. Coastal Communities Fund

Background

In December 2018 the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) announced that Round 5 of the Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) in Northern Ireland would open for applications. After considering several projects, the Council approved an application to the Coastal Communities Fund for the Ballywalter Lime Kilns Environmental Improvement Scheme.

Ballywalter Lime Kilns – Project Outputs

The Council was awarded £100,000 of funding from the Coastal Communities Fund towards the delivery of an Environmental Improvement Scheme at the Lime Kilns. This total investment in this project was £227,346. This was delivered via a cocktail of funding support, to include the Rural Development Programme's Village Renewal Scheme and Ards and North Down Borough Council.

The scheme included the following elements of work:

- New regraded asphalt path to the sea front
- New seating areas, paving and picnic areas
- New shrub and tree planting
- Cladding to the toilet block
- Lime Kiln: New glass balustrade on the upper level, seating, and resin bonded paving
- Lime Kiln: New interpretation panels to the recesses and an information panel at the lookout at the upper level
- Minor restoration works to the Lime Kiln

This project completed in mid-2021 and has provided enhanced facilities for local people and visitors and improved the accessibility and understanding of the space through interpretation.

4. SEAFLAG

Portavogie Promenade – Environmental Improvement Scheme

The Council was successful in securing a grant of £87,602.42 from SEAFLAG for a small environmental improvement scheme at Portavogie Promenade. The total investment in this project was £156,321.62, with match funding requirements being met from existing Council budgets and the Small Settlements Fund.

Project Outputs and Benefits

The scheme completed in November 2022. It involved the following elements of work on and around the Promenade and car park area:

- Environmental improvements to include the installation of new column lighting at Anchor car park leading onto the Promenade, a new pathway surface and improved access onto the beach
- Environmental improvements at Princess Anne Square creation of an entrance feature at Princess Anne Square including a new pathway to provide access, new trees, 'Welcome to Portavogie Promenade' entrance signage
- Design and installation of 3no. interpretative signs to be located at the slipway and on the path to the beach which will focus on the maritime history, environment and heritage of Portavogie

The scheme aimed to reconnect Portavogie Promenade with the Harbour and coastline back into the village through Princess Anne Square. This would generate a greater feeling of connectivity across the entire village and increasing footfall into the village centre, thus encouraging greater economic activity. The interpretation elements of the project increase awareness of, and appreciation for, the maritime heritage of Portavogie in the context of its natural environment at Anchor Car park.

Portavogie Harbour – Environmental Improvement Scheme

In November 2020 SEAFLAG reported an expected underspend of £483,818 which, if not allocated, would be returned to the Department. Therefore, the Board agreed to run a further and final call for applications from January to March 2021. The Council agreed that an application should be submitted to SEAFLAG for an Environmental Improvement Scheme at the Harbour in Portavogie.

Subsequently, the application was successful, and a Letter of Offer was issued to the Council for £209,641.87 in July 2022 for the delivery of the following works:

- artwork to the shed wall
- new low-maintenance open space around the memorial
- planters and bench seating,
- harbour signage, defined parking spaces, pedestrian crossing,
- feature light columns and
- rendering to the existing wall

Expected total project investment on completion is circa £326,000.

Project Outputs and Benefits

Northstone NI Ltd commenced work on this project in October 2022 and the works were progressing at pace. Completion was scheduled for March 2023, apart from the resin bonding surfacing which will be slightly delayed due to seasonality.

- Enhancing and protecting an environmental asset, while encouraging appropriate economic and recreational activity
- Provision of more aesthetically pleasing area for people arriving at the Harbour from both sea and land, which will enhance a sense of community
- Provision of an inclusive, safe and pleasant place for the local community and visitors to observe, thus giving the village a heart
- Promotion of health and wellbeing and a reduction in social exclusion by providing a local space for people to meet and engage, also an increased opportunity within a rural fishing community to celebrate their maritime and aquacultural heritage
- Establishment of collaborative partnerships within the fishing community in terms of heritage

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

Councillor Adair commended officers for securing almost £5million of funding for the various schemes. He had been particularly pleased with the restoration of the Ballywalter lime kilns, an important part of the Borough's heritage that otherwise would have been lost forever. Portavogie, Kircubbin and Cloughey had also benefited from improvement schemes and it showed just what village plans could achieve and the difference they could make to the Borough.

Concurring, Alderman Armstrong-Cotter praised officers for their hard work in securing the funding and she noted the benefits it had brought to rural communities right across the Borough.

Councillor McKimm was grateful to have worked with the many volunteers involved in administering the programme. They knew their communities extremely well and had put so much of their time into the programme. He asked if there were plans to formally thank them for their hours of input.

The Head of Regeneration advised that Council had written directly to thank them and at the final meeting, DAERA representatives had been in attendance and had personally thanked the social representatives that sat on the LAG for everything they had done.

Welcoming the response, Councillor McKimm advised he had missed that particular meeting due to illness but appreciated that their efforts had been acknowledged.

Councillor Cummings looked forward to the Ballygowan community park project progressing and in relation to the park at Killinchy, he had observed a notable increase in use since the lockdown periods during Covid-19, and he wondered if the officer could feed back any details of the health and wellbeing impacts that such places were having.

The officer had been aware of data that confirmed that those types of facilities had seen a notable increase in usage and in terms of the Ballygowan community park it was the desire to provide a shared space where people could go and enjoy walking.

Taking the opportunity to sum up, Councillor Adair welcomed that those volunteers on the LAG had been thanked for their hard work and also welcomed that there had been Rural Development money available to upgrade play parks in Cloughey and Portaferry. He spoke of further benefits adding that the Rural Development Programme had also boosted jobs and tourism.

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

7. ARDS AND BANGOR BUSINESS AWARDS (FILE 160094)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity stating that Members would be aware that Council officers had been working with the Chambers of Commerce in Bangor and Newtownards with a view to supporting the Business Awards.

Both Chambers had proposed that Council hosted their annual Business Awards in 2022-23. These events celebrated the work and successes of local businesses in the area.

Ards and North Down Borough Council was the principal sponsor for each event and attended the successful Bangor Awards ceremony held on Thursday 3 November at the Clandeboye Lodge Hotel, Bangor.

Ards Business Awards

Officers had been in contact with Ards Chamber in order to further develop the work on this year's proposed awards. The Council had now been informed that this year's Business Awards ceremony would not be held before March 2023 as initially planned.

The Chamber had delayed planning and organising this event due to a member's personal circumstances.

Ards Chamber intended to host an event however, this would likely be in the spring/summer of 2023, following a decision by its Board.

Contact was ongoing and the Economic Development section would update the Council in due time.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

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

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter acknowledged the personal issues that had been alluded to in the report but was pleased that this year's Ards Business Awards were still on the agenda. She appreciated it was a difficult time for many businesses that were struggling to make ends meet and it was important for the Council to send a message of support. The seconder, Alderman McDowell, concurred with those comments.

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

8. 4C UR FUTURE EVENT (FILE ED125)

(Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity stating that

Background

As agreed by Council, Ards and North Down Borough Council hosted a pilot careers inspiration event for over 700 Year 9 pupils called 4C UR Future LIVE on 7th June 2022 at the Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex in Newtownards. The event was considered as one of the interventions to help prepare young people early on, for future jobs and careers.

In September 2022 the Economic Development Service reported details of the event to Committee along with the events marketing and participant outputs.

It was suggested in the report, that an update, highlighting the feedback from the Ards and North Down participants (School staff, Volunteers and pupils) would be brought back to Committee for information.

4C UR Future has since provided officers with further feedback and updates on the Ards and North Down LIVE 2022 Event. A feedback survey was carried out resulting in a final report detailing the teachers', volunteers' and pupils' comments and opportunities for improvement, as summarised below.

Participants were as follows:

Pupils	Teachers & School Staff	Volunteers
711 Total	60	95
102 - Movilla High School		
110 - Priory Integrated College		
243 - Regent House Grammar		
125 - St Columbanus College		
131 - Strangford Integrated College		

Teacher feedback survey results indicated the following:

%	Feedback
53%	Event was very good
24%	Event was exciting and fun
59%	Innovative and different
30%	Engaging and relevant
24%	Increased confidence in pupils' own capabilities
71%	Improved pupil interaction/communication with others
41%	Increased pupil awareness of different job types and local employers

Teacher comments were as follows:

- Challenging the pupils to use skills that they were unaware they had.
- The interactive element was fantastic, kids engaged well, schools came together.
- The range and variety of activities and tasks for the students.
- The opportunity to engage with local employers and get students to have an interactive experience applying the skills that we have spoken about in the classroom.
- Some individual stations were great like Race To Net Zero and Chop Chop. Pupils really enjoyed the chance to engage in hands on activities particularly after all the covid restrictions.
- Well organised event that gave pupils the opportunity to develop skills and attributes.
- It brought a lot of children together and helped them build relationships with people in their own school.
- The interactive nature of the event and awareness pupils gained of job skills.
- The opportunity for pupils to engage with activities and pupils from other schools.
- Inviting, various businesses took part, engaging, good space, very accommodating, lunch was nice for staff.

- It was just great to see the students enjoying a different and new experience.
- One pupil had a severe anxiety attack the night before the event with the thought of the school trip. He was in two minds on the morning of the event whether to attend or not. From the minute he entered the complex he smiled and took part in every task. Staff noticed a big difference in him, there has been a big improvement in his confidence.
- The concentration on their faces when completing an activity.

Volunteer feedback survey results indicated the following:

%	Feedback
95%	Positive experience
86%	Would like to volunteer for a \$C UR Future LIVE event in the future
72%	Felt taking part helped their employer support the local community
90%	Believed 4C UR Future LIVE played positive role in bringing individuals from different background and cultures together
63%	Felt event raised awareness of their employer and sector

Volunteer comments:

- It was something different.
- I loved watching the kids enjoy the games.
- It was a great opportunity to work with young people.
- Enjoyed getting an insight into tech skills at secondary education level.
- Helped raise the confidence of my team and helped me to identify certain skills that my team members have.
- I got to work with some inspirational children.
- Good to make new connections and share knowledge.
- Discovering a new way to engage young people about careers.
- Giving something back to the community.
- I got to use my coaching skills in a different way.
- The events raised awareness of Net Zero with a wide audience.
- It remotivated employees when describing positive aspects of their job/employer.
- PR via press and social media increased awareness amongst the public.
- Participating helped make us more known to the other member companies.
- It was a chance for businesses to have a positive impact on people's lives, and to help bridge the gap into technology.

Pupil feedback survey results indicated the following:

%	Feedback
28%	Met companies or learned of new jobs they'd never heard of before
67%	Positive experience, meeting company volunteers
73%	Positive experience ('loved it', 'really good', 'ok')
77%	Discovered or confirmed things they were good at

Pupils were also asked about their future:

1/3 pupils were positive (have a plan, or can't wait)

2/3 pupils were not sure (too many positions, don't know where to start or don't want to think about it)

2/3 of pupils needed more help

Pupil comments:

- Bigger events / more events / hold it more often
- Positive experience with volunteers
- Positive experience mixing with other schools
- Even more information on careers
- I was happy with the experience. A bit of everything and the people were so nice, I couldn't ask for more.
- Nothing to improve, it really taught me how the job works and it is really useful.
- It was really fun and I would think about different jobs and different options that are available in the future.
- I would consider going back and seeing it again.
- It was really fun as is. The only thing I would do differently is add a bit more of an "escape" feel to the Escape Room. Other than that, it was a great experience
- Negative experience / did not enjoy it
- Negative experience mixing with other schools
- More time at each game
- Suggestions / recommendations for lunch / lunchtime
- Be with your friends / let pupils pick their own teams / group suggestions
- More types of jobs/careers/companies shown
- More games/suggestions for games and/or careers to include
- More challenging games/make the games harder

Appendix 1 of the report provided the full feedback report with survey feedback results and comments.

A feedback video was produced with comments from what employers, teachers, and stakeholders thought of the event, the video shows how the young people participated in a day of work-based games and skills challenges. [4C UR Future LIVE 2022 - Ards & North Down - YouTube](#)

The event provided a good introduction for pupils on areas of work as well as introducing them to start considering their skills and what might be needed to prepare them for their future career paths.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the content of the report.

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

Members recalled their own experiences of career advice at school, with the proposer Councillor McKimm remembering his aspirations to enter social work being dismissed by his teacher who, in an extremely brief conversation, had felt that factory work would have been a more appropriate option for employment. Two degrees and a doctorate later though that advice had been proven to be incorrect, and Councillor McKimm had found himself delivering a similar programme to the 4C

UR Future project in the latter stages of his career before he moved into politics full time. He therefore valued the individual and community benefits and outcomes of this particular intervention, which greatly lifted the expectations of what was possible for the pupils. He praised all those involved in its delivery.

The seconder, Alderman Armstrong-Cotter remembered career advice being informal and less frequent when she was at school. This engagement showed that times were changing for the better and the aim was to get children into vocations rather than jobs and tools like this were so important in helping them become skilled and happy and content in their chosen career. She recognised the budget constraints on many events and projects at the moment, but she was delighted that a scheme like this had been able to run and the Council should be proud to have played a role. Encouraging young people in the Borough to develop and gain skills should be a core part of the Council's economic development and regeneration remit. She particularly noted one of the comments from a pupil who had been hesitant to engage initially but had said they were glad they had taken part. That feedback was testament to the effort that had been put in and she hoped that similar projects could continue.

Describing the project as an outstanding success, Councillor Irvine referred to his youth work background and felt that if even only one person benefited these types of programmes were a success. He reflected on his own experience at school which provided only a single careers interview and a two-week work placement. He knew that many children were not cohesive in school but when they were given an opportunity like this to come out into the world and see what they were capable of, they learned much more.

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

9. INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF INVEST NI REPORT (FILE RDP155)

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

Background

Members would know that Invest NI (INI) was Northern Ireland's key economic development agency, and was a Non-Departmental Body, known as an Arm's Length Body, which fed into the Department for the Economy (DfE).

In 2022, Sir Michael Lyons and a panel of experts were commissioned by the DfE to undertake a review of INI, to explore its recent performance and whether it was fit for purpose to deliver the 10X Vision.

Sir Michael Lyons and his team consulted with over 300 stakeholders, including local council officers. It was originally anticipated that the review would be complete by September 2022 but due to the range and complexity of issues, publication was

delayed until January 2023. Below was a summary of the report's recommendations and findings which were relevant to local government.

INI had a headcount of 647 staff, most of whom work from its Belfast headquarters. Over the four years 2016-2020 it was allocated an annual budget of £138m. In 2020 and 2021 the Organisation processed additional sums to support business grants related to Covid-19.

Scope of Review

The review considered various areas from the strategic context in which INI operates, its leadership and governance, portfolio of programmes, range of activities which it supported and how it communicated.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the consultations and work that was completed, the report proposed 17 recommendations across the areas reviewed. These were summarised below:

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Area	Finding	Recommendation
Invest NI Board and Senior Leadership	<p>Finding 1a: There appear to be profound divisions at Board and senior leadership level in Invest NI, which are having a detrimental effect on the organisation. This offers a serious threat to the future trust that can be placed in the organisation to deliver strategic priorities and requires urgent action.</p> <p>Finding 1b: Although laid out in various published documents, the roles and remit of the Invest NI Board, Chief Executive and Executive Leadership Team are not clear to some members of staff, including at a very senior level, and require formal clarification and reinforcement to remove ambiguity.</p>	<p>Recommendation 1a: The Department should further build on the actions taken so far to address issues with Invest NI Board and senior leadership by:</p> <p>(i) Taking such actions as are necessary to ensure strong and confident leadership by the Invest NI Board and clarity as to its roles and responsibilities, especially in terms of oversight of the use of public monies. The respective roles of the Board Chair and Members, the Chief Executive/ Accounting Officer and other senior executives need to be clearly defined and included in the forthcoming Partnership Agreement to be drawn up by DfE.</p> <p>(ii) Taking early steps to progress the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive with appropriate skills and experience to be able to restore full confidence in the agency and deliver significant change. This should be done with the participation of current Board members but not left to the Board alone to progress. It is critical that the Department is involved in this process.</p> <p>(iii) Ensuring that the permanent Chief Executive is tasked with the urgent reshaping of the most senior levels of executive management and given the necessary support to make the changes agreed by Board and Department; and</p>

(iv) Urgently completing the 'Raising Concerns' investigations and ensuring that any conclusions educate steps (i) to (iii) above.

Recommendation 1b: The organisational structure should be revised to align with strategic priorities and be easier for both internal staff and external stakeholders to understand and navigate. When revising the structure consideration should be given to reducing the number of senior management posts and ensuring these are aligned with future strategy.

Recommendation 1c: The Board of Invest NI should undertake an annual effectiveness review (this should be carried out externally every three years) and an annual performance review of senior executive leadership, which should be reviewed by the Remuneration Committee. The Board should also assess the effectiveness of the relationship between the two parties.

Recommendation 1d: Consideration should be given to the appointment of an experienced Board Secretary position to provide authoritative advice and support to the Chair and Board.

DfE Governance and Oversight

Finding 2a: Strategy, Policy, and Guidance from DfE is unclear and not communicated to Invest NI in a manner that takes account of the business planning cycle.

Finding 2b: There is a need for greater formal clarity between DfE and Invest NI, outlining expectations and responsibilities on both parties, but that allows for an agile and responsive Economic Development Agency with proportionate control mechanisms in place.

Recommendation 2a: DfE needs to set clear policy and guidance and communicate this to Invest NI in a formal manner within a new Partnership Agreement as soon as possible. This should be reported on, and reviewed, on a regular basis.

Recommendation 2b: A formal agreement should be established between DfE and Invest NI that outlines the expectations and responsibilities of both parties but allows for an agile and responsive economic development agency. Appropriate proportionate control measures, including strong post hoc scrutiny, should be included in the agreement.

Recommendation 2c: DfE should look to strengthen its policy development and monitoring capability and resources across the Department.

Client Company Model

Finding 3a: The current “client company” model is inflexible, the criteria are not widely understood by businesses, and it may lead to missed investment opportunities and/or ‘deadweight’.

Finding 3b: There is a high level of ongoing or repeat, non-repayable support to a number of existing clients.

Finding 3c: We heard evidence internally and externally that there are insufficient and inconsistent skill levels within the Client Executive cohort.

Recommendation 3a: Invest NI should review the emphasis and resource given to the client company model to facilitate greater flexibility and support for the wider NI business base. There should be less emphasis on curating established relationships with companies and greater emphasis on diversifying the client base to meet the needs of 10X. Invest NI must ensure greater emphasis on demonstrating the impact of public support and greater transparency as to which companies are receiving ongoing subvention and whether that should continue.

Recommendation 3b: There is a need to rethink the type of support provided, particularly in such a challenging public sector financing backdrop with greater emphasis on loan and equity rather than grant support as well as fuller utilisation of alternative sources of funding. Invest NI should strengthen its role and expertise as a guide to alternative sources of finance and work with DfE and DoF to ensure that it maximises its own use of available loan/equity finance.

Recommendation 3c: Client Executives and client facing staff should undergo continuous professional development and training relevant to their sectors. The Client Executive role should also be developed to ensure that it is focused on delivering the objectives of the 10x Vision. External expertise should be used where internal skills are not sufficient.

Portfolio of Programmes

Finding 4a: The portfolio of programmes that Invest NI offers to companies is too large and unwieldy, with the organisation, including at the most senior level, struggling to clearly define the exact number available. This makes it difficult for companies and staff to understand what is on offer and questions the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme offering.

Finding 4b: There appears to be very little consideration of what is offered by other delivery organisations when designing new programmes or reviewing current ones. Reviews of programmes appear to be sporadic and non-strategic. Some evaluation frameworks are in operation, but these appear to only be on individual

Recommendation 4a: Invest NI needs to ensure a streamlined portfolio of programmes is offered to align with the growth ambitions for the NI economy and deliver additionality and value for money. A strategic audit of all Invest NI programmes should take place, in conjunction with DfE, to assess economic impact, ensure they are based on current priorities, meet Key Performance Indicators and eliminate duplicate provision (including taking account of external provision).

Recommendation 4b: Invest NI should ensure that an agile framework is in place to appoint external organisations to deliver programmes, especially in regard to the latest and emerging technologies.

	programme level, and not across the portfolio.	
Green Growth	<p>Finding 5a: Whilst a dedicated unit within Invest NI has been established to support the development of the green economy, it is immature in its development and has insufficient resources.</p> <p>Finding 5b: Despite the strategic importance of the Net Zero agenda, the Panel heard evidence from DfE that Invest NI had been slow to recognise the significance of the green economy and has been slow to respond to the development of new schemes to support the delivery of DfE's Energy Strategy.</p>	<p>Recommendation 5: Invest NI should urgently engage with DfE and DAERA to agree the policy priorities in relation to the green economy. Invest NI should develop a clear and ambitious plan to determine the appropriate financial and human resources required to deliver upon these priorities.</p>
Tourism	<p>Finding 6: There appear to be inefficiencies in the split of responsibilities for the delivery of tourism support between Invest NI and Tourism NI.</p>	<p>Recommendation 6: Support for Tourism should be led by TNI and, in keeping with the IREP recommendation, responsibilities related to tourist accommodation capital schemes should be delivered by TNI.</p>
Skills	<p>Finding 7: We heard significant evidence regarding the importance of skills, however there is a perception that the NI skills ecosystem is somewhat cluttered, uncoordinated and involves duplicated efforts.</p>	<p>Recommendation 7: DfE should lead on a review all of skills programmes that it provides funding for, including the offer of Invest NI, to ensure focus, reduce duplication and eliminate wasteful provision. Consideration should be given to widening the scope of this review to take account of the entirety of the regional skills offering.</p>
Performance Metrics	<p>Finding 8a: The current outward facing metrics do not allow Invest NI to demonstrate the impact of its interventions. They are not wide enough to capture the full range of activity and in some cases better reflect how clients perform rather than what difference financial assistance has made.</p> <p>Finding 8b: The current emphasis of metrics unduly focuses on outputs, particularly job promotion rather than outcomes and should be widened to include higher productivity, job quality and innovation impacts.</p> <p>Finding 8c: Existing KPIs do not tell the full story of Invest NI's work, and this contributes to suboptimal external communication.</p> <p>Finding 8d: The 10X Vision provides an opportunity for DfE and Invest NI to establish a new set of KPIs that will provide a much more focused approach</p>	<p>Recommendation 8: A well-defined set of SMART performance metrics should be set, and evaluated, by DfE in close coordination with Invest NI. They should focus on demonstrating where the organisation adds value to the NI economy and be better aligned to the 10X Vision and any future policy priorities of the NI Executive.</p>

Sub Regional Partnerships	to how Invest NI leads and supports economic development in NI.	Recommendation 9a: There is a need for a more co-ordinated, partnership approach at a local level especially on employability, skills and land and premises issues. DfE working where appropriate with DfC should consider how best to strengthen and promote a strong sub regional economic ecosystem and ensure they have effective leadership. Invest NI should strengthen its contribution with increased enthusiasm, a stronger focus on the local, the encouragement of entrepreneurship and more effective cooperation with partners.
	Finding 9a: There is insufficient focus on the development of sub regional economies. Regional offices are under-utilised with staff and decision-making too centralised in Belfast. While we acknowledge that regional development is not the sole responsibility of Invest NI it does have a key role to play.	
	Finding 9b: There is inconsistency in how Invest NI engage with external partners, including the Department for the Economy, other parts of central government, local government, UK Government and the private sector in NI.	Recommendation 9b: Invest NI Regional Offices should have a more strategic role and be more clearly influential within the agency including at ELT level. The staff, resources and powers allocated to them should be reviewed.
Land and Property	Finding 10a: Invest NI's involvement in land acquisition and disposal has been limited over the last decade.	Recommendation 10: Invest NI should bring forward a strategy for the development of industrial land and property in partnership with other key stakeholders, in particular the local councils. This should consider respective roles of each partner in improving the supply of land and premises for growing businesses
	Finding 10b: There is evidence of market failure in the provision of industrial land in a number of areas in NI.	
Internationalisation – Inward Investment and Trade Support	Finding 11a: Attracting and supporting Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and inward investment is widely recognised as playing a key role in Invest NI's portfolio of support but there is lack of clarity as to the organisation's strategy on FDI and how it supports the 10X Vision.	Recommendation 11a: Invest NI's approach to inward investment should be driven by what type of inward investment NI should seek to attract and what supports are needed to secure their location in NI. This should build on 10X and its supporting strategies on trade, investment and skills and more fully involve a wide range of stakeholders including existing companies and universities in defining future priorities.
	Finding 11b: A perception and concern has built up that Invest NI is too focused on attracting FDI while data indicates that FDI companies account for less than one third of Invest NI funding over the last 5 years (2017-2021).	Recommendation 11b: Trade, FDI and wider Invest NI support teams need to work more effectively together to ensure that trade and investment supports are visible, targeted and flexible to maximise impact.
	Finding 11c: Stakeholders were largely positive on the quality and value of market intelligence and services provided by Invest NI overseas offices although their role is not well enough understood and articulated inside and outside the organisation.	Recommendation 11c: There should be a clearer strategy setting out how existing and potentially new overseas offices align with the future focus of expanding trade opportunities for local businesses and targeting inward investment/FDI support for NI. This
	Finding 11d: There are clearly defined metrics that demonstrate Invest NI's activity in supporting trade and	

Financial & Human Resources

investment, however they are largely input driven. There is no clear metric to demonstrate how the agency will increase the quality of new inward investment.

Finding 11e: The value and impact of inward investment, both Great Britain and FDI, is not sufficiently monitored, evaluated and understood.

Finding 12a: Invest NI is well resourced compared to similar organisations although it has a larger remit. Despite advances in technology since the previous IREP review, there remains an imbalance between back office / support resources and business facing staff within the organisation.

Finding 12b: The loss of EU funding has required Invest NI to consider significant budget re-prioritisation. However, the extent to which DfE and DoF have resolved the immediate loss of ERDF funding is also unclear.

Finding 12c: Single year budget allocations seriously undermine Invest NI's ability to strategically plan interventions and supports.

Finding 12d: Invest NI's current organisational structure does not align with Invest NI's strategic priorities and main function as a delivery body. This structure can be confusing for external stakeholders and staff to navigate and limits efficient and effective use of resource.

Finding 12e: There are significant concerns regarding the value and the timing of Invest NI's Evolve programme.

Finding 12f: Invest NI appears to have a top-heavy workforce. There is also likely to be a large number of retirees within Invest NI over the next ten years and there is currently no resource succession plan in place.

should involve clear prioritisation, planning and delivery objectives for each overseas office ensuring that they are adequately resourced. Invest NI should secure sustainable funding for all new offices.

Recommendation 11d: Clearer KPIs should be set and stronger monitoring, evaluation and reporting on for Inward Investment/ FDI projects is required to demonstrate impact and added value.

Recommendation 12a: Invest NI should revise its organisational structure to align with strategic priorities and to be easier for both internal staff and external stakeholders to understand and navigate. When revising the structure consideration should be given to reducing the number of ELT posts. It should also take full account of the benefits of digitalisation.

Recommendation 12b: The Invest NI board should establish a Strategic Resources Committee, to strengthen financial monitoring and prioritisation and give greater oversight of personnel and skills issues.

Recommendation 12c: Invest NI should take urgent steps to review the shape and skills of its workforce in line with the organisational changes we propose. This should include:

- A rebalancing of the organisation's structure in favour of client facing activity;
- A stronger emphasis on performance review and continuing professional development of staff;
- The urgent acceleration of work on succession planning given the age profile of the organisation;
- A programme of regular inward and outward secondments to strengthen expertise and business experience within the organisation; and
- Suspension of the current Evolve Programme pending the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive.

Recommendation 12d: DfE and DoF should clarify the extent to which Invest NI's loss of ERDF funding has been resolved and the quantum of funding that will be provided to replace it.

Alternative Funding Streams

Finding 13: The introduction of new schemes from the UK Government, following EU Exit, means there is now a range of funding streams potentially available for economic development activities.

Recommendation 12e: Invest NI should be confident in its future budget allocations. DfE, with support from DoF, should therefore consider the scope for Invest NI to be given three-year budget allocations to enable a more strategic and effective approach to interventions planning.

Intelligence & Digitisation

Finding 14a: There are weaknesses and inconsistencies in the way Invest NI records and uses data. This presents risk and limitations to efficient monitoring and evaluation and leads to a lack of confidence in any data held.

Recommendation 13: In light of the changing funding arrangements, Invest NI must actively develop, and maintain, a detailed understanding of all sources of funding available for economic development in NI; share that understanding with NI businesses and other agencies and work closely with DfE, other depts and relevant agencies to maximise the benefits for NI through a coordinated and strategic approach.

Finding 14b: Invest NI internal systems require digital transformation to improve efficiency and effectiveness, for internal reporting purposes and for external use to support an improved digital customer journey.

Recommendation 14a: Invest NI must urgently review its information technology infrastructure with a view to accelerating digitisation, improving the capture of information on all transactions, and thus enabling customer facing staff to focus on programme delivery. Ease of access to appropriate information should be improved for all Invest NI Staff and for existing and potential client companies.

Finding 14c: Invest NI does not fully utilise learning from programme evaluations. Monitoring and evaluation are important steps in delivering value for money.

Recommendation 14b: Invest NI needs to develop a strategy for the proactive sharing of economic and market intelligence to policy makers and key stakeholders in NI.

Finding 14d: Invest NI does not fully collect or share intelligence. This is a lost opportunity to inform policy and provide advice to DfE, other Departments and stakeholders.

Communications

Finding 15a: Invest NI does not have a strategic communications and engagement strategy that articulates the breadth of its activities or impact that these have.

Finding 15b: Invest NI provides a wide array of support and assistance over and above bringing Foreign Direct Investment into NI, but it does not appear to communicate its other achievements to the same degree, giving the perception to many that it is predominantly an Inward Investment and job promotion agency.

Finding 15c: We did not find substantive evidence that the Board's stated ambassadorial role, outlined in the Board Operating Framework, is fulfilled.

Finding 15d: We were informed that the Invest NI brand has strong recognition overseas, however, the name of the organisation undersells the range of activity undertaken with indigenous business.

Recommendation 15a: Invest NI needs to develop a comprehensive strategic communications and engagement strategy recognising the needs of different audiences. The Invest NI Board needs to take a more active role in delivering this strategy by making full use of its ambassadorial role.

Recommendation 15b: Invest NI should monitor and communicate the impact and value of the overseas offices more clearly and regularly as part of a wider strategic communications and engagement plan.

Risk and Control

Finding 16a: There are some areas of strength in the control environment but clear areas of weakness in the overall framework. Further improvements are required to the current risk and control structure to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation.

Finding 16b: Incomplete or inaccurate information has been provided to casework approval committees. There have been instances where documentation was either not available or could not be located, controls and procedures were not adhered to, and prior conditions were either overlooked or not met.

Finding 16c: The creation of the Governance and Compliance Council (GOCC), was in response to investment in a failed project and does not easily integrate to the current structures. As a result, responsibilities and reporting lines between the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), GOCC and Internal Audit Committee (IAC) are unclear. Board governance responsibilities cannot be replaced by executive arrangements.

Finding 16d: The current arrangements for Post Project Evaluations are not satisfactory, with project owners carrying out evaluations in some areas.

Recommendation 16a: The creation of a centralised key compliance and business assurance team which will help strengthen the second line of defence in risk management and control at an operational level.

Recommendation 16b: Invest NI should consider commissioning an Enterprise Risk Management Framework Review to identify potential weaknesses in the control environment including systems.

Recommendation 16c: Invest NI should consider how oversight mechanisms for the large number of lower value projects, not assessed by the Invest NI Appraisal Team, can be strengthened to ensure delivery against objectives and value for money.

Recommendation 16d: A review of the implementation of Invest NI's raising concerns policy should be undertaken in conjunction with DfE, with a view to strengthening the requirement for timely investigation of any concerns raised, improving information sharing with the Department and encouraging those staff who have identified issues for concern to actively raise these.

Invest NI and a New Economic Vision

Finding 17a: 10X has been positively received as an ambitious vision but clear endorsement from the NI Executive and inclusion in a future Programme for Government would strengthen its status and further encourage cross departmental work.

Finding 17b: Slow progress in developing detailed implementation plans is having a direct impact on Invest NI's own ability to plan for the long term.

Finding 17c: 'A 10X Economy' was not publicly consulted upon and we found limited evidence of it being co-designed with Invest NI. It has also been suggested that DfE did not fully use the agency's expertise in the development of the 10X Vision.

Finding 17d: Invest NI is key to the delivery of 10X, its current priorities and programmes broadly align with the Vision, but the organisation will have to be more flexible to deliver on the Vision as it is developed.

Recommendation 17a: DfE must ensure that the 10X Vision and subsequent action plans are tangibly linked to future NI Executive strategies, particularly the Programme for Government.

Recommendation 17b: DfE should provide clear written policy direction on the 10X Vision and its implications for its further activities to Invest NI and other relevant delivery bodies as soon as possible.

DfE should ensure Invest NI is fully engaged in the co-design of applicable elements of the 10X action plan.

Many of the report's findings and recommendations related to the internal working of INI however, several of them may have affected how local government authorities worked with the Organisation, as well as how businesses could be better served.

Findings and Recommendations №: 2b, 3a, 3c,4a, 4b, 5, 6, 7, 8, and especially 9a, 9b, 10a 10b 11a, 11b, 11c, 12b, 13, 14b,17c were of particular relevance to councils and ongoing contact with the INI, at the right level, should be maintained to ensure councils' influence in shaping polices, work streams and supports that best met local need and the wider business base, going forward.

A full copy of the Review Report could be found at: [Independent Review of Invest Northern Ireland \(InvestNI\) | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/independent-review-of-invest-northern-ireland)

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

Proposed by Councillor McKimm, seconded by Councillor Dunlop, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor McKimm felt that the report made worrying reading, pointing to varying internal conflicts. He asked the Head of Economic Development for her view of the findings and if she had any idea what the long-term aspirations of the organisation might be.

The Officer felt that the findings had reflected the Council's recent experience of the organisation, noting in particular, an unalignment with business skills and support

services, and a working relationship that only focused on operational aspects. Long term, the Council needed to be involved at a strategic level.

Councillor Dunlop voiced his disappointed at the report, particularly in relation to a weak approach to developing a green economy. Given Northern Ireland's background in innovation and capacity to achieve great engineering, he had found it sad to read that the country was so far behind and strategically, Invest NI had lacked focus. A failure to invest in land and property within the Borough was another big concern despite the Council's continued demands for investment. He hoped that organisations such as NDDO would be consulted and come on board.

Alderman McDowell, along with his NILGA colleagues, had made a strong representation to Invest NI to emphasise the major role that local Councils had in economic development, as defined under the Review of Public Administration. He was therefore extremely disappointed that the role of local authorities had been missed completely in the report, aside from a single reference to a required strategy for use of industrial land. The Council had been sending that message for many years and the report confirmed how dysfunctional Invest NI had been. He also noted it had been a significant period of time since representatives from Invest NI had addressed or consulted with Council members.

Continuing, he felt the review missed further key points, noting the obstacles Invest NI had put in place for a particular business he was aware of within the Borough that had not appeared to be 'sexy' enough, despite employing a number of people. He believed that Councils should have a role in inward investment and there was no mention of that either.

Given those feelings on the report, Alderman McDowell indicated that he wished to make an amendment to what had already been proposed.

Alderman McDowell proposed an amendment, seconded Councillor Cummings, to note the report and that Council writes to Invest NI to express its disappointment that the role of the Council has not been adequately considered in the review and invites senior representative from INI to address a meeting of the Committee on future plans.

Speaking as seconder, Councillor Cummings noted the operational involvement and asked if Council was involved in any way in the review that had been presented. The officer confirmed that Council was working at different levels on different aspects and that there had been some meetings around collaboration on marketing but there was a lot more that needed to be done.

Councillor Cummings felt it fundamental that Council was involved in the follow up of this review, so it could influence where priorities should be.

The Director of Place advised that senior Council officers had fed into the strategic review. While the review acknowledged that there needed to be better alignment with local Councils, the review had failed to indicate how that was going to happen. The Director added that under Council's Community Planning section, there was a Land Estates Group, chaired by the Chief Executive, and Invest NI had been represented

at it recently. The Director had highlighted the Council's land concerns at that time but that had not featured in the review. She had also asked for a meeting with Invest NI's senior team to get an understanding of the organisation's plans in relation to INI land.

Councillor Morgan added her support for the amendment and wondered if Council could request a further update from Invest NI on how it had addressed the many shortcomings that were listed. She was concerned that just noting the report allowed the matters to disappear.

Summing up as the original proposer, Councillor McKimm concurred that the practical action suggested in the amendment was appropriate and he looked forward to the response.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman McDowell, seconded by Councillor Cummings, to note the report and that Council writes to Invest NI to express its disappointment that the role of the Council has not been adequately considered in the review and invites senior representative from INI to address a meeting of the Committee on future plans.

10. EXPERIENCE AND WALKS AND TOURS PROGRAMME UPDATE REPORT 2022/23 (FILE TO/EV92)

(Appendix VI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity stating that since 2015, the Tourism Service Unit had delivered AND Walks and Tours annually across the borough from April to New Year's Day. In addition to this, the Experience AND programme was now in its fourth year of operation. The Experience programme began in 2019 as a pilot initiative and further developed during Covid restrictions. It assisted local businesses at a time of 'need' when their normal operating models were not deliverable. Assistance was provided by officers to deliver primarily safe outdoor experiences. Its success had been demonstrated by its growing programme annually.

AND Walks and Tours Programme 2022/23

25 walks and tours were delivered in 2022/23 beginning with an Easter themed minibeasts children's nature trail, in Castle Park, through to the popular walking tour of Newtownards and a new historical walking tour of Donaghadee both on New Year's Day 2023.

A total of 523 tickets were available with 453 sold, equating to 87% of tickets sold. Of these tickets sold, 54% were outside of borough (OoB) purchases. Ticket prices ranged from £5 to £42 per person with income approximately £4000.

The programme included a diverse range of tours for all age groups and a variety of themes including horticultural, historical, Queen's Platinum Jubilee, children's nature trails, summer solstice and an opportunity to 'welcome back' the Brent Geese to Strangford Lough. Locations ranged from Portaferry, Millisle, Ballywalter, Donaghadee, Newtownards, Helen's Bay and Comber. This year's walks and tours

complemented the two main food festivals in summer and autumn (See Appendix 1 for full listing).

A number of private tour guides have now become established in the borough with assistance and support from officers. The AND Walks and Tours programme was therefore mindful of their specialisms and areas of interest. Each year, the programme was designed to complement/support such activity. Council intervention was therefore reduced in the number of tours planned for 23/24 and would likely continue to reduce in coming years.

Experience AND Programme 2022/23

The Tourism Development Officers work with local tourism providers throughout the year, to deliver new or enhanced saleable AND Experiences for visitors.

At the start of the season, 30 experiences were programmed for May – October 2022; however, due to mainly adverse weather conditions, where re-scheduling was not an option, coupled with unforeseen personal circumstances for some businesses, not all were delivered. Some experiences were cancelled due to businesses failing to deliver on their initial commitment. Officers had adapted the participation criteria in the 2023/24 programme, ensuring roles and responsibilities are duly allocated. By the end of the season a total of 18 experiences, ranging from 'on the water' activity to craft and wellbeing took place at the following locations: Bangor, Helen's Bay, Holywood, Ballywater, Kircubbin, Whiterock and Killinchy.

From 18 AND Experiences delivered; 263 tickets were available with 235 tickets sold, equating to 89% of available tickets sold. Of these tickets sold, 59% were OoB purchases including Canada, GB, ROI as well as rest of NI. Feedback was incredibly positive for each Experience. The budget attached to the development and delivery of the tours is £6000 annually. This allowed for seed funding and de-risking the development of the Experience for the tourism provider. The programme in 2022/23 had a net actual spend of £2215. Ticket prices ranged from £10 to £110 per person.

The AND Experience programme provided industry with an opportunity to gain more experience in the tourism sector or 'pilot' initiatives. An Industry Day was held at Clandeboye Lodge Hotel held on 4 October 2022 which showcased the programme's success to date and encouraged new and more varied participants for 2023/24. Presentations were made by Tourism Northern Ireland on Experience Development and Mark Rodgers, Dalriada Tours, on how developing experiences had grown his business. The event ended with a speed networking session allowing business collaboration.

50 business attended the event with very positive feedback, both in terms of information gathering and the opportunity to network and make connections. It had resulted in a number of new collaborative experience development relationships.

Historic Environment Division (HED) Sites - Nendrum Monastic Site and Grey Point Fort

The Tourism Service was approached by HED in March 2022, to seek assistance with operational delivery for one 'exceptional year' due to resource limitations, at Nendrum Monastic Site and Grey Point Fort. Further to a Service Level Agreement,

the Tourism Service sourced and managed tour guides to deliver site opening on Saturdays; June to start of September. The opening days were promoted by ANDBC and HED through digital and social channels. As a result, Nendrum Monastic Site had 272 visitors and Grey Point Fort 362 visitors on these days.

AND Walks and Tours Programme 2023/24

The programme would begin in May and finish on New Year's Day 2024. This year the programme would complement monthly food activities/events happening within the borough. It was anticipated that once the programme was finalised it would contain approximately 12 walks and tours.

Experience AND Programme 2023/34

Further to the Industry Day in October, an Expression of Interest was advertised via Council ezines and social media. It accepted applications from local businesses or businesses delivering experiences in the borough. As a result, 44 applications were submitted.

Following panel assessment, 26 experiences were successful in meeting the criteria and would be included in the programme for 2023/24. Two had subsequently been removed due to reallocation of funding from the TNI Market Led Experience Programme, meaning they would be delivered within the current financial year. The Council EOI experiences would run from May – September taking place across the borough including Bangor, Ballyholme, Holywood, Kircubbin, Millisle, Whiterock, Portaferry, Comber and Groomsport. The themes included creative, wellbeing, 'on the water' and food. Businesses participating in the 2023/24 programme were included in Appendix 2.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

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

Councillor Adair looked forward to a new walks and tours programme, adding that it was good to encourage people to get out and enjoy the beautiful scenery that the Borough had to offer. He noted also that the programme had encouraged many visitors to make day trips and he commended the Tourism team for getting the guide distributed widely throughout key locations in Belfast including George Best City Airport.

Referring to tour guides, Councillor McKimm had consulted with a group called Dander Down which had been thankful for support from Council's Tourism officers. The group had previously talked to officers about the possibility of using 'whisper sets' which provided an audio guide through headphones. He was aware now of even better technology that worked with smart phones and the group was keen to pick up those conversations with officers. In addition the group were interested to work with officers to provide a wellbeing project that involved information gathering from care home residents to provide historical and ghost themed tours.

The Head of Tourism agreed to progress those conversations with relevant officers.

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

11. TRAVEL AND TOURISM EXPOS 22/23 UPDATE AND 2023/24 ATTENDANCE (FILE 170871)

(Appendix VII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity stating that the Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Development Strategy 2018-2030 set challenging targets to increase the share of overnight trips to 10% and increase visitor expenditure to £82m. One of the thematic priorities was 'Promote to Invest'. To raise awareness of the destination in the ROI, GB, European and world markets, it was becoming increasingly necessary for officers to increase and develop relationships with tourism operators on an in-person basis.

Following ANDBC's first attendance at World Travel Market (WTM) London, pre-pandemic 2018 and 2019, officers sought and gained approval from Council in December 2021 to attend this event plus additional Expos and buyer events as appropriate in 2022/23. This was subject to successful application and/or the event being deemed suitable and from within existing budgets. See Appendix 1 for previously approved listing of events for 2022/23 and requested for approval for future attendance.

The Expo platforms were used to sell experiences and products on offer in the Borough, with the intended outcome to increase bed nights and income to local businesses. This was primarily via incoming trade operators' itineraries, although some expos also offer 'public consumer days' where this segment could also be targeted.

Throughout the year, Tourism Northern Ireland (TNI) and Tourism Ireland (TI) inform the local Tourism industry of the various opportunities to attend Expos/Buyer Meetings. Opportunities include within Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, UK, Europe, USA, and other overseas destinations. An online application portal was used to submit an Expression of Interest, subsequently to be assessed by the organiser. If successful, many of the opportunities were subsidised with the attendee responsible for flights and accommodation (on some occasions these are also subsidised). This kept costs at a minimum.

For note, the Expos listed in Appendix 1, plus additional trans-Atlantic and European events, were traditionally attended by a large number of local councils from NI including Newry, Mourne and Down, Antrim and Newtownabbey, Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon, Mid and East Antrim, Fermanagh and Omagh and Belfast, highlighting the need for ANDBC's attendance to ensure the destination is profiled along with other NI destinations.

2022/23 Expos/ Buyer Meeting Attendance

Throughout the year, officers attended eight events, as listed below. Three were virtual and five were in person events with a total of 126 individual appointments.

The number of meetings at each event was dependent on the variety of formats used by each organiser and its duration.

Event	Location	Month	Appointments
Meet the Industry	Virtual	January	21
Expo GB	Virtual	March	9
Meet the Buyer *	ICC, Belfast	March	25
Italy Virtual	Virtual	May	13
Coach & Group *	City Hotel Derry/Londonderry	September	13
Flavours of Ireland *	Guildhall, London	October	8
World Travel Market*	Excel, London	November	20
ITOA (Irish Tour Operator Association)	Manor House Hotel, Enniskillen	November	17
			Total 126

*Networking Opportunities: These events provide informal 'down time' activity post event day to network with trade representatives. This was an additional and invaluable opportunity to speak with Tour Operators who had not been secured on the appointment schedule throughout the day.

At the time of writing the report officers were due to attend Holiday World Dublin as part of the Visit Belfast stand 27-29 January 2023. Whilst trade buyers were in attendance, this tended to be primarily a public consumer event and would be staffed by visitor servicing officers.

A further virtual TNI "Meet the industry" was also scheduled for February 1 and 2 with a place secured for officers to participate on both days.

Feedback from Trade

Attendance at the above events had highlighted the demand from inbound operators for new destinations within the island of Ireland; something beyond the 'known' such as Giant's Causeway, Game of Thrones, Belfast, and Derry/Londonderry. New demand included opportunities to escape the city, enjoy the natural environment and meet genuine local people. Feedback from the trade at the appointments was highly positive with many wishing to arrange follow up calls/visits post event.

Developing and secured opportunities

Follow up with all those contacts established in 2022 was scheduled for January / February 2023. The aim was to further develop relationships and attempt to secure either an online familiarisation visit, or where possible, in-person visits during 2023 ultimately leading to bookings.

It should be noted that most operators worked with a 2-3 year lead time in itinerary creation, although some could adapt more quickly. In person familiarisation visits were also mostly required prior to any inclusion in an itinerary. One confirmation of

an in-person familiarisation trip, which originated from World Travel Market (WTM), was confirmed for February 2023 with EI Travel Group. The initial contact was made with their representative in 2019; a minimum of five further contacts in person and virtual meetings with officers had ultimately led to this visit. The continual building and development of relationships with operators was key.

Another example is EBZ Ireland, who officers initially met in 2018. They began visits to the area once lockdown was lifted and now schedule an annual tour in the Borough as part of their NI offering for approximately 20 passengers. This tour included Strangford Lough and attractions such as Mount Stewart.

Excursions Ireland carried out familiarisation visits in 2017 and 2018 following officer engagement at Expos. They started scheduling AND in 2021 to include visits to Bangor Castle Walled Garden. This delivered two group visits and 62 passengers in 2021 and increased in 2022 with 10 group visits and in excess of 200 passengers, generating over £1,800 for the Walled Garden. At the time of writing the report, a further six dates were confirmed for 2023/24, with potential for additional tours. Furthermore, Excursions Ireland attended a familiarisation visit to an officer organised Ballywalter Park Estate tour, and due to its success, it was now included within their portfolio for 2023/24 with a confirmed booking date being discussed at time of writing. Further discussions were currently being held with the Estate for additional development opportunities. In addition to this, tours to Echlinville Distillery by the company were also in discussion between both parties following officer introduction and visit.

At WTM in 2021, officers met with a representative whose umbrella company dealt in high end visits, Vesperience and group tours, Veenus. This meeting was followed up with an online familiarisation trip. As a result, the company met officers again at WTM in 2022. At the event they advised officers that they were now including AND in their Veenus portfolio. This itinerary included Mount Stewart, Echlinville Distillery and Tracey's Farmhouse Kitchen. Further discussions had identified additional opportunities for other parts of their business which could be included in the future. They had indicated that they were still working on regaining their full operational strength and market post pandemic.

2023-25 Expo attendance

Opportunities existed for the Tourism service to personally attend trade/consumer Expos, as listed in Appendix 1, both under an ANDBC banner or, where appropriate, in conjunction with Tourism NI, Tourism Ireland or Visit Belfast to promote the Borough's tourism offering. Dependent on the specific event, attendance by one or two officers would be evaluated at the time of booking.

It should be noted that several shows had limited places available for attendance via pre-application and presence could not be guaranteed. A number operated on a first-come, first-served basis and those requiring travel and accommodation were best booked as early as possible to secure efficiencies on travel and accommodation. Pre-approval by Council to attend some of these, others of similar nature, or all of these Expos allowed for immediate submission of Expressions of Interest and the earliest booking of flights and accommodation which reduced the overall costs.

Attendance at Expos in 2022/23 totaled approximately £1,600. It was assumed in 2023-2025 a budget of circa £3,000 from existing tourism budgets would be appropriate to facilitate attendance at listed events. The indicative increase accounts for events post Covid, as included in Appendix 1, that were not back in full operation / in person in 2022. The allocated budget was included in existing planned tourism budgets as business-as-usual activity.

Other councils within NI, as listed in the report, had been contacted in relation to plans for 2023/24-25, and whilst in similar positions with budget restraints for the foreseeable future, their plans were to attend as many as possible, subject to budgets. Work of this nature continued to profile NI destinations and engage trade interest for future bookings.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves that:

1. The Tourism Service Unit can apply, and subject to successful applications, up to two officers can attend some or all the listed tourism Expos in Appendix 1, plus any further/replacement bespoke opportunities of similar platform/market, under an ANDBC banner, in conjunction with Tourism NI, Tourism Ireland and Visit Belfast dependent upon budget availability.
2. The budget for attendance, travel and accommodation is funded from existing planned tourism development and destination marketing budgets subject to the Rates setting process.

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

Highlighting the benefits of networking and promoting the Borough, Alderman Wilson was happy to propose the recommendation which would enable officers to plan ahead more efficiently without the need to come to Council each time with a begging bowl.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter agreed that the promotion of the Borough and information gathering was extremely beneficial. She felt this was a streamlined approach and it would be more efficient for officers who had the expertise to attend without an elected member and then for information to be fed back to Members through a detailed report. It was an important learning experience and a careful way of using the budget.

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

12. REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT – DECEMBER 2022 (FILE FIN 45)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity stating that The Regeneration & Development Directorate's Budgetary Control Report covered

the 9-month period 1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022. The net cost of the Directorate was showing an underspend of £244k (8.2%) – box A on page 3.

Explanation of Variance

Environment's budget performance was further analysed on pages 4-6 into 3 key areas:

Report	Type	Variance	Page
Report 2	Payroll Expenditure	£77k adverse	3
Report 3	Goods & Services Expenditure	£213k favourable	3
Report 4	Income	£108k favourable	3

Explanation of Variance

The Regeneration & Development Directorate's overall variance could be summarised by the following table:-

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Payroll	77	The National & Local Pay Agreements were greater than budgeted increase. This impacts all Council Services.
Goods & Services		
Regeneration	(178)	Mainly due to projects not progressing as planned. Head of Regeneration – (£124k) – Project 24 (£46k); Kinnegar project (£45k). Urban Development – (£30k) – Vacant Commercial Property project. Rural Development – (£24k) – range of small project underspends.
Tourism	(55)	Tourism Events – (£40k) – proposed car event did not take place.
Income		
Tourism	(55)	Grant relating to 21/22 received this year (£41k).

REPORT 1 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT						
Period 9 - December 2022						
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance	
	£	£	£	£	%	
Regeneration & Development						
300 Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	215,723	227,600	(11,877)	292,500	(5.2)	
310 Regeneration	562,187	753,300	(191,113)	1,291,700	(25.4)	
320 Economic Development	848,428	859,100	(10,672)	1,313,800	(1.2)	
340 Tourism	1,100,871	1,131,300	(30,429)	1,589,700	(2.7)	
Total	2,727,209	2,971,300	A (244,091)	4,487,700	(8.2)	
REPORT 2 PAYROLL REPORT						
	£	£	£	£	%	
Regeneration & Development - Payroll						
300 Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	116,186	116,700	(514)	155,400	(0.4)	
310 Regeneration	424,910	431,100	(6,190)	581,100	(1.4)	
320 Economic Development	514,357	510,200	4,157	683,300	0.8	
340 Tourism	734,581	654,600	79,981	871,000	12.2	
Total	1,790,034	1,712,600	77,434	2,290,800	4.5	
REPORT 3 GOODS & SERVICES REPORT						
	£	£	£	£	%	
Regeneration & Development - Goods & Services						
300 Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	124,537	110,900	13,637	137,100	12.3	
310 Regeneration	147,809	325,800	(177,991)	715,400	(54.6)	
320 Economic Development	596,425	590,000	6,425	1,093,800	1.1	
340 Tourism	587,839	642,900	(55,061)	894,700	(8.6)	
Total	1,456,609	1,669,600	(212,991)	2,841,000	(12.8)	
REPORT 4 INCOME REPORT						
	£	£	£	£	%	
Regeneration & Development - Income						
300 Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	(25,000)	-	(25,000)	-		
310 Regeneration	(10,531)	(3,600)	(6,931)	(4,800)	(192.5)	
320 Economic Development	(262,353)	(241,100)	(21,253)	(463,300)	(8.8)	
340 Tourism	(221,550)	(166,200)	(55,350)	(176,000)	(33.3)	
Totals	(519,434)	(410,900)	(108,534)	(644,100)	(26.4)	

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

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

13. NOTICE OF MOTION

13.1 NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR ADAIR AND COUNCILLOR EDMUND

That this Council writes to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Infrastructure expressing concern that the provision of a footpath at Shore Road Ballyhalbert is currently not considered a priority by the Department following the completion of a feasibility study which demonstrated need. That the Council highlights the road safety concerns raised by residents for pedestrians using the Shore Road from the village to the residential developments including Park Homes and St Andrew's. That Council requests that the Department for Infrastructure makes the installation of a footpath a priority and commits to deliver the scheme as a matter of urgency.

(Councillor Edmund joined the meeting – 7.43pm)

Proposed by Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the notice of motion be adopted.

Speaking to the proposal, Councillor Adair explained that the absence of any footway link along the Shore Road had been a long-standing issue with residents of Ballyhalbert.

He highlighted the growing number of houses at St Andrews, Longfield and Park Homes – 300 new houses had been built with plans for 200 more, and none of those was linked to the central village services by a footway. Currently those residents were having to walk within a narrow white line that ran along the road between the seawall and the main road which was unacceptable.

The ongoing development of housing had seen Ballyhalbert's population quadruple over the last 10 years and the absence of a foot link on the road had raised road safety concerns, particularly for the many children and elderly. While it was in a 30mph speed limit zone, motorists often exceeded the limit and he was aware of near misses.

During a consultation with Ballyhalbert residents, this had been the number one issue raised and people blamed the Council. While Councillor Adair had explained to people that it was not in the remit of the Council, he advised them that the Council could lobby DfI and urge them to do something about it.

There had been some hope last year when a DfI feasibility study for a footway was undertaken but unfortunately correspondence confirmed that while the study had identified a need, there would be extensive road widening and associated coastal defence work required as well as the need to acquire land from the frontage of properties. On that basis it was considered to be low priority due to the costs involved.

A suggested alternative by Councillor Adair was for the DfI to consider using land at the back of the houses to create a foot link without the need to use the main road. In closing, he found it disappointing that the DfI did not view this as a priority and now hoped that the Council could write and make a special case for Ballyhalbert. He

was unaware of any other village in the Borough where there was no safe footway link on the main road for pedestrians to access the village centre. Children walking to school along a white line was unacceptable.

The seconder, Councillor Edmund concurred that there was a large number of children with no access to a footway. It was on a long stretch of road on a key tourist route where the speed limit was exceeded regularly. As a main arterial route through the Ards Peninsula it was not appropriate to install speed bumps due to the problems that could present to emergency service vehicles.

There were times during the year when the white line area that was the existing footway would be obstructed with sea debris. Both taking people's gardens away or reclaim the Shore Road would be costly and he was not sure people would want to give up their garden.

He hoped that the Department would look at finding suitable land to safely bring residents from the developments into the village, providing access to the Primary School with one road crossing. He hoped that the Committee would support this.

Councillor Irvine said he would be happy to support the Notice of Motion fearing that if nothing was done there could be a fatality.

Alderman McDowell, while supportive of the motion, asked why it had come before the Place and Prosperity Committee, feeling it would have been more appropriate for it to be heard at the Corporate Services Committee. He asked if this was due to the recent name change of the committee but the Director advised it was possibly an oversight and she had not had chance to raise it with the Chief Executive before the agenda was issued.

Councillor Kennedy asked if the proposer had approached the DfI specifically in relation to the construction of a footpath on the alternative route and Councillor Adair advised that it had been raised but no response had been received.

Summing up, Councillor Adair advised he had not specifically asked for the motion to be heard at this committee but he was just happy for it to be heard considering the high importance of the matter. He was aware of a field behind the houses on the Shore Road and that could possibly allow for a footway to run there as an alternative. He had asked if that had been included in the DfI's feasibility study but to date he had not had any response. He felt it would be a logical solution and he was happy to include that in his proposal. There were 300 houses cut off from the centre of the village with no footway and that was unacceptable in the 21st Century.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that this Council writes to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Infrastructure expressing concern that the provision of a footpath at Shore Road Ballyhalbert is currently not considered a priority by the Department following the completion of a feasibility study which demonstrated need. That the Council highlights the road safety concerns raised by residents for pedestrians using the Shore Road from the village to the residential developments including Park Homes and St Andrew's. That

Council requests that the Department for Infrastructure makes the installation of a footpath a priority and commits to deliver the scheme as a matter of urgency. In addition, Council asks in its response if consideration has been given to an alternative route along the green area at the back of the houses that would come out at High Street.

(Councillor Edmund left the meeting – 8pm)

14. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

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

NOTED.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

15. ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT OPEN HOUSE FESTIVAL 2022 (FILE TO/EV90)

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)

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 8.06pm.

ITEM 7.4.

160

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid special meeting of the Ards and North Down Borough Council was held at the City Hall, The Castle, Bangor and via Zoom, on Tuesday, 14 February 2023 commencing at 7.00pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: The Mayor (Councillor Douglas)

Aldermen:	Armstrong-Cotter	McDowell
	Carson (Zoom)	McIlveen
	Irvine	M Smith (Zoom)
	Keery	Wilson (Zoom)

Councillors:	Adair	MacArthur
	Blaney (Zoom)	McAlpine (Zoom)
	Boyle (Zoom)	McClellan
	Brooks (Zoom)	McKee (Zoom)
	Cathcart	McKimm
	Chambers (Zoom)	McRandal
	Cummings	Moore
	Dunlop (Zoom)	Morgan
	Edmund	Smart
	Gilmour	P Smith
	Greer	T Smith
	Irvine (Zoom)	Thompson (Zoom)
	Irwin (Zoom)	Walker
	Kennedy	Woods (Zoom)

Officers: Chief Executive (S Reid), Director of Finance and Performance (S Christie), Director of Corporate Services (M Steele), Director of Community and Wellbeing (G Bannister), Director of Place (S McCullough), Director of Prosperity (A McCullough), Director of Environment (D Lindsay – Zoom), Head of Finance (S Grieve), Head of Communications and Marketing (C Jackson), Democratic Services Manager (J Wilson) and Democratic Services Officer (P Foster)

1. PRAYER

The Mayor (Councillor Douglas) welcomed everyone to the meeting and then invited the Chief Executive to read the Council prayer.

NOTED.

2. APOLOGIES

The Mayor sought apologies at this stage and noted no apologies had been received.

NOTED.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

NOTED.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

At this stage the Mayor noted that the Agenda indicated the recommendation that Item 4 – minutes of Special Corporate Services Committee held on 19 January, 2 February and 8 February 2023 - should be heard 'In Committee'. However, she was aware that there would be particular public interest in the discussion of the minutes and as such would recommend that it was dealt with 'Out of Committee'. That however was assuming that members did not wish to raise any staffing, legal or commercially sensitive matters. If that was the case then it would be necessary to deal with those matters 'In Committee'.

Therefore, if any member wished to raise a staffing, legal or commercially sensitive matter, they were asked to indicate in order that the meeting could go 'Into Committee'.

As no indications were made the Mayor requested a proposer and seconder to take Item 4 'Out of Committee'.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor P Smith, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that Item 4 be considered Out of Committee.

4i. MINUTES OF SPEICAL MEETING OF CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2023

4ii. MINUTES OF SPEICAL MEETING OF CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 FEBRUARY 2023

4iii. MINUTES OF SPEICAL MEETING OF CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 FEBRUARY 2023

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copies of the above minutes.

The Mayor invited a proposer and seconder to adopt the minutes.

Councillor P Smith proposed, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that the minutes be adopted.

The proposer Councillor P Smith expressed his support for a rates rise of 6.8% for three reasons. Those reasons being:

- i) It avoided the slashing of Council services
- ii) It achieved the lowest rate possible in what were very difficult circumstances
- iii) It built in a clear commitment for strategic reviews of waste and service delivery

He stated that a rate rise of 6.8% was considerably below inflation which was currently sitting at 10.5% and was better than many neighbouring Councils rate increases. Continuing he stated that it was fair to say that it had been a collective effort by members and officers to have been able to achieve this outcome. He acknowledged the significant cost pressures which the Council had to absorb this year as well as the pressures families were under as well with their own budgets. He acknowledged there were those who may say a lower rate increase was achievable but that could only be done by slashing Council services and potentially making redundancies and as such he believed that would not be a correct decision for the Council to make. He was also aware that there were those who may say that without the pay increases a better outcome could have been achieved but the price to pay for that could have been weeks of strikes and rubbish lying uncollected on the Borough's streets.

Continuing he stated that this rate being proposed adopted a strategic approach by undertaking a review of waste services during the incoming year. He agreed that it was imperative that the Council improved its recycling rates and reduced its landfill for the good of the planet, everyone's pockets and in order to meet Government targets which had been set. Councillor Smith stated that the public needed to be brought along with the Council in respect of any changes to current bin collection services and as such that required planning and consultation. At this stage he stated that it was important to remind ratepayers that the rate was made up of two parts, those being the local rate set by the Council and the regional rate set by the Assembly or Northern Ireland Office. The regional rate being the larger part of that.

In summing up he stated that as Chairman of the Corporate Services Committee he would like to thank the entire Finance team, the Chief Executive and Directors for all their hard work throughout this process and for helping members to get to point where they could all agree and support.

Commenting as seconder, Alderman McIlveen indicated that he would suggest that the proposal included a small amendment to make to it which was that the minutes be adopted and furthermore, that at point 4, to pursue option 2 of the HRC option was removed and that no change was made to the opening times of HRCs.

Councillor P Smith indicated that he was content for that to be included into his proposal as the change would have no effect on the rate but would have an impact on service provision. As such, he was happy for that to be included.

Alderman McIlveen stated that the Council existed to deliver services and as such it was incumbent upon members to ensure those core services were protected. Adequate consideration needed to be given to a proposed change to a three weekly bin collection model and as such a budget could not be set for something which had not been fully deliberated upon. As such he welcomed the opportunity for the Council to now be able to consult fully with its ratepayers on this very matter. Continuing Alderman McIlveen agreed that no one wanted a 6.8% rate increase however he acknowledged the cost pressures the Council was facing as well as the cost of living crisis affecting everyone. As such this had been a very difficult decision to take with cuts made which would undoubtedly have an effect across the Borough.

At this stage Alderman McDowell proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Greer, that this Council accepts the officers' recommendations in their report (Point c, Page 7) to the Special Corporate Services Committee on the 8 February 2023 and agrees a district rate increase 6.38% in lines with Appendix 5-11 in the report for the 2023/2024 year.

The proposer, Alderman McDowell, stated that Councillors and Council officers had been working on the rate estimates for months. They had experienced massive cost of living price increases like everyone else, especially on fuel costs and staff costs. At the start of the process, in December 2022 the Council was looking at a 20% increase and with business cases and proposed savings that had been reduced to around a 9% increase for 2023/2024. At a recent workshop he recalled how they had come up with a good compromise on the waste initiatives such as revised bin collections and a change in opening hours for Household Recycling Centres, considering the concerns of the DUP and UUP.

Continuing Alderman McDowell advised that at the Special Corporate Services Committee, officers had brought back a recommendation of a 6.38% rate increase for the 2023/2024 financial year. While this was still a high increase, it was a considerable improvement from the 20% at the start of the rates process. It was also a lower increase than most other Councils in Northern Ireland. Therefore Alliance were surprised that the DUP and UUP proposed a higher rate of 6.8%, simply because they could not support a change in service arrangements in bin collection and a more efficient operation of recycling in HRC's.

For example, the changes to the bin collection, would see no reduction in service, but an extra blue bin collection replacing a grey bin collection each month, meaning that the grey bin would be emptied every three weeks instead of two. Most people who were recycling had found that the grey bin was more than half empty while their blue bins were completely full and needed emptying more often. Special arrangements would be made for those who had good reasons to have their grey bin collected more frequently.

Alderman McDowell agreed that everyone recognised the need for change and the Council needed to improve its recycling figures. Otherwise, the Council may face penalties and fines for not reaching them and pay more and more each year to send its waste to landfill. This lower rate saved over £300,00 this year and had the potential to save at least £600,000 in every future year. But most importantly it was

good for the environment to increase recycling and good to save money now for ratepayers when they needed it the most.

In summing up he stated that Council must provide leadership and highlight the benefits of recycling, rather than use scare stories to spread fear, or populism to try and gain some extra votes at the next election. As such he urged members to support his amendment.

The seconder, Councillor Greer, reserved her right to speak at this stage.

Councillor McKimm expressed his thanks to the entire team for all work over the past few months and he paid special thanks to the Director, Simon Christie who had always been so willing to assist him with any queries and talk through the various options available. Continuing he indicated that he would be speaking in support of the amendment put forward by the Alliance Party. He noted there had been language used in respect of 'slashing', which to him meant an indiscriminate action and to consider putting forward a lower rate would not equate to a 'slashing' of services. He added that he had been delighted to hear reference made to the impact on ratepayers and the environment and as such he felt that what was being proposed now had indeed been previously proposed. As such ratepayers would pay a higher rate than what was necessary and then would continue to pay until such times as the Council realised it did have a duty to the environment. Continuing, he stated that when members referred to 'slashing' yet he would prefer it to be phrased as detailed, well considered areas where the Council had to look at cutting services. Councillor McKimm stated that he wished to be placed on record as saying what was being proposed was not a 'slash' and no one would be left with waste sitting on their doorstep. Instead what they would have would be a lower rate and lower landfill costs over the coming years. He added that he supported the Alliance Party's amendment.

At this stage Councillor Moore indicated that she wished to express her disappointment on the outcome of the Council's rates negotiations. She stated that the Council had the opportunity to be more bold, creative and forward-thinking, but regrettably a significant number of Members had shied away from the necessary decisions and instead opted to maintain the status quo.

On the issue of sustainability, she noted that the Council's own website stated, 'there could be no more 'business as usual'; and that instead it must 'fundamentally change'; that the Council were 'determined to seize every opportunity' and accept it would 'involve some hard decisions'. She commented that it was easy to publish commitments like those on the Council's website but questioned when it would abide by them.

Continuing, Councillor Moore referred to the Council's own roadmap - STAND for Sustainability which stated that members: must demonstrate leadership as representatives of the Borough's residents by both promoting and living the principles of the Roadmap. They should also actively encourage residents and businesses within the Borough to adopt sustainable behaviours as part of their everyday lives. She stated that the Council simply was not doing that and as such it was not empowering its own residents to live more sustainably.

According to DAERA, in 2021/2022 Ards and North Down reported the largest fall in household recycling - 2.6%. By failing to implement the changes to HRCs and kerbside collections the Council was only storing up those challenges for further down the road. They were difficult decisions, but that was the Council's responsibility to its residents. By failing to be bold it was potentially making those decisions even more difficult. Recycling targets were the Council's statutory responsibility- 70% by 2030, the most recent figures showed it was at 42.7%. That, she stated, was not going to improve without intervention. Simply put, she said the Council were doing a disservice to its residents and to the environment.

At this stage Alderman McIlveen stated that he would like to understand what the Alliance Party were thinking by putting forward this proposal, particularly as they had not brought any forward throughout the entire rate setting process. He added that the Council could not fix a rate on something which had not been consulted upon or even developed a policy on. This, he stated, was a double whammy which the Alliance had created with a significant rate rise and Council services being absolutely slashed through massive cuts to them. The rate proposed at the start of the meeting protected those core services and provided a roadmap for the way forward to enable the Council to consider how to deal with its waste through consultation and the development of a proper policy. It also enabled the Council to consider carefully its organisation and savings to be made through an organisational review as well as considering insourcing and outsourcing opportunities to secure savings for the ratepayer. He added that he would not be supporting the amendment.

Councillor T Smith stated that it was amusing and astonishing to hear the Alliance Party trying to portray themselves as a party of a low rate. One of the reasons the Council was looking at a rate rise of over 6% was as the result of their decisions particularly in relation to the local unaffordable pay deal on which £2M of ratepayers' money was spent. Continuing he stated that if the Council had listened to the Alliance Party back in September and October of 2022 this rate would have been even higher if the Council had not taken the decision to re-engage with Serco. He recalled how the Alliance Party had voted against that not once but twice, eventually supporting it in the end.

Continuing he looked more closely at what the Alliance Party's proposed rate rise of 6.38% would equate to which was half of one percent or £2.50 per annum per household. As such he stated that it was important to consider what the Alliance Party wanted to cut to make those savings of £2.50. They wanted to cut the number of grey bin collections without any consultation, slash the opening hours of many HRCs, cut back on burials, cut back on road cleaning operations and cease the free supply of caddy liners. All those cuts he stated to save £2.50 per house per year. Councillor Smith stated that their proposal was disastrous and one which would only serve to hike up rates while cutting front line services. It was therefore in his opinion a fictional fairy tale that the Alliance Party could deliver for the people of the Borough, instead what you would get would be higher rates and fewer services. In summing up he expressed his support for Alderman McIlveen and Councillor P Smith's proposal adding that they had done their best in trying circumstances despite opposition from the Alliance and Green Parties.

Councillor Gilmour questioned where and when difficult decisions had been taken. She asked if it was the 1.1% which the Alliance Party added onto the rate for the pay deal or was it their decision that they did not want to outsource leisure services at Aurora, Bangor. Continuing she stated that no detailed proposals had as yet been brought forward in respect of the changes to the bin collection service and currently there was no policy in place for that. Councillor Gilmour stated that to proceed along what had been proposed would be irresponsible and place a burden upon ratepayers. She added that she could not support something which was not realisable and to proceed would be dishonest and as such she would not be supporting the amendment.

Alderman Irvine expressed his thanks to the entire Finance Team for all their work throughout the rate setting process. He also took the opportunity to wish the outgoing Director of Finance and Performance, Simon Christie, well on his departure from the Council. Continuing he stated that he would have concerns with the proposed cuts to bin collections and was aware of the grave concern out in the community about such proposals. As such he agreed that it was important to consider this thoroughly, particularly as its implementation could potentially see a rise in fly tipping throughout the Borough. Finally he thanked the members of the Corporate Services Committee for their hard work throughout the past few months in order to achieve the lowest rate possible to retain the best possible Council services.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter commented that when both Alderman McIlveen and Councillor T Smith had set out their responses to the amendment she had 'cringed' for the Alliance Party. She stated that for the Council to set a policy of that magnitude to save £2.50 for its ratepayers and to bring it through the back door in this manner, was in her opinion nothing short of sleekit. Indeed she suggested that it would appear no judgement had gone into the proposal which had been put forward by the Alliance Party. Continuing Alderman Armstrong-Cotter reminded Members that the Council existed to provide a service and everyone had been required to make cuts during this rate setting process. She urged the Alliance Party to have a rethink about their back door proposal they had put forward.

Commenting as seconder to the amendment, Councillor Greer took the opportunity to thank the Director and his team for all their work. Continuing she expressed her support for the amended rate rise of 6.38%, adding that the Alliance had supported this proposed change to waste services since the bin trial model had secured funding in 2019. This, she added, would be an enhancement to the Council's bin collection service and from what she had heard from constituents this would be supported. Councillor Greer urged Unionists to get behind the Alliance's amendment. She added that as the Alliance was a Party of 10 it represented one quarter of the Council and therefore it needed the support of other Parties to take decisions forward. Continuing she referred to the proposed introduction of a booking system for HRCs which the Alliance Party had been fully supported of. Councillor Greer stated that as a Party they cared for the environment and the ratepayer and as such this rate rise was considered to be somewhere in the middle and part of a long term plan. She recalled how when she had joined the Council back in 2019 how at that time, they had been discussing the issue of bin trials and as such she felt the debate was just rolling on without any hard decision able to be taken by members on such matters. She suggested that it did not show leadership, however, she was mindful

that by 2030 the Council would be required to reduce the amount of waste it sent to landfill and as such currently it was being entirely irresponsible and showed a complete disregard to the ratepayer.

At this stage and summing up, Councillor P Smith stated that the rate setting process had not been pain free with many difficult decisions having to be taken. He agreed that the Council needed to review how it managed its waste but that needed to be properly planned with the development of an appropriate policy that could be implemented. He added that consultation on that very matter was key and as such the Council would have a lot of challenges ahead. Councillor P Smith stated that he was aware DAERA was currently working on this issue with a paper anticipated to be published in the Spring. In summing up he encouraged members to support his original proposal.

The amendment was put to the meeting and with 14 voting FOR, 24 voting AGAINST and 1 ABSTENTION, it was declared LOST.

At this stage and returning to the original proposal, Alderman Armstrong-Cotter stated that she wished to clarify that consultation had not been undertaken for the three weekly bin collection service adding that previously they had been advised that a four weekly bin collection service would not work. She added that it only served to emphasise the need to consult on this huge issue which would have a significant impact on ratepayers. Alderman Armstrong-Cotter reiterated that such a significant change needed to be carried out in an open and transparent manner and as such that was why she was able to support her colleague Councillor P Smith on his proposal. She added that ultimately everyone in the Chamber was a politician and as such truth was truth and fact was fact and while she did support the proposal, she was disappointed that there some things which would no longer be happening throughout the Borough. However, she felt it represented the best way forward for the Council and as such urged members to stand together and support this in order to send an appropriate message to ratepayers.

Councillor McKimm expressed concern that those who had been supportive of the amendment had been accused of being dishonest and added that he could confirm that he had not told any lies or been dishonest. He advised that he had attended each of the Special meetings of the Corporate Services Committee to discuss the rates and spent numerous hours considering the various reports which had been brought to those meetings. He also referred to the many meetings held to consider how the Council could be more environmentally friendly and the cost of that to residents, yet those who had spoken so passionately tonight on those matters had not actually attended those meetings.

Continuing, he indicated that he wished to return to the substantive point about cost, stating that the factual reports which had come from the Director of Environment clearly outlined the huge costs which would be faced by the Council if it chose not to take those few proactive steps to reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. He stated that there were substantial savings to be made and facts to be considered at a time of a cost of living crisis which was impacting everyone. As such he stated that the amended proposal put forward by the Alliance Party would have saved the Council a lot of money.

At this stage Councillor Greer stated that she wished to continue along the lines of Councillor McKimm's comments commenting that neither she nor her Party members had been dishonest and they too had attended all meetings and scrutinised all reports. She added that there had been the potential to save £1.3M for ratepayers which was significant given that everyone was in the middle of a cost of living crisis. She reminded members that they were elected as political leaders to take difficult decisions to 'square off' the Council's finances. She stated that members were lacking the ability to take such decisions this evening.

Councillor McKee acknowledged the enormous amount of work which had gone into this year's rate setting process and he thanked members for that. He stated that the circumstances the Council had found itself in were particularly difficult due to the perfect storm effecting local government finances. Councillor McKee stated that he, along with his Party colleagues, were not just concerned by the missed opportunity in not reforming kerbside collection but were worried that going on some of the decisions taken, that this Council was losing its focus on operating for the benefit of communities, for the vulnerable and for those who needed it the most. The disregard shown by some members for the wellbeing of staff during this rates setting process had been alarming. He asked how the Council could expect to deliver a good quality service for residents of the Borough while at the same time decreasing an already understrength and under pressure workforce, that he stated was beyond him. For that reason and many more, he indicated that the Green Party would not be supporting this striking of the rate as set out in the proposal this evening.

At this stage Councillor Walker stated that quite frankly the abuse which had been thrown out during the meeting was unprofessional and unnecessary with no leadership whatsoever shown. He noted the ability of some to ignore history and the fact that for the past four years the Council had been considering how to manage its waste going forwards considering the impact on residents and businesses alike. He added that it was ridiculous to suggest that the Alliance Party was trying to 'slip something in'. Continuing he advised that each time the Director of Environment had brought something forward for members to consider it had been thrown back at him and he was told to go away and try again. He queried what it was that members actually wanted him to do. Each time something had been brought forward the UUP and DUP had both said no and while those proposals would have seen substantial savings being made, he was at a loss as to what more the Director could do.

Councillor Walker reminded members that over the next four years the Council had a statutory requirement to meet recycling rates and as such it would have nowhere to hide and tough decisions would need to be made. He expressed his hope that the UUP and DUP would be able to make those tough decisions especially as the Alliance Party and Green Party had tried to move them forward on this matter. He acknowledged that the Council looked set to accept this rate rise and waste a further £300,000 and as such he encouraged members to consider future reports fully rather than fuel ratepayers fears via various social media platforms and instead take the time to show leadership.

Councillor T Smith stated that he had never heard so much nonsense in that if you disagreed with the Alliance Party it was classed as abuse. Everyone he said had the

right to voice a different opinion. He recalled when the proposed three weekly bin collection had first been brought to the Corporate Services Committee as he had been outraged by it. In respect of consultation he urged the Alliance Party to take note recalling a recent consultation undertaken in respect of the Kinnegar to Donaghadee Greenway. One week before the public meetings were due to take place about that Greenway, the Alliance Party were begging the Council not to jeopardise the Greenway proposals and then they seemingly changed their tune after consultation had taken place. So before the Council set about slashing bin services, he suggested that the Council should talk to the public via consultation. He added that had it not been for the Alliance Party the pay rise would not have gone ahead with £1.8M already spent on this with £650,000 locked into the budget going forward. So over the next five years the Alliance Party's local pay deal would cost £3M. He stated that it was not considered abuse to disagree and instead that was simply politics and consultation should be undertaken with the public in respect of the proposed changes to bin collections services rather than bouncing such a decision upon Members as part of the rate setting process. He added that he would not apologise for consulting with the public and indeed would continue to do so.

Councillor Kennedy stated there being no policy and no consultation exposed like never before the naivety and incompetence of those who wished to support the Alliance Party's amendment. All at a time when the Council needed to be responsible and be prudent rather than wasteful. Continuing he suggested that if it was not dishonest it was instead utterly deluded. He referred to Councillor T Smith's point which was that you could not agree with the progressive left and also Councillor Walker's overly sensitive response to being challenged. In respect of Councillor Moore's comments he suggested that perhaps she had spoken a little too honestly about recycling habits of constituents and dismissed them to instead show leadership. As such he felt that all reasonable individuals would back the proposal.

Expressing his thanks to all the Parties who had been involved in this year's rate setting process, Councillor Boyle acknowledged that it had been a difficult journey in the run up to an Election to be able to set what could be considered an acceptable rate while still maintaining a level of service to ratepayers. He also thanked the Chief Executive, the Corporate Leadership and Finance Team, and in particular Simon Christie and Stephen Grieve. At this stage he also welcomed the Council's new Director of Corporate Services, Michael Steele. Continuing he commented that the tone of the debate had turned into a mud slinging exercise and he sought to reassure ratepayers that most of the time the Council conducted its business in a much more harmonious fashion. Councillor Boyle stated that he did not believe the proposal before them was the best outcome and as such the Council could have done better with a lower rate on the table. As a member of the Environment Committee for the past eight years every report which the Director had brought forward on the issue of waste collections had been rejected and as such, he did not take any comfort or lectures from any party giving a commitment to look at this matter. The matter in hand was in fact about the millions of pounds it was going to cost ratepayers unless the Council took a difficult decision to provide them with an enhanced bin collection. He questioned how that could be considered as a cut to services particularly when he was aware ratepayers wanted to recycle and have more space in their blue bins. This in turn would save the Council an absolute fortune and he was unclear what part of that some Members could not understand,

particularly when the Council had had eight years to consider this. In summing up he stated that he would not be supporting the rate increase in the proposal.

Councillor Gilmour rose at this stage to pay tribute to the outgoing Director of Finance and Performance, Simon Christie and thanked him for all his hard work during his time with the Council. Continuing she stated that she also wished to address some of the comments which had been made about the proposed changes to the bin collection service. Some of those comments had suggested that a trial had already been undertaken and as such the scheme was good to go but that was not actually the case. Pre Covid 19 there had been a proposal put forward for a four weekly bin collection trial and at that time her Party had raised the possibility of a three week bin collection only to be told that would not work. So currently there was no policy in place and no consultation undertaken. Referring to comments made by Alliance Party members about why they could not support the amendment she stated that she had been elected as Councillor to scrutinise the information presented to her and make an informed decision based upon that which would be beneficial to ratepayers. She added that the Council Chamber was a member led forum and not an officer led forum, she was grateful for the information provided by officers but ultimately as Councillors it was up to them to scrutinise them.

Continuing she recalled that throughout the rate setting process her colleague Alderman McIlveen had tried to illustrate the flaws as the result of no policy being in place to which he was told 'sure there was an officers report on it' and she felt that was a bizarre response to have made. As such she stated that she would be supporting the original proposal which was before them this evening.

Councillor Gilmour asked for a Recorded Vote to be taken.

Councillor Moore stated that she wished to clarify some of the misinformation and disinformation put forward by Councillor Kennedy. What she had said was that they were not empowering residents but more a case of enabling residents and supporting them through any policies being implemented. What she had referred to on the Council's website was specifically around Sustainability and the Council's obligations to that, not more widely interpreted through the Council's financial responsibilities but specifically that elected representatives needed to demonstrate leadership.

At this stage Councillor P Smith was invited to sum up and he rose to comment briefly on a number of points. In relation to the issue of waste he reminded members that his Party had supported the four week bin trial which could not be taken forward due to circumstances outside the Council's control. He added that it was also fair to say that this evening members were voting to introduce the HRC Booking System and as such the advice of officers was being taken on board and changes made. Continuing he stated that his proposal had been thought through compared to the amendment which had been submitted and as such there remained a lot of work to be done. What was needed was a policy to be defined, consulted upon a plan produced and then implemented, rather than do it in reverse order. In conclusion he commented that the Rate proposed protected services and he thanked Officers and members alike for their hard work throughout the rate setting process. He added that the Council could have been looking at the closure of Community Centres, a

reduction to Leisure Centre hours, HRC opening hours being reduced, a reduction in street cleaning and even car parking charges being introduced in towns such as Comber. All of those could have been part of tonight's rate package but that had managed to be avoided and as such while a lower Rate would have been preferable the rate before them of 6.8%, provided a balance of minimising the Rate increase as best they could while protecting services. Councillor P Smith urged Members to support the proposal.

Councillor Gilmour having requested a Recorded Vote, the voting resulted as follows:-

On the proposal being put to the meeting, with 22 voting FOR, 14 voting AGAINST, 1 ABSTENTION and 3 ABSENT it was **DECLARED CARRIED**.

FOR (22)	AGAINST (14)	ABSTAINING (1)	ABSENT (3)
Aldermen	Aldermen	Councillor	Alderman
Armstrong-	McDowell	Douglas	Gibson
Cotter	Wilson		Councillors
Carson	Councillors		Cooper
Irvine	Boyle		Johnston
Keery	Dunlop		
McIlveen	Greer		
Smith	Irwin		
Councillors	McAlpine		
Adair	McKee		
Blaney	McKimm		
Brooks	McRandal		
Cathcart	Moore		
Chambers	Morgan		
Cummings	Walker		
Edmund	Woods		
Gilmour			
Irvine			
Kennedy			
MacArthur			
McClellan			
Smart			
P Smith			
T Smith			
Thompson			

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor P Smith, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, with 22 voting FOR, 14 voting AGAINST, 1 ABSTENTION and 2 ABSENT, that the minutes be adopted and furthermore that at point 4 to pursue option 2 of the HRC option was removed and that no change was made to the opening times of HRCs.

5. PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT (FILE FIN149)

(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Finance & Performance detailing that the Council was also required to adopt the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition (the CIPFA Code), which required the Council to approve a treasury and investment management policy and practices. This had been updated to reflect the requirements of the latest edition of the CIPFA Code, particularly to include an Investment Management Policy statement and also to implement all outstanding internal audit recommendations from the recent review carried out by Deloitte.

In addition, the former Department of the Environment (DOE) issued Guidance on Local Council Investments in October 2011 that required the Council to approve an investment strategy before the start of each financial year.

Appendices 1 and 2 fulfilled the Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 to have regard to both the CIPFA Code and the DOE Guidance.

CAPITAL STRATEGY

The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 required the Council to have regard to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities 2018 Edition (the Prudential Code) when determining how much money it could afford to borrow. The objectives of the Prudential Code were to ensure, within a clear framework, that the capital investment plans of local authorities were affordable, prudent and sustainable, and that treasury management decisions were taken in accordance with good professional practice.

This capital strategy gave a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of Council services along with an overview of how associated risk was managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

To demonstrate that the Council had fulfilled its objectives, the Capital Strategy set out the indicators that must be set and monitored each year.

This strategy was set out in appendix 3 and the Prudential Code required that it was made available on the Council website.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the Treasury and Investment Management Policy and Practices, Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2023/24 and Capital Strategy for the financial year as set out in Appendices 1 – 3.

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

6. ROBUSTNESS OF ESTIMATES AND ADEQUACY OF RESERVES (FILE FIN149)

(Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Finance & Performance stating that Section 4 of the Local Government Finance Act 2011 required the Chief Financial Officer of a Council to submit a report on the robustness of the estimates and for the Council to have regard to this report when considering the estimates. In addition, Section 6 required the Chief Financial Officer of a Council to submit a report on the adequacy of reserves and for the Council to have regard to this when considering the estimates.

ROBUSTNESS OF ESTIMATES

The aim of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was to give the Council a realistic and sustainable plan that reflected the Council's priorities and the policy of reasonable Council Rate increases as reflected in the Corporate Plan.

The detailed estimates had been formulated in the context of the guiding principles agreed in October 2019 and detailed work had been carried out with Directors, Heads of Service and Service Unit Managers for the various services. This work underpinned the MTFP, taking into account forecast outturn, current spending plans, the likely future demand level pressures for both revenue and capital expenditure and the risk environment. The major risks to the MTFP were:

General Inflation

Increasing prices will likely continue to put Council budgets under pressure in the incoming year, although this may ease if inflation has already peaked. Current Bank of England forecasts expect inflation to be around 4% by December of this year.

Energy Inflation

Energy prices have shown substantial instability over the past year, having increased relentlessly, gas prices have now fallen to half the level they were in the autumn. This unpredictability is very difficult to budget for. In order to mitigate this, officers will consider whether it is appropriate to set aside funds at the end of the financial year to assist with managing this risk.

Bangor Aurora

Major repairs at Bangor Aurora, particularly regarding the roof, the pool floor, sports hall floor and wet-side changing area have been reported to Members through the Environment and Community and Wellbeing Committees are likely to have implications for the income levels. Depending on the how this work is taken forward, this could have a financial impact. Officers have made provision within the district rates calculations for this impact. However, this remains a significant risk.

A project team has been established by the Director of Community and Wellbeing to address these issues.

Pay Inflation

The increase of the National Living Wage to 66% of median earnings continues to put the National Joint Council pay scale under pressure. This bottom point pressure inevitably has a knock on effect on points further up the scale in order to maintain appropriate pay differentials. The pay inflation built into the estimates assumes that the underlying rate of inflation will fall and the cost of living generally will stabilise. If these assumptions do not materialise and inflation and associated cost of living remain high, the estimated increase may be too low leading to an unbudgeted pressure emerging for 2023/24. In order to mitigate this, officers will consider whether it is appropriate to set aside funds at the end of the financial year to assist with managing this risk.

A number of iterations had been reported to special meetings of the Corporate Services Committee during the estimates process, before being agreed at the meeting on 8 February 2023.

The Chief Executive was satisfied that the capital and revenue budget estimates for 2023/24 set out in appendices 1 and 2, had been prepared in line with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code, Prudential Code and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting and are robust. It was noted that the Council had committed to delivering significant savings over the year along with carrying out.

- a full review of waste management in the incoming financial year and the development of a costed and publicly consulted plan that would enable Council to achieve its 2030 recycling targets.
- an operational review which would provide Council with options to deliver best value for the ratepayer.
- an organisational review which would aim to deliver efficiencies which would provide best value for the ratepayer.

ADEQUACY OF RESERVES

The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 required the Chief Financial Officer of a Council to submit a report to council on the adequacy of any proposed level of financial reserves for a financial year.

In line with its First Guiding Principle the Council had considered the adequacy of reserves throughout this Estimates process. Appendix 3 set out the forecast year end reserves position for the current and next financial years and the Chief Executive was content with the adequacy of these. However, it was noted that the forecast General Fund balance was forecast to dip below Council's target level of 7% of gross expenditure as set out in the guiding principle 1. The Council would need to consider if there was capacity to increase this fund level as part of the year end process and then if not put in place a clear path to increase the General Fund balance over the medium term.

Cognisance had also been taken of the CIPFA Local Authority Accounting Panel Bulletin 99 (issued July 2014), which gave guidance on the level of reserves and the financing of Council expenditure.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the report.

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

7. DISTRICT RATES 2023/24 (FILE FIN149)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Finance & Performance detailing that this report was to present to members the proposed district rates for the 2023/24 financial year.

The Corporate Services Committee at its special meeting on 8 February recommended, subject to ratification, a district rate increase of **6.80%** for the 2023/24 financial year. The appendix set out the formal calculation.

APPENDIX – DISTRICT RATE CALCULATION

Total Amount to be Raised	63,063,400
Reduced by Rates Support Grant	0
+/- Balance Applied	-320,000
Amount to be Raised <i>(via District Rates, De-rating and Transferred Functions Grants)</i>	62,743,400
Total Penny Product <i>(from table below)</i>	2,388,040
Non-Domestic District Rate	26.2740
Council Specific Conversion Factor	0.014707
Domestic District Rate	0.3864

Penny Product Information	
Estimated Penny Product (Rateable) - <i>(To be based on figure provided by LPS, DoF, which is total of non-domestic and domestic penny products, with rating policy reductions applied; as this is for rate setting the council specific conversion factor will have been applied to domestic capital values)</i>	2,302,360
Estimated Penny Product (De-rated) <i>(To be based on figure provided by DoF)</i>	66,820
Derived Penny Product (Transferred Functions Grant) (Fixed amount)	18,860
Total Penny Product	2,388,040

Grants payable by DfC

Estimated De-rating Grant (DRG) <i>(De-rating Grant payable by DfC during year will be Estimated PP (De-rated) x Non-domestic District Rate)</i>	1,755,629
Transferred Functions Grant (TFG) <i>(includes NI Local Government Commissioner for Standards Costs)</i> <i>(Derived Penny Product (TFG) x Non-domestic District Rate)</i>	495,528
Rates Support Grant	0

Amount payable by DoF	
Estimated Amount to be Raised via District Rates (Rateable)	60,492,243

RECOMMENDED that subject to ratification, that Council sets for the 2023/24 financial year a non-domestic district rate of 26.2740p in the pound and a domestic district rate of 0.3864p in the pound.

Councillor P Smith proposed, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer, Councillor P Smith commented that he felt this was the best outcome which could have been achieved under what were very difficult circumstances. He added that it did what it was hoped to set out to do which was to minimise the Rate increase and sustain core services for residents.

Commenting as seconder, Alderman McIlveen took the opportunity to express his thanks to Officers for the incredible work they had undertaken throughout the past few challenging months. He acknowledged the many sacrifices which had been made while seeking to protect the Council's core services and their continued delivery. Alderman McIlveen stated that at the forefront of his Party's mind had always been the protection of the Council's core services which was at the heart of why it existed rather than there to employ staff. In his view this rate struck that balance and would see the protection of HRCs, retention of caddy bags and retention of Saturday and Bank Holiday burials, to name a few. A rate rise no doubt but one which would protect services.

Also thanking Officers for all their hard work throughout the rate setting process, Alderman McDowell took the opportunity to thank his colleagues as well. He stated that while they may have differing opinions and views, he would hope that they all had the best interest of ratepayers at heart. He acknowledged there were always different ways of doing things and as Councillors they all needed to demonstrate leadership. He added that he hoped in the future that difficult decisions could be taken to ensure the Borough was a better one for all.

At this stage Councillor T Smith stated that difficult decisions had been made and ultimately no one wished to have to implement a Rate rise. He advised that at Committee he had abstained during the vote as while the retention of services was key, what he did have difficulty with was how much the Council was spending on itself. Back in 2015 the rate was set to raise £42M that year, eight years on it was now set to raise £62M, almost a 50% increase. Over the years there had been

significant cuts to services and as such ratepayers would undoubtedly want to know where that money was going. Continuing he referred to the impact of the recent pay awards with £5M included in the rates for pay increases. Councillor T Smith went on to suggest the Council was financially obese and as such he felt that it could not continue as it currently was. He stated that he was proud to have been the one to propose the extension to the Serco contract given the significant savings that would generate going forwards. Councillor T Smith suggested that the Council needed to have a good long hard look at itself and reconsider employees terms and conditions and how Council services were run. He expressed the view that the organisation was not fit for purpose adding that the only thing super about the Council was that it was super expensive, and Ratepayers were paying the price for that.

The Mayor thanked Councillor Phillip Smith for proposing the Rate and to the members of the Corporate Committee for their careful review of the Council's financial situation to reach that point.

She stated that striking the rate was always a balance – between agreeing a figure that allowed the Council to deliver the services and investments residents wanted, while seeking to ensure the financial burden placed on the ratepayers was as low as possible. The latter objective had been front of mind this year as everyone was alive to the very real financial pressures so many people and businesses in the Borough were facing.

As a corporate organisation the Council was experiencing those pressures. Increases in inflation and energy costs were placing unprecedented pressure on its budgets. These factors were further compounded by interest rate rises, public sector pay increases and uncertainty around future government funding.

Overall, the Council faced increased cost pressures of between £9-10M in the coming financial year. All 11 Councils across Northern Ireland were facing similar economic challenges. Each local authority had flexibility in how to meet the challenges but must ensure their plans were affordable and sustainable, not just for the year ahead, but over the medium term.

The process of setting the rate spanned many months. During that time, the Council had more than halved the expected initial rate under consideration. It had explored many options to drive expenditure down. This included managing staffing levels and recruitment; reviewing service provision and operations; developing energy saving initiatives; deferring expenditure where possible; and reviewing its capital development projects. With inflation continuing to run at over 10%, it had also looked at appropriate increases in fees for the services it charged for. As a result, the Council identified over £4 million of savings to help offset the rate increase this year.

The Mayor echoed Councillor P Smith in his thanks to the senior Council Officers and their wider staff teams who had worked to reduce the rate increase whilst ensuring it could continue to deliver services effectively. She made special mention of the Director of Finance and Performance, Simon Christie, who was leaving Council this month after four years. She added that Members would want to join her in thanking him for his hard work, dedication and innovation during that time and to wish him well for his future plans.

Continuing, the Mayor stated that for the 2023/24 year the Council had agreed an increase in the domestic and non-domestic rate of 6.8% - this meant an increase of approximately £3 per month for the average household and £8 per month for the average business in the Borough.

Alongside all the statutory duties everyone was familiar with, the rise would allow the Council to progress service improvements and capital projects in the coming year as it sought to help drive economic growth and improve the quality of life for residents.

While the Council was currently operating in difficult economic times, its citizens rightly expected it to look to the future. The Council had been successful in securing over £60 million of external funding for a range of capital investment projects in recent years. It was focused on securing even more and would be applying to several funding streams, such as PEACE Plus and Levelling Up, during the next financial year to help it invest further in the local area.

The Council would be continuing to work with local and central government partners as part of the Belfast Region City Deal. Through this Deal it would move forward with the ambitious redevelopment plans for Bangor Waterfront. It reached a key milestone for this project in January with formal confirmation of £40 million of funding from the Department for Communities. As the programme of works rolled out over the next 10 years, there would be benefits for residents, businesses and the wider Borough.

The villages would benefit from £1.75 million of investment thanks to the Small Settlements Regeneration Programme, which was a collaboration by three government departments. This was enabling the Council to deliver a public realm scheme in Portaferry; infrastructure enhancements to the centre of Ballygowan; a community park and viewing platform in Greyabbey; and improvements to the Kircubbin Coastal Path. These projects would enhance the appearance and appeal of the villages, encouraging people to visit and spend locally.

The Council would be further progressing plans for the redevelopment of Whitespots Country Park, including appointing design consultants to work towards submission of a planning application. Substantial external funding had already been secured to support the plans, which aimed to bring the rich heritage of the site to life.

Following the successful resolution of some long-standing planning issues with the DfI, Bangor Marine received formal approval for the Queen's Parade Redevelopment Scheme in September. In January, the company was successful in securing £9.8 million from the Westminster Government's Levelling Up Fund for the Marine Gardens element of the project. The Council very much looked forward to this long-awaited transformation project starting 'on the ground' later this year.

The health of the high streets continued to be a major priority. The Council was undertaking a review of all the current town and city Masterplans to produce new and updated frameworks for the revitalisation of the town and city centres relevant to a post covid environment.

As part of its ongoing proactive maintenance strategy, it would be investing in the refurbishment of the toilets at Whiterock and in a number of playparks including The Glen in Newtownards and in Helen's Bay.

The Council remained passionate about hitting the 2030 statutory recycling target of 70% and further establishing its reputation as a proud recycling Borough. It would continue to educate and support households on the many options available for recycling - at the kerbside, in its Household Recycling Centres, and beyond. It was committed to a full review of its waste management services in the coming year to support further innovations. In the immediate term it would be continuing to implement measures that promoted better use of the HRCs, leading to cost savings for ratepayers as well as improvements in the level of recycling at these community facilities.

The Council would be continuing to deliver on its Roadmap to Sustainability with a particular focus on tree planting and the development of community orchards; climate adaptation measures and its community food growing projects.

Following a period of consultation, the Council looked forward to adopting a new Local Biodiversity Action Plan to help guide its actions around conserving and enhancing its Borough's habitats.

It would be investing almost half a million pounds in events to help animate the Borough. This would include the direct delivery of popular festivals such as Comber Earlies, as well as supporting local event organisers through event grants.

It would also join communities across the UK to mark the Coronation of King Charles III through the provision of community grants and activities connected to the national programme.

The Council would be supporting businesses to start, grow and thrive and provide opportunities for employment and skills development across the Borough. Looking to the future it would continue to invest in the young people, giving them opportunities to shape our Borough through the Youth Voice initiative. It would also be running a range of summer schemes and providing grants for sports, community, arts, heritage and 'in bloom' initiatives.

Following the Council decision to extend the contract with Northern Community Leisure Trust, it would be continuing to collaborate with this key partner to deliver high quality leisure services to residents in Holywood and Bangor, alongside our in-house leisure offering that covered the remainder of the Borough.

Digitisation remained a priority as it sought to offer more efficient services to its ratepayers. In the coming year it would be digitalising its current paper-based cemetery records and investing in a new finance system, which would improve its internal efficiency and allow greater integration with the website.

The Council also agreed a number of transformation proposals; some that would be progressed over the next year and some over the longer-term. These included planning for agile working; a renewed focus upon customer service excellence; and

reducing the running costs of its assets. An organisational re-design project would also be progressed to ensure further efficiencies.

Finally, the year ahead would see a Local Government Election with a new term for the Council. This meant the Council would also be developing a new corporate plan for the 2024-28 Council period. Throughout 2023 it would be seeking views from the public regarding priorities and aspirations for the Borough.

It would be a busy year and there was much to look forward to.

In conclusion, that Mayor thanked Members, Officers and the Finance team once again for their work on the Rates and budget setting. It had been an extremely challenging process, but everyone had learnt much from it.

She added that any increase in bills was never a good news story for households, particularly in the current climate; but she reassured the Ratepayers that the Council would continue to scrutinise council spend. The Council remained committed to making further efficiency savings wherever possible, while maintaining and enhancing its services, continuing to invest in the Borough and to progressing the Council-wide transformation agenda.

At this stage the Mayor indicated that she wished to acknowledge her friend and fellow Councillor, Mark Brooks who had joined the meeting from hospital and she wished him well for a full speedy recovery on behalf of the Council.

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 8.47pm

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Corporate Services Committee was held at the City Hall, The Castle, Bangor and via Zoom, on Tuesday 14 February 2023 at 9.00pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor P Smith

Aldermen: Irvine McDowell
Keery McIlveen

Councillors: Chambers (Zoom) Irwin (Zoom)
Dunlop (Zoom) McKimm
Douglas (Zoom 9.12pm) T Smith
Greer
Gilmour

Officers: Director of (M Steele), Head of Finance (S Grieve), Compliance Manager (G Robinson) and Democratic Services Officer (P Foster)

1. APOLOGIES

The Chairman (Councillor P Smith) sought apologies at this stage, and none were submitted.

NOTED.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman sought any Declarations of Interest at this stage, and none were made.

NOTED.

3. DEPUTATION – LAND & PROPERTY SERVICES -REVAL 2023 (Appendix I)

The Chairman invited Mr Gary Humphrey, Valuation Services Directorate Land & Property Services to make his presentation.

Regrettably, Mr Humphrey experienced some technical issues and was unable to join the meeting via Zoom to make his presentation.

NOTED.

4. BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT – DECEMBER 2022 (FILE 45)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services advising that this Budgetary Control report covered the 9-month period 1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022.

The Revenue Budgetary Control Report by Directorate was set out in Report 1 on page 4 and showed an overall deficit of £82k, after using Earmarked Funds to mitigate the in-year cost pressures resulting from pay agreements and utility costs.

Explanation of Variance

The Council's budget performance was further analysed on pages 5-7 into 3 key areas:

Report	Type	Variance	Page
Report 2	Payroll Expenditure	£2,005k adverse	5
Report 3	Goods & Services Expenditure	£1,184k adverse	6
Report 4	Income	£3,107k favourable	7

Explanation of Variance

The Council's overall variance could be summarised by the following table (variances over £100k):

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Payroll Expenditure	2,005	Estimated analysis:- National Pay Agreement £1,349k Local Pay Agreement £1,371k Vacancies (£715k) Vacancy Control has been introduced to help mitigate the pay agreement cost pressures.
Goods & Services Expenditure		
Parks & Cemeteries	115	Cemeteries operating costs – maintenance, fuel, hired equipment & services, consultancy
Leisure	434	Tariff risk*
Waste & Cleansing	(228)	Waste disposal costs. Tonnages down on budget
Assets & Property	1,217	Electricity - £350k* Gas - £70k* Vehicle fuel - £164k* Vehicle maintenance - £186k Property Operations - £110k Technical Services - £355k

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Regeneration	(178)	Some projects not progressing as planned
Planning	(117)	Some projects not progressing as planned
Administration	145	Insurance premiums and self-insurance claims
Income		
Services Income	(1,166)	Community & Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCSP grant income – (£100k) Parks & Cemeteries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cemetery income – (£105k) Leisure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ards Blair Mayne WLC - (£230k) Waste & Cleansing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dry recyclables – (£187k) Assets & Property <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wind turbine income – (£196k)
Non-Service	(1,941)	District Rates finalisation. Reserves released. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offsetting Covid-19 and cost of living pressures (indicated above with an *). It is expected that by the end of the financial year reserves released will be approximately £5M.

Report 1					
BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT					
Period 9 - December 2022					
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	174,932	149,300	25,632	204,300	17.2
110 Environmental Health	1,440,520	1,499,700	(59,180)	2,024,900	3.9
120 Community and Culture	1,450,936	1,638,600	(187,664)	2,264,300	11.5
140 Parks and Cemeteries	2,843,527	2,750,500	93,027	3,745,400	3.4
150 Leisure	2,154,996	1,761,000	393,996	2,588,000	22.4
Totals	8,064,910	7,799,100	265,810	10,826,900	3.4
Environment					
200 Environment HQ	360,968	139,900	221,068	188,500	158.0
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	12,230,516	11,815,500	415,016	15,539,800	3.5
220 Assets and Property Services	6,399,749	5,406,600	993,149	7,174,200	18.4
230 Regulatory Services	364,461	330,400	34,061	456,000	10.3
Totals	19,355,693	17,692,400	1,663,293	23,358,500	9.4
Regen, Development & Planning					
300 Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	215,723	227,600	(11,877)	292,500	5.2
310 Regeneration	562,187	753,300	(191,113)	1,291,700	25.4
320 Economic Development	848,428	859,100	(10,672)	1,313,800	1.2
330 Planning	1,041,259	1,076,000	(34,741)	1,499,900	3.2
340 Tourism	1,100,871	1,131,300	(30,429)	1,589,700	2.7
Totals	3,768,468	4,047,300	(278,832)	5,987,600	6.9
Finance & Performance					
400 Finance & Performance HQ	103,692	92,800	10,892	125,400	11.7
410 Internal Audit	31,707	31,700	7	57,000	0.0
420 Finance	644,720	704,900	(60,180)	1,024,700	8.5
430 Strategic Transformation and Performance	1,420,450	1,502,700	(82,250)	2,013,000	5.5
440 Strategic Capital Development	229,280	248,500	(19,220)	336,400	7.7
Totals	2,429,849	2,580,600	(150,751)	3,556,500	5.8
Org Development & Administration					
500 OD & Admin HQ	130,027	110,300	19,727	151,500	17.9
510 HR & OD	851,203	814,300	36,903	1,085,500	4.5
520 Administration	3,000,401	2,797,500	202,901	3,796,900	7.3
Totals	3,981,630	3,722,100	259,530	5,033,900	7.0
Chief Executive					
600 Chief Executive	281,423	254,400	27,023	389,400	10.6
610 Community Planning	132,237	135,000	(2,764)	185,600	2.0
630 Communications and Marketing	541,838	575,900	(34,062)	872,400	5.9
Totals	955,498	965,300	(9,802)	1,447,400	1.0
Payroll Savings Budget					
700 Payroll Savings Budget	-	(299,700)	299,700	(400,000)	-
Total	-	(299,700)	299,700	(400,000)	-
NET COST OF SERVICES	38,556,048	36,507,100	2,048,948	49,810,800	5.6
Non Service Income and Expenditure					
Non Service Income and Expenditure	(38,474,269)	(36,507,100)	(1,967,169)	(49,810,800)	(5.4)
Grand Totals	81,779	-	81,779	-	-

Report 2					
PAYROLL REPORT					
Period 9 - December 2022					
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	122,830	117,000	5,830	156,800	5.0
110 Environmental Health	1,723,999	1,745,200	(21,201)	2,330,400	1.2
120 Community and Culture	1,159,494	1,174,100	(14,606)	1,563,300	1.2
140 Parks and Cemeteries	2,517,989	2,390,900	127,089	3,198,000	5.3
150 Leisure	3,258,064	3,071,000	187,064	4,100,300	6.1
Totals	8,782,376	8,498,200	284,176	11,348,800	3.3
Environment					
200 Environment HQ	303,693	117,000	186,693	156,800	159.6
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	6,337,738	5,472,400	865,338	7,295,500	15.8
220 Assets and Property Services	1,490,689	1,509,200	(18,511)	2,017,000	1.2
230 Regulatory Services	1,495,774	1,493,500	2,274	1,991,500	0.2
Totals	9,627,894	8,592,100	1,035,794	11,460,800	12.1
Regen, Development & Planning					
300 Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	116,186	116,700	(514)	155,400	0.4
310 Regeneration	424,910	431,100	(6,190)	581,100	1.4
320 Economic Development	514,357	510,200	4,157	683,300	0.8
330 Planning	1,689,009	1,585,800	103,209	2,114,500	6.5
340 Tourism	734,581	654,600	79,981	871,000	12.2
Totals	3,479,043	3,298,400	180,643	4,405,300	5.5
Finance & Performance					
400 Finance & Performance HQ	92,042	90,400	1,642	120,400	1.8
410 Internal Audit	-	-	-	-	-
420 Finance	701,585	649,500	52,085	866,600	8.0
430 Strategic Transformation and Performance	555,834	558,700	(2,866)	746,300	0.5
440 Strategic Capital Development	228,336	243,100	(14,764)	324,400	6.1
Totals	1,577,796	1,541,700	36,096	2,057,700	2.3
Org Development & Administration					
500 OD & Admin HQ	123,289	104,400	18,889	139,500	18.1
510 HR & OD	578,105	562,600	15,505	750,900	2.8
520 Administration	1,403,816	1,314,200	89,616	1,759,400	6.8
Totals	2,105,210	1,981,200	124,010	2,649,800	6.3
Chief Executive					
600 Chief Executive	200,413	191,700	8,713	294,100	4.5
610 Community Planning	133,403	123,300	10,103	164,900	8.2
630 Communications and Marketing	416,955	391,400	25,555	523,300	6.5
Totals	750,772	706,400	44,372	982,300	6.3
Payroll Savings Budget					
700 Payroll Savings Budget	-	(299,700)	299,700	(400,000)	-
Total	-	(299,700)	299,700	(400,000)	
NET COST OF SERVICES	26,323,091	24,318,300	2,004,791	32,504,700	8.2
Non Service Income and Expenditure					
Non Service Income and Expenditure	-	-	0	-	
Grand Totals	26,323,091	24,318,300	2,004,791	32,504,700	8.2

Report 3					
GOODS AND SERVICES REPORT					
Period 9 - December 2022					
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	52,102	33,200	18,902	49,000	56.9
110 Environmental Health	165,434	191,200	(25,766)	295,200	13.5
120 Community and Culture	1,049,189	1,077,300	(28,111)	1,693,300	2.6
140 Parks and Cemeteries	738,290	623,300	114,990	935,700	18.4
150 Leisure	1,153,869	719,900	433,969	1,184,500	60.3
Totals	3,158,883	2,644,900	513,983	4,157,700	19.4
Environment					
200 Environment HQ	57,275	22,900	34,375	31,700	150.1
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	6,854,135	7,082,000	(227,865)	9,237,500	3.2
220 Assets and Property Services	5,884,381	4,667,300	1,217,081	5,961,700	26.1
230 Regulatory Services	472,754	518,100	(45,346)	725,900	8.8
Totals	13,268,545	12,290,300	978,245	15,956,800	8.0
Regen, Development & Planning					
300 Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	124,537	110,900	13,637	137,100	12.3
310 Regeneration	147,809	325,800	(177,991)	715,400	54.6
320 Economic Development	596,425	590,000	6,425	1,093,800	1.1
330 Planning	143,524	260,700	(117,176)	412,900	44.9
340 Tourism	587,839	642,900	(55,061)	894,700	8.6
Totals	1,600,133	1,930,300	(330,167)	3,253,900	17.1
Finance & Performance					
400 Finance & Performance HQ	11,680	2,400	9,280	5,000	386.7
410 Internal Audit	31,707	31,700	7	57,000	0.0
420 Finance	68,685	88,700	(20,015)	203,400	22.6
430 Strategic Transformation and Performance	871,542	944,000	(72,458)	1,266,700	7.7
440 Strategic Capital Development	944	5,400	(4,456)	12,000	82.5
Totals	984,558	1,072,200	(87,642)	1,544,100	8.2
Org Development & Administration					
500 OD & Admin HQ	6,738	5,900	838	12,000	14.2
510 HR & OD	277,148	255,300	21,848	339,600	8.6
520 Administration	1,945,960	1,800,800	145,160	2,434,600	8.1
Totals	2,229,846	2,062,000	167,846	2,786,200	8.1
Chief Executive					
600 Chief Executive	81,306	62,700	18,606	95,300	29.7
610 Community Planning	(1,167)	11,700	(12,867)	20,700	110.0
630 Communications and Marketing	146,141	184,500	(38,359)	349,100	20.8
Totals	226,280	258,900	(32,620)	465,100	12.6
Payroll Savings Budget					
700 Payroll Savings Budget	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	-	-	-	-
NET COST OF SERVICES	21,468,245	20,258,600	1,209,645	28,163,800	6.0
Non Service Income and Expenditure					
Non Service Income and Expenditure	6,116,866	6,142,500	(25,634)	7,522,700	0.4
Grand Totals	27,585,112	26,401,100	1,184,012	35,686,500	4.5

Report 4					
INCOME REPORT					
Period 9 - December 2022					
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	-	(900)	900	(1,500)	-
110 Environmental Health	(448,913)	(436,700)	(12,213)	(600,700)	(2.8)
120 Community and Culture	(757,748)	(612,800)	(144,948)	(992,300)	(23.7)
140 Parks and Cemeteries	(412,752)	(263,700)	(149,052)	(388,300)	(56.5)
150 Leisure	(2,256,937)	(2,029,900)	(227,037)	(2,696,800)	(11.2)
Totals	(3,876,350)	(3,344,000)	(532,350)	(4,679,600)	(15.9)
Environment					
200 Environment HQ	-	-	-	-	100.0
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	(961,356)	(738,900)	(222,456)	(993,200)	(30.1)
220 Assets and Property Services	(975,321)	(769,900)	(205,421)	(804,500)	(26.7)
230 Regulatory Services	(1,604,068)	(1,681,200)	77,132	(2,261,400)	(4.6)
Totals	(3,540,745)	(3,190,000)	(350,745)	(4,059,100)	(11.0)
Regen, Development & Planning					
300 Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	(25,000)	-	(25,000)	-	100.0
310 Regeneration	(10,531)	(3,600)	(6,931)	(4,800)	(192.5)
320 Economic Development	(262,353)	(241,100)	(21,253)	(463,300)	(8.8)
330 Planning	(791,274)	(770,500)	(20,774)	(1,027,500)	(2.7)
340 Tourism	(221,550)	(166,200)	(55,350)	(176,000)	(33.3)
Totals	(1,310,708)	(1,181,400)	(129,308)	(1,671,600)	(10.9)
Finance & Performance					
400 Finance & Performance HQ	(30)	-	(30)	-	100.0
410 Internal Audit	-	-	-	-	100.0
420 Finance	(125,550)	(33,300)	(92,250)	(45,300)	(277.0)
430 Strategic Transformation and Performance	(6,926)	-	(6,926)	-	100.0
440 Strategic Capital Development	-	-	-	-	100.0
Totals	(132,506)	(33,300)	(99,206)	(45,300)	(297.9)
Org Development & Administration					
500 OD & Admin HQ	-	-	-	-	100.0
510 HR & OD	(4,050)	(3,600)	(450)	(5,000)	(12.5)
520 Administration	(349,375)	(317,500)	(31,875)	(397,100)	(10.0)
Totals	(353,425)	(321,100)	(32,325)	(402,100)	(10.1)
Chief Executive					
600 Chief Executive	(295)	-	(295)	-	100.0
610 Community Planning	-	-	-	-	100.0
630 Communications and Marketing	(21,259)	-	(21,259)	-	100.0
Totals	(21,554)	-	(21,554)	-	100.0
Payroll Savings Budget					
700 Payroll Savings Budget	-	-	-	-	100.0
Total	-	-	-	-	-
NET COST OF SERVICES	(9,235,288)	(8,069,800)	(1,165,488)	(10,857,700)	(14.4)
Non Service Income and Expenditure					
Non Service Income and Expenditure	(44,591,135)	(42,649,600)	(1,941,535)	(57,333,500)	(4.6)
Grand Totals	(53,826,423)	(50,719,400)	(3,107,023)	(68,191,200)	(6.1)

The next budget report would be to the June Corporate Services Committee, covering the full 2022/23 financial year (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023).

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

Alderman Keery proposed, seconded by Councillor T Smith, that the recommendation be adopted.

The seconder, Councillor T Smith referred to Page 2 of 7 within the report which detailed an Explanation of Variances, and he noted costs associated with Payroll Expenditure totalled approximately £2.7M. That was something which he stated had not been budgeted for and which had arisen as the result of the Local and National Pay deals. Continuing he also referred to expenditure associated with Leisure and asked if any discussions had taken place to date with SERCO about the possibility of looking at leisure provision in Ards.

In response the Head of Finance confirmed that was part of an extension which had been agreed for five years and as such that would be a matter for the Director of Community & Wellbeing to consider in due course. He added that part of those considerations would see recommendations put forward prior to the end of the extension period.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Keery, seconded by Councillor T Smith, that the recommendation be adopted.

5. BLAIR MAYNE BURSARY AWARDS 2023 (FILE ADM24)
(Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services advising that a sub-committee of the Corporate Services Committee administered the Blair Mayne Bursary Fund. Three awards of £500 were made annually to successful applicants under predetermined criteria. The categories were:

- Sport
- Academic Study
- Adventure Training

A meeting of the subcommittee was held by Teams on 23 January 2023 which detailed the recipients of this year's bursary. The minutes were attached.

The presentation of the awards would take place on 24 March 2023. All Members would be issued with invitations in due course. At this stage Damien Lewis, Author of SAS series of books had been provisionally booked for the ceremony.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees to adopt the minutes.

Alderman McIlveen proposed, seconded by Alderman McDowell, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer, Alderman McIlveen commented that this would be the first year the Council had funded the Blair Mayne Awards. As such he was pleased to see it in such good health in terms of the applications coming forward which showcased the wealth of talent within the Borough.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman McDowell, that the recommendation be adopted.

6. SUSTAINABLE FOOD PLACES ANNUAL CONFERENCE
MARCH 2023 (FILE SUS1)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services advising that Ards and North Down Borough Council became a member of Sustainable Food Places (SFP) in April 2022 (reported Corporate Committee May 2022).

The ambition of SFP was to create a transition to a healthy, sustainable, and more equitable food system. Not only did this require strong national policy, but also collaborative action between policy makers, businesses, and society at the local level, it promoted a systems approach that involved and connected key actors at all levels and across all parts of the food system.

As part of this membership the Ards and North Down Partnership could avail of a network of contacts and knowledge, apply for grants/funding and attend events. SFP would be holding their annual conference on 23 & 24 March 2023 at St Catherine's College, Oxford.

As a member, Ards and North Down had been invited to attend. SFP would cover costs of travel and accommodation for up to two representatives of each partnership to attend. This may be two officers or one officer and one member of the wider Steering Group. The Council would be required to cover the subsistence costs in line with Council policy.

RECOMMENDED that the Council considers the acceptance of the invitation to attend the SFP conference on the 23 & 24 March 2023 and if so whether it is for 2 officers or one officer and one member of the wider Steering Group.

Councillor Dunlop sought clarification on who currently sat on the Steering Group.

In response the Compliance Manager confirmed that it consisted of a wide variety of stakeholders including the Council's Sustainability Officer, Head of Parks & Cemeteries, Social Farms, Queen's University, SERC and the National Trust.

Councillor Dunlop indicated that he would be content for the Council's Sustainability Officer to attend.

At this stage Councillor Greer indicated that she was going to propose that two officers be nominated to attend, and she asked if Councillor Dunlop would be content with that.

Councillor Dunlop indicated that he was content with.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Dunlop, seconded by Councillor Greer, that two officers be nominated to attend the SFP Conference on 23 & 24 March 2023.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE ACT NI BRIEFING NOTE (FILE SUS1)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services advising that at the meeting of the Corporate Services Committee on Tuesday 13 December 2022, in response to the Roadmap to Sustainability update, the committee requested that a briefing be brought to a future Committee on the new Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 and how this may impact on future decisions within the Council.

Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 – Briefing Note

What is Climate Change?

Climate Change referred to changes in the natural environment and weather systems which had been caused by global warming. Greenhouse gases (GHGs) were released when fossil fuels were burnt like oil and coal and through the digestive processes of animals. GHGs remained near the earth's surface and prevented heat and light from escaping. This caused a warming effect, leading to a rise in global temperatures. Sustained emission of GHGs over the last 200 years had led to intensive global warming, and profound Climate Change. Governments across the world had pledged to limit global warming to less than 2°C by 2050 compared to pre-industrial levels in order to avoid irreversible harm to the environment.

What is the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022?

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 ("the Act") received Royal Assent on 6 June 2022.

The Act would:

1. Set targets for net zero for the years 2050, 2040 and 2030 for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions:
 - This target excluded **methane** emissions which only needed to be reduced to **46%** against the [baseline](#) by **2050**);
 - a reduction of at least **48%** in GHG emissions against the baseline by **2030**;
 - a GHG emissions target for 2040 (to be confirmed within 24 months of this Act coming into force) that was in line with the 2050 target.

The Act also contained some information on plans to meet the emissions targets for the following sectors (sectoral plans):

- Energy
- Renewable electricity consumption – at least **80%** of Northern Ireland's electricity consumption must be from renewable sources by **2030**
- Infrastructure
- Industrial processes

- Waste management – at least **70%** of the waste in Northern Ireland needs to be recycled by **2030**
 - Agriculture
 - Fisheries
 - Transport
 - Active travel
2. Set out a carbon budgeting framework (Carbon budget was a term used to refer to the maximum amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions allowed over a period of time, to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius):
- The Act laid out the details on the setting of carbon budgets by DAERA for each budgetary period at levels consistent with meeting the emissions targets for 2030, 2040 and 2050.
 - The budgetary periods, for the purposes of this Act, were 2023 to 2027 and each period of five years after that.
 - DAERA must set the carbon budgets for the first three budgetary periods (2023 to 2027, 2028 to 2032, and 2033 to 2037) before the end of 2023, and at least 12 years before the start of the budgetary period for any subsequent budgetary periods, i.e. the carbon budget for the 4th budgetary period (2038 to 2042) needed to be set by 2026.
 - DAERA may also decide to transfer a part of the unused carbon budget back to the preceding budgetary period, or forward to the next budgetary period, as detailed in Section 28 of the Act (Carrying amounts from one budgetary period to another).
3. Provide for reporting and statements against those targets and budgets:
- This part also included 'Just Transition' clauses, including a 'Just Transition Fund for Agriculture' (section 31 of the Act refers), to support the sectors through the changes brought by the Act, and to avoid causing them a disadvantage such as being unfairly penalised. It was designed to assist Northern Ireland's large agri-food sector 'to deliver its contribution under' climate actions plans. This was inspired by a **similar fund** (though wider in scope than agriculture) established in Scotland. The just transition principle was important, in taking action to reduce Northern Ireland emissions and increase Northern Ireland removals, in a manner which, so far as possible, achieves the objectives of:



The establishment of a Just Transition Commission (JTC) was inspired by the Scottish JTC. The NI JTC would have an oversight and advisory role in relation to the 'just transition' elements of the Act. The Act required JTC membership to be significantly representative of Northern Ireland society, but otherwise left the functioning, constitution and financial aspects of the JTC to secondary legislation. A previous Scottish JTC produced a significant **report** into a green recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, and the Northern Ireland JTC, when established, may be expected to produce similar advice.

4. Confer power to impose climate change reporting duties on public bodies;
5. Establish a Northern Ireland Climate Change Commission and appoint a Climate Change Commissioner to oversee and report on the operations of the Act. There was also a commitment to developing a climate action plan within two years of the Act receiving Royal Assent.

What are the new reporting regulations required under the Act which will affect public bodies?

- a) There was a statutory requirement in the Act under Section 42 for DAERA, acting on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive, to make new legislation (i.e., new Regulations), which would require climate change reporting by specified public bodies.
- b) The new legislation must be made and come into operation before **6th December 2023**.
- c) The Act required prior consultation with relevant stakeholders before the regulations came into operation. This was currently being carried out by Climate NI on behalf of DAERA.
- d) Although section 42 of the Act gave powers to make new Regulations which set duties on specified public bodies to report on climate change, the Act did not contain any powers or duties to require public bodies to deliver their functions in

a certain way or to take any other specific actions beyond fulfilling their climate reporting duty.

- e) The climate change reporting duties that the Regulations may impose, on specified public bodies, include preparing reports containing any of the following:
- an assessment of the current and predicted impact of climate change in relation to the body's functions;
 - a statement of the body's proposals and policies for adapting to, or mitigating the effects of, climate change in the exercise of its functions;
 - a statement of the timescales for implementing those proposals and policies; and
 - an assessment of the progress made by the body towards implementing the proposals and policies set out in any previous reports prepared under the regulations.

What public bodies may have to consider when preparing reports

The Act gave powers to DAERA to include in the Regulations a requirement for the specified bodies, when preparing the reports, to have regard to:

- a) the most recent report under section 56 of the Climate Change Act 2008 (i.e., the latest UK-wide Climate Change Risk Assessment);
- b) the most recent programme under section 60 of that Act (i.e., the latest Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programme); and
- c) the desirability of co-ordinating the body's proposals and policies for adapting to, or mitigating the effects of, climate change with corresponding proposals and policies of bodies in other parts of the United Kingdom, in the Republic of Ireland or elsewhere.

Where are we now?

DAERA, acting on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive, had been, and were continuing to, engage with all relevant stakeholders on the new reporting Regulations before they come into effect in December 2023. This engagement would provide information on:

1. Which public bodies should report under the new Regulations;
2. What should be reported on - i.e., questions which could be asked as a part of climate change reporting;
3. The timeline for public bodies providing their completed reports;
4. Whether reporting should be mandatory, or voluntary, or a combination of both;
5. How the reporting information collected could be used; and
6. What type of support organisations might need in order to help them produce their report.

Until the new regulations were agreed we can only assume what the requirements would be on local Councils.

Public body reporting requirements in other government jurisdictions were highly varied. Some require reporting by public bodies on only adaptation, others only on mitigation, while others again had a mixture of both mitigation and adaptation

reporting requirements. Also, those requirements in some cases were mandatory or voluntary, or a mixture of both, and there was even a variety of approaches on selecting the bodies who reported under those reporting regimes.

Some jurisdictions required reporting through setting those requirements in legislation, and some set the reporting requirements on public bodies through a policy. Even across jurisdictions which had made this type of reporting a legal requirement, there was no standardised approach.

Some main reporting themes that arose (although not included in every reporting regime, in every jurisdiction) included the provision of a range of data, on:

- Sources and levels of greenhouse gas emissions;
- Actions and progress on reducing their greenhouse gas emissions;
 - Identifying and understanding how a body is at risk from the impacts of climate change (climate risk assessment);
- Actions, plans and policies by the body, to reduce its identified risks, impacts and vulnerability to climate change (adaptation)

To summarise key targets that were specified within the Act were:

- Net zero emissions by 2050 (excluding methane which had its own target)
- At least 80% of Northern Ireland's electricity consumption from renewables by 2030
- At least 73% of waste in Northern Ireland needs to be recycled by 2030

Based on those and the Council's own commitments to climate change it should be focusing, for now, on how it could contribute to those targets. Relevant service plans, strategies and projects should be aligned with those targets whilst the Council awaited regulation of monitoring.

Further updates would be provided to Council in due course once more was known in relation to the Executive's intentions.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

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

The proposer Councillor Dunlop commented that he would look forward to seeing what DAREA came up with in due course.

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

8. INNOVATE UK NET ZERO LIVING PROGRAMME - FAST FOLLOWERS (FILE SUS1) (Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services advising that Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation, were investing £6

million in this Fast Followers competition as part of the 'Innovate UK Net Zero Living programme'.

The aim of this competition was to support local authorities in up to 20 places and fund a dedicated Net Zero Innovation and Delivery officer role. The funding would help to further develop net zero delivery plans, improve delivery pathways and enable adoption at scale of innovative products and services.

The fund would invest up to £300,000 per place over two years. If successful, the Council would also have access to net zero skills and capability support provided by Innovate UK and their partners. If successful Councils must:

- recruit a specific Net Zero Innovation and Delivery Officer to participate in the programme
- actively participate in a programme of net zero delivery support modules to be provided by Innovate UK and its partners
- implement the learning gained to a specific net zero project

Full details of the fund could be found in the attached Appendix. There was no match funding required from the Council. The closing date for applications was 1 March 2023.

Officers had met and felt this was a much-needed funding opportunity to assist with the Council's commitments to deliver the Roadmap to Sustainability particularly identifying those requiring non-technical solutions such as behavioural changes, policy adaptations, governance or finance. Funders were keen to see projects that had sectoral and geographical reach, so an opportunity to share and expand learning.

RECOMMENDED that the Council note that an application will be made to this fund.

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

9. INVITE TO MUSICAL TRIBUTE TO HM QUEEN ELIZABETH II (Appendix IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services advising that the Council had received an invitation from The Viscount Brookeborough KG, Hon Regional President of ABF The Soldiers' Charity to the tribute concert at the Waterfront Hall on the 15 April 2023, as a commemoration of Her Majesty's long reign, through the medium of music and to raise funds for soldiers, ex-soldiers and their families.

VIP tickets cost £65 and allowed for the holders to access VIP seating, relax in a VIP lounge with drinks and nibbles before and during the interval of the show.

Full details were attached in the Appendix.

RECOMMENDED that Council consider this invitation.

Alderman McIlveen proposed, seconded by Councillor Greer, that the matter be deferred to the Full Council meeting for consideration.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Greer, that the matter be deferred to the Full Council meeting for consideration.

10. RESPONSE TO NOTICES OF MOTION

10a. NOM 169 – Penalty Charge Notices (FILE NOM 169) (Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services advising that a Notice of Motion debated at Corporate Committee in November 2022 and subsequently ratified by Council stated:

“That this Council recognises the amazing work undertaken by care workers in caring for vulnerable people in our Borough, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is deeply regrettable that care workers have received penalty charge notices (PCN) for parking on double yellow lines whilst performing their caring duties. The Council, therefore, agrees to write to the Infrastructure Minister to urge that the Department amends the Parking Enforcement Protocol to add that care workers, whilst on duty are added to the list of exemptions to restrictions to allow parking outside an address of who they are caring for, to ensure that they can provide essential care in a timely manner.”

A letter was sent from the Chief Executive on 21 December 2022 to the Permanent Secretary for the Department Infrastructure and a reply email was received on 5 January 2023. A copy was attached.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the response to the Notice of Motion.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor T Smith, seconded by Alderman Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

11. NOTICES OF MOTION

a) Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Woods and Councillor Dunlop:

Councillor Woods proposed, seconded by Councillor Dunlop, that this Council notes its declaration of a climate emergency in 2018 and the passage of the Climate Change Act 2022; agrees the need to reduce emissions to ensure happy and healthy communities and engages with community and government partners with the aim of piloting 'car free' days in our City, towns and villages, bringing back a report to this effect.

The proposer, Councillor Woods stated that her motion was very simple and self-explanatory. Towns, cities and villages were full of cars and had been designed to facilitate the movement of vehicles and prioritised them, and in doing so that had led

to the detriment of others. She expressed the view that the streets should be for people.

Conversations on access and the use of city, town and village centres had been happening for decades. However, the focus on this had been spurred on by the pandemic, which saw a need for greater mobility and social distancing, with a focus on bringing business back to local areas and recognising the ever-changing use of towns away from the traditional. She added that it was also a conversation which was part of a much bigger puzzle, about living streets, about 15-minute cities or 20-minute neighbourhoods, about school streets, none of which were new either.

Continuing, Councillor Woods stated that many other cities and areas had done similar schemes with some having gone further and pedestrianised areas of their centres. She said that herself and Councillor Dunlop had seen this personally in Brussels for example, where a main road had been turned into a space for people and community. The pedestrian zone around the Grand Place had been extended, with access, to vehicles for certain reasons. Having centres dominated by vehicles created air and noise pollution, traffic unsafety and traffic jams that also slowed down public transport. By limiting through-traffic, for example through restricted access zones and adjustments to traffic directions or one-way streets, streets could be made more pleasant and safer for visitors, schoolchildren, residents and public transport users. Personally, Councillor Woods stated that was something which she would love, town centres being used by people, not being lined with cars and full of pollutants, but with areas for recreation, for relaxing and using space. However, she added that may be just a dream and as such she would settle for a day.

Councillor Woods advised that Car Free Day was on 22 September every year and suggested that perhaps this was something the Council could look at to join in with other cities and implement across the Borough. Events could be held on that day and people encouraged to rethink streets and who they were for as public space was not just for cars. She suggested that local and independent businesses could all be showcased to encourage increased spending and promote active travel for all. Street parties could be thrown, and neighbours could have a get together, safely with young people and children outside their houses. This would also help to raise awareness of air pollution levels that were increasing yet again in some areas that the Council monitored, and the health impacts that this had upon us all.

Continuing Councillor Woods acknowledged that there were always arguments thrown in that there would be a negative economic impact if cars were removed from the towns and city centres wholly. This however was not what the evidence showed. Research by Living Streets for example and Transport for London concluded that town centre pedestrianisation and public realm investments generated value for retail schemes, and, after an adjustment period of 12 months, saw an upturn in turnover and centre viability. Research from Dublin had also shown the same thing from Capel Street - people stayed longer than they had previously. In Spain, over the 2018 Christmas period, Madrid closed its city centre to cars. Data from the project showed that retail takings increased by 9.5% on Madrid's main shopping street during the pilot. Findings from Living Streets showed that businesses, high streets and urban centres were responding to the changing ways everyone shopped and lived with a range of actions to encourage footfall and increase sales. The most

successful of those recognised the economics of place and the need to improve the pedestrian experience and accessibility.

In summing up Councillor Woods stated that there was a shameful record here in Northern Ireland on promoting active travel. She commented that it was not about Greenways, but was about placemaking, access, health and wellbeing. COVID-19 was a massively missed opportunity, where everyone talked a good talk about doing things differently, yet nothing really changed. Cars were still king, to the detriment of people and place, to happy and healthy communities. What she would like to see was a viability report in conjunction with stakeholders, forward planning and getting everyone on board. She asked members to support her motion at this stage adding that she looked forward to the debate.

Echoing Councillor Woods comments, the seconder Councillor Dunlop agreed that this would provide an excellent opportunity to experiment. He referred to the May Day Bank Holiday activities which took place every year in Holywood citing that as an excellent example of what could take place. That he noted was an event which always received a positive response from residents. Councillor Dunlop added that he would encourage greater officer collaboration on this matter and look forward to the report coming back in due course.

Councillor McKimm expressed his thanks to his colleagues for bringing forward the proposal which he stated was not too dissimilar to one brought forward by the Mayor and Alderman Wilson. He indicated that he would welcome the opportunity to have car free days and knew how well they had operated in Europe. Continuing Councillor McKimm recognised that the proposal was not anti-car and instead was more about the introduction of alternatives. One example of how well this could work was the recent Gary Lightbody concert in Bangor where people had been able to dance in the streets which had been closed to traffic during the concert. He added that he fully supported the proposal.

Councillor Douglas thanked members for bringing this motion forward noting that it was similar to one she had previously brought forward with her colleague Alderman Wilson. She expressed her support for it adding that people could generally see so much more when they were on foot which would be beneficial from many businesses points of view.

At this stage Alderman McIlveen asked if there was any estimate how much a report of this nature would cost and if the officer team had the necessary expertise to formulate such a report. He suggested that it may be necessary to seek that information externally.

In response the Director of Corporate Services indicated that he would not have that information to hand and as such would respond to the member directly.

In response Alderman McIlveen recalled that was the concern which members had when the Mayor and Alderman Wilson had previously raised their motion. He stated that he did not believe Council officers had that level of expertise to deliver such a comprehensive report. Therefore, it was not a case of members resisting such a proposal but rather how that could be delivered and if Council officers had the

expertise required. Continuing he suggested there had been missed opportunities as part of the Belfast City Deal to consider a more co-ordinated approach to this. As such he indicated that he would not be voting for or against this as he would rather have a full explanation brought back to the Council meeting next week on how a report such as this would be paid for.

Councillor T Smith expressed concern with the proposal before members reiterating that he was very much pro car, and his view was that the car was the biggest asset to personal freedom that had been created over the past century. Cars were essential items that enabled people to enjoy independence without the need to rely upon expensive and slow Government run transport. He added that for many living within the Borough the car was essential for people to go to work or just to go about their daily business and as such he would wonder where proposals such as this would end up. Councillor Smith expressed the view that this was an attack on cars and while he supported the concept of electric cars, he acknowledged that currently they were unaffordable for many. He also added that in his opinion the Green Party were anti-car and as such he would have difficulty supporting the proposal.

By way of summing up, Councillor Woods thanked members for their comments. She stated that she was not in any way anti-car as had been suggested and instead her motion was more about awareness raising to consider the reclamation of the Borough's streets. Cars were not king, and she fully accepted that public transport needed to be overhauled and made more sustainable, accessible and cheaper. To allay members concerns she reiterated that what had been proposed was a report to be brought back to discuss one day, a pilot of one day for a car free day on 22 September 2023. Continuing she reiterated that it was not an attack on cars but instead an opportunity to reconsider that town centres should be more about people, communities and local businesses. In addressing Alderman McIlveen's concerns she expressed the view that the Council did have the expertise for this as they also already existed within the local communities. Roads were already closed throughout the Borough on several occasions throughout the year to host community led events such as Santa Parades, May Day Celebrations and 12th July Parades. She added that her motion was about working with others such as DfI and local Chambers of Trade. Therefore, she did not think that a report to be brought back would cost anything particularly as the expertise and knowledge already existed within the community.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Woods, seconded by Councillor Dunlop, with 5 voting For, 3 voting Against and 3 Abstaining that this Council notes its declaration of a climate emergency in 2018 and the passage of the Climate Change Act 2022; agrees the need to reduce emissions to ensure happy and healthy communities and engages with community and government partners with the aim of piloting 'car free' days in our City, towns and villages, bringing back a report to this effect.

(b) Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor T Smith and Councillor Brooks:

Councillor T Smith proposed, seconded by Councillor Gilmour, that this Council supports local residents who have started a petition which calls for a pedestrian

crossing on Moat Street, Donaghadee, near to the Spar store. This road can be extremely busy and residents have real safety concerns when trying to cross it. Not only do many people use this area to cross to shop at the Spar store, others need to cross the road to get children to and from the local schools. This Council will write to the Department of Infrastructure and call on them to listen to local residents, take on board their concerns and take the necessary steps to install a pedestrian crossing in this vicinity.

The proposer, Councillor T Smith, stated that he believed there was a real need for a survey to be undertaken by the Department to establish the need for a crossing at this location in Donaghadee. He stated that his proposal had been brought forward in order to support many of the local residents and pass their concerns onto the Department.

Commenting as seconder, Councillor Gilmour stated that she was happy to support the proposal particularly given the close proximity of shops and schools at that location.

Also supportive of the proposal, Alderman Irvine thanked Councillor T Smith for bringing this forward. He advised that he had been contacted by many local residents about this and as such would be supportive of what had been proposed. Alderman Irvine added that he was aware there were many elderly people also living nearby who could also benefit from the installation of such a crossing.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor T Smith, seconded by Councillor Gilmour, that this Council supports local residents who have started a petition which calls for a pedestrian crossing on Moat Street, Donaghadee, near to the Spar store. This road can be extremely busy and residents have real safety concerns when trying to cross it. Not only do many people use this area to cross to shop at the Spar store, others need to cross the road to get children to and from the local schools. This Council will write to the Department of Infrastructure and call on them to listen to local residents, take on board their concerns and take the necessary steps to install a pedestrian crossing in this vicinity.

(c) Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cummings and Alderman Armstrong-Cotter:

(Councillor Cummings joined the meeting at this stage – 9.40pm)

Councillor Cummings proposed, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that this Council honours the 50th Anniversary of the UDR CGC Greenfinches following the introduction of the Ulster Defence Regiment Bill in July 1973, which permitted the recruitment of women into the regiment, recognising those who joined within the Borough, and brings back a report to outline how the Corporate Services Committee can work with local UDR Associations along with other relevant bodies to support anniversary events in the Borough.

The proposer, Councillor Cummings stated that his notice of motion was designed to facilitate dialogue between local UDR associations and Council who were keen to

mark this important anniversary and the landmark decision that saw the inclusion of women within the ranks of the regiment. A regiment which secured a 'unique distinction' of 22 years continuous service, something that was unique within the history of the British Army, but who throughout that period saw 198 soldiers make the ultimate sacrifice, and amongst that number four greenfinches. Those being: Private Eva Martin, Lance Corporal Jean Leggett, Private Margaret Hearst and Corporal Heather Kerrigan. Service and sacrifice that was recognised by Her Majesty with the award of Conspicuous Gallantry Cross in 2006.

Continuing Councillor Cummings commented as the Council's Veterans Champion and a Borough, the Council had committed itself to recognising and supporting its veterans. This proposal reinforced the deep gratitude and appreciation, for the Greenfinches, the operational code name given to those female soldiers. They were strong women, courageous women, who were owed a debt of gratitude now and always.

The UDR Greenfinches led the way for full integration of women into the military, who in 1973 began to recruit women into their ranks, something that was in contrast to the 'Womens Royal Army Corps', who only merged into the British Army in 1992. (British Army Review 1975 p30). To quote the Under Secretary of State, at the Regiments creation said;

"In these enlightened days it may seem odd that a Bill is needed to remove this measure of apparent discrimination, but in the very different circumstances of the 1969 Ulster Defence Regiment Act which specially excluded women".

There were 530 Initial applications, and enlistments into the regiment. Something which grew to 738 in the 1980s, and remained constant, with the women representing 10% of regimental strength. He added that it was also worth placing on record, that whilst they were fully integrated into duties from the start the Greenfinches were unarmed. It was one thing to stand against the evils of terrorism and it was yet another with only access to a radio, map reading skills, and a first-aid kit. Sadly, he recalled that four Greenfinches lost their life to the terrorist campaign.

Councillor Cummings stated that he was keen to see the Council work with the UDR Association as they sought to mark this important anniversary in the regiment's history. The UDR Regimental Associations had already started to consider activities and he had indeed submitted a request for the Council to consider a civic reception, which would be hosted at an appropriate time later in the year. He added that this was something that he had mentioned to the Associations, as it was important that the Council worked alongside them. As such they would welcome further involvement in their plans, and this notice of motion was designed to allow officers to report back.

In summing up Councillor Cummings stated that the Council had committed itself to recognising and supporting its veterans. This proposal reinforced the deep gratitude and appreciation, both for the service of the Greenfinches and their ongoing contribution, as veterans, to life within the Borough. Those were remarkable, strong and courageous women to whom we owed a debt of gratitude now and always.

The seconder, Alderman McIlveen thanked Councillor Cummings for bringing forward his proposal and acknowledged the work which he had undertaken in relation to this. He expressed his support for the proposal agreeing that the Greenfinches were indeed brave women who had carried out valiant service during the troubles and as such they should be celebrated on their 50th Anniversary.

Thanking Councillor Cummings for bringing forward his motion, Councillor Gilmour added that she looked forward to the report coming back detailing celebratory events. At this stage she commented that her mother in law had been a Greenfinch serving for eight months in the Omagh area where she had been stationed in the radio room. She added when Corporal Heather Kerrigan had been murdered, she was only too well aware that it could have been her mother in law out on patrol that fateful evening. Those women were murdered in cold blood by IRA scum and Heather was never far from her thoughts. She also acknowledged and commended the Greenfinches for making the choice to stand up to the IRA and she fully support the proposal brought by Councillor Cummings.

At this stage Alderman Keery indicated that he had been approached by representatives of the UDR in respect of the anniversary of the Greenfinches and as such he wished to propose an amendment.

Alderman Keery proposed, seconded by Alderman Irvine, that this Council recognises the significant contribution that women have made and continues to make to the defence of this great nation. The Ulster Defence Regiment Bill received Royal Assent on the 18th July 1973 which enabled the recruitment of women into The Ulster Defence Regiment. (Conspicuous Gallantry Cross) CGC. Ards and North Down Borough Council recognises the substantial impact that the Greenfinches had in the defeat of terrorism in Northern Ireland and in conjunction with the Regimental Association of The Ulster Defence Regiment CGC will recognise and honour the sacrifice they made. Council will explore a lasting tribute to the Greenfinches of The Ulster Defence Regiment CGC.

The Chairman asked Councillor Cummings if he was content to include that wording in his proposal. Councillor Cummings indicated that he was content to do so.

Alderman McIlveen sought reassurance that the Chairman was content with that course of action, and he indicated that he was given that a report would come back in due course.

Welcoming the motion, Alderman Irvine acknowledged that the Greenfinches had put their lives on the line for their country at a time of some very dark days. 1973 was the year which enabled women to join the Ulster Defence Regiment however he noted that no weapons were allowed while out on patrol even though a firearms licence was held. He added that had been a very dark time for the country and therefore it was important to have a lasting legacy as had been proposed.

Rising in support of the motion, Alderman McDowell commented that one of his best friends had served in the UDR and as such he was only too aware of the sacrifice made and dangers faced by all those who served. They had served their communities as best they could at that time and as such, he agreed that they

deserved recognition for the work they had carried out. Alderman McDowell added that many of those who served had full time jobs yet were prepared to make many sacrifices.

Councillor Douglas also expressed her support for the proposal and thanked Alderman Irvine for his informative comments. She too acknowledged those were incredibly dark days during which many challenges were faced and as such she agreed that it was very appropriate that they were honoured.

By way of summing up, Councillor Cummings thanked members for their comments noting some of which were very personal and had brought home the many sacrifices which had been made. He agreed that it was entirely appropriate and important to ensure that the UDR Associations were involved with any considerations undertaken by the Council.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Cummings, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that this Council honours the 50th Anniversary of the UDR CGC Greenfinches following the introduction of the Ulster Defence Regiment Bill in July 1973, which permitted the recruitment of women into the regiment, recognising those who joined within the Borough, and brings back a report to outline how the Corporate Services Committee can work with Regimental Association of The Ulster Defence Regiment CGC along with other relevant bodies to support anniversary events in the Borough and explore a lasting tribute to the Greenfinches of The Ulster Defence Regiment CGC.

(Councillor Cummings left the meeting at this stage – 10.02pm)

12. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

i) European Victims Day

Alderman Irvine noted that the Council annually lit its buildings up in red to mark European Victims Day but noted that due to technical difficulties this had not been possible this year. He indicated that he had been contacted by the South Eastern Fermanagh Foundation (SEFF) victims group which worked on a cross community basis. They had felt it was important for the Council to show solidarity with all victims particularly in light of the UK Government's ill-conceived Victims and Reconciliation Bill, which would see no justice for victims and see security forces considered as terrorists. This was something which he stated was completely unacceptable and as such it was hoped that Bill would never see the light of day. Furthermore, as the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement was fast approaching it was important to remember those who had made the ultimate sacrifice to ensure some level of peace for us all.

He acknowledged that many victims though had had to witness the perpetrators of crimes released from prison and elevated to high levels of prominence within the government without any remorse shown to their victims. He encouraged the Council to stand with victims and survivors of the troubles across the entire community.

NOTED.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

13. INVESTORS IN PEOPLE OUTCOME (FILE 260502)

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)

14. REQUEST FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY TO RENEW THE LICENCE FOR THE TIDAL GAUGE AT THE COMMERCIAL PIER AT BANGOR MARINA (FILE LP)

(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)

15. REQUEST FROM NIE FOR A WAYLEAVE OVER COUNCIL LAND AT THE PLAYING FIELD IN CARROWDORE (FILE LP479) (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)

16. ROMAS OUTDOOR SEATING AREA AT MILL STREET CARPARK, NEWTOWNARDS (Appendix VIII)

*****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)

17. REQUEST FROM MCAULEY’S AMUSEMENTS FOR 2 CHILDREN’S ATTRACTIONS ON COUNCIL LAND PICKIE PARK (FILE LP2MMPT4) (Appendix IX)

*****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)

18. LEASE OF MULTI-USE SPACE AT ABMWLC (FILE LP) (Appendix X)

*****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)

(Councillor Chambers left the meeting at this stage – 10.15pm)

19. MERCHANT SERVICES CONTRACT (FILE FIN35)

*****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)

20. CORPORATE BANKING CONTRACT EXTENSION (FILE FIN35)

*****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)

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 10.18pm.

Unclassified

207

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Corporate Services
Date of Meeting	14 February 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administration
Date of Report	30 January 2023
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/>
Subject	Invite to Musical Tribute to HM Queen Elizabeth II
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Letter of invitation

The Council has received an invitation from The Viscount Brookeborough KG, Hon Regional President of ABF The Soldiers' Charity to the tribute concert at the Waterfront Hall on the 15 April 2023, as a commemoration of Her Majesty's long reign, through the medium of music and to raise funds for soldiers, ex-soldiers and their families.

VIP tickets cost £65 allow for the holders to access VIP seating, relax in a VIP lounge with drinks and nibbles before and during the interval of the show.

Full details are attached in Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council consider this invitation.



The Army's National Charity

President
General Sir James Everard KCB CBE

Chairman of Trustees
Lieutenant General Philip Jones CB CBE DL

Chief Executive
Major General Tim Hyams CB OBE

ABF The Soldiers' Charity (Northern Ireland)
Building 115, Thiepval Barracks, Lisburn BT28 3NP
02892 678112 ni@soldierscharity.org www.soldierscharity.org

NI Councils List A.

12th January 2023

MUSICAL TRIBUTE TO HM QUEEN ELIZABETH II – WATERFRONT HALL, 15 APR 2023

Dear Stephen,

On behalf of our Hon Regional President, The Viscount Brookeborough KG, I would like to inform you of our Tribute Concert at the Waterfront Hall, Belfast, featuring the Band, Bugles, Pipes and Drums of the Royal Irish Regiment. It will take place on the evening of Saturday 15th April 2023, as a commemoration of Her Majesty's long reign, through the medium of music and to raise funds for soldiers, ex-soldiers and their families in times of need.

ABF The Soldiers' Charity, (formerly the Army Benevolent Fund), has been in existence since 1944 and supports soldiers, veterans and army families who have fallen upon hard times, raising around £8 million annually to meet this need. Should you wish to know more about the work of the charity, you can visit our website at www.soldierscharity.org.

We would like to invite a group of your Councillors and staff to attend and I would be grateful if you could enter the date of the concert into your forecast of events for 2023 and support the charity by planning to attend what I know will be a tremendously entertaining evening. VIP tickets cost £65 and allow the holders to relax in a VIP lounge with drinks and nibbles as part of the ticket price, both before the show and during the interval. VIP seating is also included for the performance.

If you have any enquiries, don't hesitate to contact me on ni@soldierscharity.org or by calling 02892 678112. Please note that we work from home on Mondays and Fridays.

Best wishes,

David

David Forsey
Director (NI)



ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A virtual meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee was held via Zoom on Wednesday 15th February 2023 at 7:00 pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor Edmund

Alderman: Carson (Zoom)
W Irvine
Wilson (Zoom)

Councillors:	Boyle	McRandal
	Chambers (zoom)	Moore
	Douglas	Smart (Zoom)
	S Irvine	T Smith (Zoom, 19:24)
	Johnson (Zoom)	Thompson
	McArthur	Woods (Zoom)

Officers: Director of Community and Wellbeing (G Bannister), Head of Community & Culture (J Nixey), Leisure Manager (A Johnson), Head of Parks & Cemeteries (S Daye), Environmental Health Manager (J Neill) and Democratic Services Officer (S McCrea)

1. APOLOGIES

No apologies had been received for lateness or non-attendance.

NOTED.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman asked for any Declarations of Interest and the following declarations were made:

Councillor Boyle declared an interest in Item 8: Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 Fixed Penalty Fees

NOTED.

3. DEPUTATION FROM GREENSPACES

(Louise Macartney and Patrick Cregg were brought into the meeting to present at 20:04)

Louise Macartney thanked Members for allowing the deputation. She explained that Greenspaces' tagline was to conserve, protect and promote green spaces in the borough. The company itself was formed circa 2012 as an advocacy group that had trusted links with those individuals knowledgeable in nature such as experts trained in various backgrounds such as ecology or landscape management as well as the self-educated. Some photographs were shown to Members to showcase the beauty of the borough. Furthermore, Louise Macartney explained that their vision included biodiversity and human-wellbeing. Northern Ireland had recently been ranked as the 12th worst in the world for biodiversity loss in a study carried out by RSPB and the British museum that looked at loss over a period of 40 years. Science had dictated nature was of huge benefit to wellbeing with a quotation from Yale University advising that those spending two hours per week in nature were substantially more likely to report good health and psychological wellbeing and an example was proffered of London Train Network using a large banner of a treeline at one of its stations as a way to promote lower stress levels through exemplifying nature.

Louise Macartney believed Ards and North Down Borough had a trove of natural treasures and a wonderful sealine vista for both residents and those who visited its shores. However, there was a risk to those views and beauty spots, a risk that was primarily building development. In the past ten years, Greenspaces had been involved in planning applications with planners and developers in an attempt to save nature and it was hoped with the improved green spaces local biodiversity action plan upcoming that it could be used to assist in the protection of green spaces in the borough.

Greenspaces operated as a linked group of individuals with expertise that provided a reservoir of knowledge. The Coastal path greenway proposal had been reviewed by Greenspaces and it was through this that contact was made with one Ronald Surgeoner who had spent ten years photographing the same family of otters that resided along the coast whilst information yielded from investigations revealed a veritable list of species that relied upon the coastline as it was. Louise Macartney used the greenway proposal to example the feelings of the local population who had wanted involvement much earlier in the process and though it had not been the intent of Greenspaces to discuss the subject, Louise Macartney believed it was a useful time to take stock of Greenspaces' positive and constructive outlook of approaching planning in terms of nature. With the overwhelming passion for the local area, communication was paramount, something that Greenspaces would like to be able to assist with. It was envisaged that a meeting with Greenspaces could occur on the 6th March where all would be welcome to present ideas.

Upon completion of the presentation, Councillor Woods gave thanks for the presentation and spoke of how their aims and objectives were of a similar nature to hers. Councillor Woods made reference to what she alleged was a failing planning system, which, when it came to protecting the natural environment, it appeared the legislation was not worth the paper it was written on. In terms of communication and consultation whereby residents felt they had not been involved, Councillor Woods asked what Louise Macartney's view would be on an ideal approach regarding communication and what public buy-in may look like. Louise Macartney explained that the most important element was creating a constructive and respectful conversation and that it should be remembered those involved in such discussions had done so as they wanted what was best for the borough. As such, it was important for community groups to have those discussions. She suggested methodologies such as the world café style meetings whereby individuals could discuss a subject around a table and discover ideas from one another.

Councillor Woods believed that the existing system had legal requirements but that it did not require the involvement of communities; a problem she thought could be addressed via the Local Development Plan. With regard to the biodiversity action plan, Councillor Woods queried whether Greenspaces hoped to place a response that would provide their points of view and knowledge on the issue. Louise Macartney explained that Greenspaces were working at the moment on developing a response and that those who were familiar with such documents were to have a meeting in the near future. Furthermore, she advised that Greenspaces members were excited that the Council were to have a plan and that Greenspaces would like to support good outcomes for the borough.

Alderman Irvine asked how Greenspaces may engage with the Council in the future and whether formal or informal links may be better. Patrick Cregg responded, advising that when he retired, he was struck by the wealth of knowledge held by those who had been in government or business prior to their own retirement and that they could act in a galvanising way to help assist with particular issues. However, some discussion would be required to understand exactly what that may look like in the future but he believed those individuals could be the conduit between the Council and wider public. Alderman Irvine spoke of a recent meeting he had with the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum whereby the Director had stated their hope of having sustainability in biodiversity at the heart of an application they were amidst. Patrick Cregg explained that there was a lot of land in public ownership that was not necessarily owned by the Council such as Housing Executive areas, Ministry of Defence and Health Organisations. He believed that the Council had a role in assisting biodiversity management and could take lead as an example for others to follow.

Alderman Carson advised Greenspaces that he had recently heard of troubling news in England where green spaces were being developed by housing associations with

an effective land-grab where gardens of existing dwellings were being taken to assist in further development. Louise Macartney advised that she had not heard of that approach until now and that it was concerning but that Greenspaces was devoted to the local area with their position being one where they would work toward the best green and biodiversity outcomes. In relation to the proposed coastal path, she wished to assuage feelings of cyclists that it had not been an anti-cycling agenda. Green issues were nuanced and they appreciated anything that considered green space. Greenspaces themselves took a case-by-case basis as some areas may require change for green travel and that the overarching question in such circumstances should always be what gain would exist for the green space.

Councillor Boyle stated that he had never heard of Greenspaces until this evening's agenda and asked if they were a legacy North Down operation or if they were positioned throughout the borough. Louise Macartney explained that Greenspaces' roots were in Bangor where, many years ago they began by liaising with the Parks Department regarding heritage planting of trees. At that time, the group did not attract much attention but despite that, even as a small group, they kept abreast of issues in the borough and the peninsula. Councillor Boyle asked if Greenspaces' involvement in planning and applications was in a manner that worked with or against the departments. Louise Macartney advised that they wished to work with other groups using their experts as well as other groups such as community spaces. Greenspaces individuals also continued to educate themselves and whilst communications took place with other external parties, that knowledge would be put to good use where possible. In regard to comments made relating to green spaces having a positive impact upon mental health and wellbeing, Councillor Boyle suggested it may be a boon for the Council to lead by example and host some of their meetings in such green spaces thereby not only promoting the green space itself but also the benefits.

(Greenspaces representatives Louise Macartney and Patrick Cregg left the meeting at 19:29.)

NOTED.

**4. ARDS AND NORTH DOWN SPORTS FORUM GRANTS – WG
JANUARY 2023**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would have been aware that on the 26th August 2015 Council delegated authority to the Ards and North Down Sports Forum, in order to allow it to administer sports grants funding on behalf of the Council. £40,000 had been allocated within the 2022/2023 revenue budget for this purpose.

The Council further authorised the Forum under delegated powers to award grants of up to £250. Grants above £250 still required Council approval. In addition, the Council requested that regular updates were reported to members. During December 2022, the Forum received a total of 4 grant applications: 2 Goldcard and 2 Individual Travel/Accommodation. A summary of the 4 successful applications were detailed as attached Successful Goldcard and Successful Individual Travel & Accommodation Appendices.

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

	Annual Budget	Funding Awarded December 2022	Remaining Budget
Anniversary	£1,000	£0	£250
Coaching	£3,000	£0	£592.50
Equipment	£11,000	£0	£3,535.14
Events	£6,000	£0	£1,700
Seeding	£500	£0	£250
Travel and Accommodation	£14,500	*£370.00	*-£273.97
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	£1,000
New category under development	£3,000	£0	£3,000
*Goldcards proposed during the period December 2022 is 2 (18 Goldcards in total during 2022/23).			

* The proposed remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of - £273.97 was based on a proposed award of £370.00 – for Noting.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the attached applications (no applications were received for over £250 this month), and that the applications approved by the Forum (valued at below £250) are noted.

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

Councillor Boyle noted that applications had been light and queried if that had been due to the time of year. The Director of Community & Wellbeing explained that it was likely the case whilst the Head of Leisure agreed that a drop off in applications occurred at this time of year and picked up again around March.

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

5. COMMEMORATIVE TREE PLANTING

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing Members would have been aware that Council had facilitated the planting of commemorative trees on Council land in conjunction with local groups and organisations.

Historically, requests had been received on an ad hoc basis as a result of a written request from interested organisations or other groups. A policy on when and how to approve such requests was required, in order to ensure fairness, equity of treatment, ensure compliance with any statutory obligations, and provide satisfaction that approved request were within the context of any other approved policies and plans. For example, the trees were open spaces which were accessible and visible to all, and so should reflect the areas' community plan with regard to respectful and shared communities, and therefore be quality shared or neutral displays (Community Plan Outcome 3, p27).

The policy aimed to provide a consistent and fair approach to the decision-making process on whether or not to approve any request to plant a commemorative tree on Council property. It was critical that all tree planting contributes to the Council's overall Tree and Woodland Strategy.

The policy had set out the following criteria:

1. A request would be approved if it meets the following essential criteria:
 - a. The request was being made by a properly constituted organisation.
 - b. The request was submitted in writing in the approved form at least 8 weeks in advance of the requested planting date.
 - c. The tree would become the property of Council and maintained as such. The species and variety would be at the discretion of Council and align with the Councils Tree and Woodland Strategy.
 - d. Applications would be considered on a date received priority should there be a conflict in dates requested (Officers would liaise with those making a request to accommodate where required).
 - e. Applications must have included details of any commemorative plaque to be considered for approval.
 - f. The request was satisfactorily equality screened.
 - g. The request was deemed to be eligible (See section 2).
2. Eligible requests were to be as follows:
 - a. To raise awareness of charities nominated by the Mayor.
 - b. To highlight events directly organised by the Council.

- c. To mark a significant sporting event in the Borough.
 - d. To commemorate a significant anniversary of, or an event organised by a charity or community organisation which has a significant connection to the Borough.
 - e. To commemorate a major national event or anniversary.
3. In addition to failing to meet at least one of the above criteria, a request would be deemed ineligible if it fell into any of the following categories:
- a. An application which in officers' opinions were only promoting a commercial interest.
 - b. The promotion of an ethos, activity or organisation which was not deemed in the context of communities to be shared, neutral or promoting good relations.

A copy of the policy and application form had been attached as appendices to this report.

Members were advised that the Commemorative Tree Planting Policy did not apply to or replace the memorial tree planting which took place in Council cemeteries.

In recent weeks there had been a request for commemorative tree planting activity. This had been received as follows:

- Tesco Bangor (Bloomfield) – Single Memory tree with plaque signifying its support for Cancer Research, and requested to be planted in Valentine Playing Fields, Bangor. Species to be determined by Council Officers.

Officers were able to confirm that this request complied with the criteria in the policy subject to the policy approval.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the Commemorative Tree Planting request as outlined in the report.

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

Councillor MacArthur welcomed the request and stated that Tesco, as with other supermarkets, had champions in the community. She asked if the policy, a constituted organisation referenced a larger organisation scale as she did not want any groups to be excluded by it.

The Officer confirmed that it had been a Tesco initiative and he was satisfied that it was an organisation that was PLC and that the plaque was mainly informing of cancer research which Officers felt was sufficient in the rules to permit, thence the

recommendation. Councillor MacArthur advised that the services she had previously spoke of in relation to community champions were valuable and should be engaged with, referencing champion supports by the Co Op in Donaghadee and Ballyholme.

Councillor Boyle asked if there were two parts to the criteria of the policy as he had noted mention of policy approval. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries explained that the report wording should have reflected in fact the policy was already agreed, and the report was recommending approval of an application.

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

6. FUNDING OFFERS FROM DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ENERGY & INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY (BEIS) FOR; CAPACITY & CAPABILITY BUILDING PROGRAMME IN NORTHERN IRELAND: NON-FOOD PRODUCTS 2022/23 AND SMALL PROJECTS ON CONSTRUCTION PRODUCTS

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the report sought approval to accept an offer of monies from the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to the value of £55,000 for Capacity and Capability Building and £8,250 for Construction Project funding.

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) was the national regulator for product safety and is part of BEIS. It was established to lead and co-ordinate the UK product safety system to deliver improved protections for consumers and better support for industry across the UK. It was also responsible for developing and building national capacity and capability for product safety that was consistent and applied uniformly across the UK.

OPSS had been funding District Councils in Northern Ireland to provide support to local businesses, market surveillance and to enhance enforcement capacity and capability to support their development of effective mechanisms to protect consumers and the UK internal market. For 2022/23 funding would be made directly to the Council.

The purpose of the grant funding programme was to support District Councils in Northern Ireland to build capacity and capability to ensure the safety of consumers. It funded targeted and prioritised regulatory activity ensuring there was a robust consumer product and construction product safety system UK-wide. This was part of BEIS approach to ensure robust market surveillance across the UK.

The 2022/23 Capacity & Capability Building Grant Offer

The maximum amount of Grant offered was up to £55,000 which would be paid in financial year ending on 31st March 2023. The Eligible Expenditure for which the Grant was awarded expenditure was limited to costs which were incurred between 1st July 2022 and 31st March 2023. A copy of the grant offer was attached in Appendix 1.

The funding was used in Ards and North Down to fund staff posts which undertook a wide range of activities on non-food products including to:

- build on previous product safety capacity and capability building work.
- ensure access to enforcement equipment and facilities.
- provide advice and support to local businesses to meet their obligations under product safety legislation for importing and appropriate labelling/marketing of goods.
- define work processes.
- develop officers' understanding of local supply chains and their associated risks.
- ensure adequate prioritisation of effort and resource against OPSS policy and national regulatory interests, and
- ad hoc requests for case studies or other additional information.

The full details of the funded activities were set out on page 29 of the attached grant offer.

The 2022/23 Construction Products Project funding Offer

The maximum amount of funding offered was up to £8,250 for expenditure which had occurred between 1st January 2023 and 31st March 2023. A copy of the Award letter was attached in Appendix 2. The funding would be used to:

- Complete evidence gathering
- Evaluate the amount of construction product activity in the Borough
- Identify key priority areas which in turn will
- Inform the capability and capacity building work

Risk

These funding offers were historically made towards the end of the financial year meaning that the Council operated at risk by employing posts throughout the year in anticipation of the Grant. Much of the work had already been completed from the 2022/23 work plan and should the Council have decided not to accept the grant funding, the Council would then be liable to secure the funding for the two officer posts for this year.

Members would have recalled from a previous report and supported by legal advice, that this activity was a statutory duty on Council, and must be carried out whether the funding was accepted or not.

Furthermore, at least one the posts would need to be removed and a significant reduction would be made to the capacity of the Consumer protection team in the future.

RECOMMENDED that Council accepts both Grant offer for the Capacity and Capability Building programme and the funding for the Construction Products Project authorises the Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development to sign and return the acceptance forms on behalf of Council

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

Councillor Boyle asked if this had been the first time that this item had come to Council to which the Officer concurred. He pointed to the maximum figure of £55k which would hinge on staffing and asked if it had been a one-off grant. The Environmental Health Manager advised that it was but funding would again be available to apply for from March. Councillor Boyle congratulated Officers on managing to receive the maximum grant amount.

Councillor MacArthur had found some of the environmental language difficult to translate and asked what it product safety would look like in practice as she had been aware of a recent recall of a product from which her own research revealed that online shopping was prolific and queried how it could be regulated or if this item would only deal with brick and mortar establishments. The Environmental Health Manager explained that they dealt with product alerts and oftentimes recalls. The Grenfell tower disaster had sparked the additional focus on construction, whilst day-to-day operations involved working with manufacturers and even providing advice to those wishing to produce something new.

Councillor T Smith recalled seeing information from OPSS in relation to an SLA which he believed enhanced the NI Protocol. He asked if the rules and regulations operated under would be UK-wide and if UK-wide regulations would be used in regard to non-food products or if these would be EU regulations. The Director of Community & Wellbeing explained that the regulations had been discussed before with regard to product safety but on this occasion the funding was being offered directly from OPSS. The regulations in the UK as a whole had been in place for some time but now whilst the same regulations existed in Northern Ireland, they may develop differently. Councillor T Smith stated that if they were implementing EU regulations, it would not be beneficial and asked to be recorded as against the recommendation.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor MacArthur, that the recommendation be adopted. Councillor T Smith was recorded as against the recommendation.

**7. AFFORDABLE WARMTH SCHEME MEETING REQUEST
UPDATE
(Appendices II – IV)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would have recalled that at the Council Meeting of 26 October 2022, Council requested that it wrote to the Department of Communities (DfC) to arrange a meeting to discuss concerns around the Affordable Warmth Scheme.

After a delay, the attached response (PSC 0059.23 SINV 0012-2023 PSO Letter to ANDBC) was received which advised that the Permanent Secretary had declined the invitation due to time pressures but confirmed that David Polley, Director of Housing Supply Policy, who had responsibility for the Affordable Warmth Scheme, would be happy to meet with a delegation.

Previously, Senior Officers accompanied a cross party delegation of 5 members to meet with the then Permanent Secretary Tracy Meharg (July 2019) and this would be the recommendation for the meeting with the Director.

DfC were to hold the following dates and time slots:

Thursday 16th March 2pm – 5pm

Tuesday 21st March 10 am – 1 pm

Additionally, Officers suggested an internal pre-meeting with Members and Senior Officers which could have taken place on either of the following dates to prepare and clarify the agenda:

Wednesday 8 March PM

Tuesday 14 March AM or PM

The preferred date and exact times would then be confirmed based on the preference/availability of the delegation and Members would be able to liaise with the Environmental Health Manager (Health & Wellbeing) who would provide further information and details as they emerge.

RECOMMENDED that Council appoint a delegation of five members who are available to meet with the Director of Housing Supply Policy on the suggested meeting dates.

Proposed by Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the recommendation be adopted. Furthermore, proposed by Councillor Boyle, seconded by Alderman Irvine that appointed Members attend a pre-meeting on the 14th March with the follow-up meeting on the 16th March.

Recommendation for appointment of Members was as follows:

Councillor Woods – proposed by Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor Douglas.

Councillor Thompson – proposed by Councillor MacArthur, seconded by Alderman Irvine

Councillor Boyle – proposed by Councillor Douglas, seconded by Councillor McRandal

Councillor Chambers – proposed by Councillor Smart, seconded by Councillor Irvine

Councillor Adair – proposed by Councillor Thompson, seconded by Councillor Irvine

The Mayor, Councillor Douglas – proposed by Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor McRandal.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Boyle, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the recommendation be adopted. Furthermore, proposed by Councillor Boyle, seconded by Alderman Irvine that delegated Members attend a pre-meeting on the 14th March and a follow-up meeting on the 16th March. Finally, proposed by Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor Douglas that named delegates Councillors Woods, Thompson, Boyle, Chambers, Adair and Douglas are to attend the meeting.

8. PRIVATE TENANCIES ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2022 FIXED PENALTY FEES

(Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members may have recalled that at last month's meeting a report was tabled in relation to a delay in the implementation of Sections 1 to 6 of the Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. These sections of the Act were to become active on 1st April 2023.

There were a number of offences specified under Sections 1 to 4 of the Act, which related to the following legal requirements:

- Sections 1 and 2 of the Act related to information that the landlord must provide to the tenant.
- Section 3 would make it a requirement for landlords to provide receipts of payments for any transaction not carried out electronically.
- Section 4 restricted the deposit amount requested by a landlord to the equivalent of one month's rent.

For each offence contained under these sections, the Council may have issued a Fixed Penalty Notice up to an amount not exceeding £500. However, as the Council had discretion in relation to the fee required to discharge an offence, it was asked that approval be provided to charge the maximum sum available (£500). A summary of the relevant offences was provided as an appendix to the report.

The maximum fee should be charged which would have provided an effective deterrent to any person with a legal duty to comply with Sections 1 to 4. A Fixed Penalty Fee of £500 was being recommended to each council in Northern Ireland to ensure consistency of enforcement.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees a Fixed Penalty Notice fee of £500 in relation to offences under Sections 1 to 4 of the Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

(Councillor Boyle left the meeting due to a declaration of interest.)

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

Councillor Woods queried if the fixed penalty fee was to be adopted by all Councils and if it was being ratified at the same time. The Environmental Health Manager stated she believed that six councils had agreed to the figure of £500 but some were still amidst the process of agreement.

Alderman Irvine was satisfied with the figure, believing it may add some level of protection to those in vulnerable situations.

Councillor MacArthur wondered if information had been placed on websites and if standard forms and receipts existed given the possibility of in-depth investigatory work for each case where the penalty may be issued. The Officer explained that necessary information would be given by DfC who were handling all communications and media aspects and that any information could also be linked from the Council website.

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

(Councillor Boyle returned to the meeting following Item 8's conclusion.)

9. GOOD RELATIONS ACTION PLAN 2023-24
(Appendix VI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would have been aware that funding for the Councils Good Relations Programme was provided by The Executive Office (75%) and match funded by the Council (25%). The award was made based on an assessment of an annual Action Plan which reflected the needs and priorities of the Borough, detailed in the Council's approved Good Relations Strategy (2022-25).

The Executive Office required the Councils annual Action Plan (2023-2024) to be submitted for consideration in February 2023 and as such, the attached Action Plan had been submitted to The Executive Office in draft format and subject to Council approval on 22 February 2023.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the attached Good Relations Action Plan for 2023 – 2024.

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

Councillor Douglas welcomed the report and strategy for next year. She had seen first-hand the work of Good Relations and offered congratulations and praise to the team for their efforts.

Councillor Thompson reiterated his support for the action plan and how good relations engagement with a great many people each year.

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

10. PEACE IV MINUTES 22ND NOVEMBER 2022
(Appendices VII & VIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Minutes of the abovementioned Peace IV meeting.

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

Councillor Thompson looked forward to PeacePlus and the opportunity to involve more individuals in future projects to help communities across the borough.

Councillor Smart gave thanks to staff who had played a pivotal role in the delivery of the Peace IV program that oversaw £3m of investment and explained that it had been a difficult time in closing Peace IV whilst preparing PeacePlus.

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

11. PEACEPLUS MINUTES 10TH NOVEMBER 2022
(Appendices IX & X)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Minutes of the abovementioned PeacePlus meeting.

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

Councillor Douglas thanked all staff for their efforts, citing that PeacePlus had resulted in one of the highest levels of engagement she had come across, and a long list of very worthwhile project ideas to be looked at further.

Councillor Boyle agreed with his colleague, saying that it was challenging with many ideas and that a lot of work still had to be done in the future. He had enjoyed the experience of the PeacePlus Committee. Councillor Thompson also stood to agree with his fellow Councillors and spoke of the engagement and surveys that had been carried out by Officers which he looked forward to seeing the fruits of.

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

12. CORONATION PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES RESPONSE TO NOM

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that, in November 2022 the Council agreed the following Notice of Motion:

In light of the fact that the Coronation of King Charles III will take place on 6 May 2023, this Council tasks officers to make provision for community celebrations across the Ards and North Down Borough Council area, and tasks them to allow for this in the forthcoming rate setting process.

In January 2023 Council agreed the following:

It is recommended that Council agrees that a budget of £30,000 is ringfenced for the Coronation Grants Scheme, which is opened for applications in early February 2023 and administered as detailed in this report, and that a further report on other activities will be brought to committee for consideration in February.

In late January, the Coronation Plans were announced by the Royal Family which included

Saturday 6th May 2023 - *The Coronation Service at Westminster Abbey*

Sunday 7th May 2023 - *The Coronation Concert at Windsor Castle and the Coronation Big Lunches*

Monday 8th May 2023 - *The Big Help Out, to promote and encourage volunteering.*

In January, Council further agreed that a Working Group was established to agree a programme of community activities in line with the programme of events. The following Members were appointed to the Working Group:

Councillor Gilmour

Councillor McArthur

Councillor Moore

Councillor Smart

Alderman Irvine

Councillor McClean

Officers were endeavouring to set up a meeting of the Working Group in first week of February which would consider a proposed list of events and activities that could be delivered to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III, with a particular emphasis on the Royal Family's Coronation Plans i.e., the Big Lunch and Volunteering.

Members would have been aware that £30,000 out of a £50,000 budget for the Coronation had already been ringfenced for grants and as such, the remaining budget for a programme of events was £20,000.

The simplified grant scheme, which would open for applications in early February would allow constituted community and voluntary groups to celebrate the Coronation and events such as Big Lunches and volunteering activities were encouraged.

Other potential events/activities which could be delivered by Council would be discussed in detail with the working group, along with considering an appropriate permanent legacy to commemorate the Coronation.

A final proposed programme of events would be brought to Council in March 2023.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report.

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

Councillor Thompson hoped that, despite the cost of living issues, it may be possible to have events hosted that allowed burgesses across the borough to participate within.

Councillor MacArthur had received a range of suggestions from a working group which might help keep costs subdued given the cost of living. She cited £50k that had been set aside, £30k of which had been earmarked for community and voluntary groups whilst an additional £20k had been distributed across the borough for events.

The Head of Community and Culture explained that a draft program was agreed by the working group and that there was a possibility of bringing forth a report in March of 2023, but that if working group members were able to confirm agreement with their colleagues beforehand, it may be possible to furnish Members with the report at the meeting of Council in February to seek approval for it and being the work earlier.

Councillor Douglas spoke of positive feedback that had been received for the Platinum Jubilee event which included markets on the seafront and asked if there may be any scope for something to be held in Ward Park or if an expectation existed for Bangor or Newtownards events, whether such could be discussed by the working group. The Head of Community and Culture agreed that the budget was extremely limited thence the reason of not proposing large scale events, though events run by community groups could be pulled together in order for them to collectively host larger events. Councillor Douglas referenced increased footfall that occurred with the Platinum Jubilee which had greatly benefited local businesses and suggested that it may be a pertinent issue to be discussed within the working group. The Officer advised that other organisations may be partnered with but that it would be a scoping exercise and full details may not be available in time for the report.

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

13. COST OF LIVING CRISIS REPSONSE TO NOM

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the following Notice of Motion had been agreed at the Special Meeting of Council on 12th January 2023 regarding the cost-of-living crisis, a follow up report was tabled at Council on 26th January. It was further agreed on 26 January 2023 that Council:

- 1) **Noted the contents of that report and research on the subject undertaken by officers with other Councils and partners to date.**
- 2) **That no dedicated resources currently exist to fund additional schemes, including a potential hardship fund within current budgets, underspends, or other outside sources, but that funding has been requested from DfC and the Northern Ireland Office.**
- 3) **That £50,000 of funding is made available in the meantime from current reserves to establish a funding stream to be used by local foodbanks, St Vincent De Paul and Community Advice Ards and North Down.**

It was further agreed that the Community and Wellbeing Committee be granted Delegated Authority to implement the outworking's that it would agree to in relation to the above decision.

1. Alternative Source of Funding. AND Social Supermarket Underspend

Since compiling the Council report of 26 January, officers had identified a potential alternative source of funding, rather than using funding from Council reserves. This was potential underspend in funding awarded to Council from Department for Communities (DfC) through the Community Support Fund.

This funding had been allocated to Council for the establishment of a Social Supermarket (SSM) in the Borough totalling £82,155.18, which was then awarded to North Down Community Works for the period 2022-2023. A similar financial allocation for North Down Community Works SSM was expected for the period 2023-2024.

DfC had confirmed that this funding could be used to address "food hardship" as per our Memorandum of Understanding with DfC and they would prefer that the funding was used by Council for that purpose, rather than being returned to the Department unspent after 31 March 2023.

Officers were working with North Down Community Works to ensure they could maximise the amount of funding they could use in year from this existing allocation, but it was estimated that approximately **£48,847** may be underspent, in year. In addition, as noted in January's report to Council, DfC had confirmed that they would be providing additional support to Fareshare to purchase food for SSM's, including

North Down Community Works SSM, so additional support to purchase fresh food would also be available through this route.

The funding could be used *"for tailored interventions to be delivered and to provide a solid base for longer term actions to tackle poverty and will allow Councils flexibility to pool the funds to follow the same overriding principles as the social supermarket type approach"*.

Any tailored interventions must have addressed food hardship and included some type of wrap around support for individuals e.g. similar to the projects supported through DfC's Covid Funding whereby the Food Banks distributed food but worked in partnership with CAAND to provide advice services when clients presented for food. Members were asked to note that this funding couldn't be used for fuel top ups or payments to individuals.

2. Governance and Agreed Channels for Distribution.

Members would have been aware that care needed to be taken when distributing to organisations to protect public funding and comply with audit requirements, fraud regulations and ensure good governance.

Council had a sound record in distributing public funding and already had contracts for service delivery already in place with a number of not-for-profit organisations who delivered specialist services across the borough, including Community Advice Ards and North Down.

Furthermore, on 31st January 2023, DfC notified Council that they intended to provide additional financial support to Welfare Reform Advice Service providers. CAAND were the only advice service provider funded by DfC within the Borough and as such would receive an additional £1500 for running costs. This would be passed to CAAND using a Letter of Variation (LOV), to their original Service Level Agreement (SLA). A further variation of contract could be facilitated to award CAAND further financial support, to provide additional wrap around support and advice to assist with the cost-of-living crisis.

Council did not have an existing contract with St Vincent De Paul (SVP) however Council could fund not-for-profit organisations directly to deliver specific services, therefore a Service Level Agreement (SLA) could be established with the organisation to provide food, food vouchers and wrap around support to those in need. SVP was subcontracted to deliver similar services during the Covid crisis.

Council did not have a current contract with any of the three main Foodbanks: Ards Foodbank, Bangor Foodbank and Storehouse, however the Foodbanks were partners on the Community Support Steering Group and had received financial support from Council during Covid to provide food support to those in need during the pandemic. As noted, Council could fund not-for-profit organisations directly therefore a Service Level Agreement (SLA) could be established with the organisation to provide food, food vouchers and wrap around support, by working in partnership with Community Advice Ards and North Down.

Members were asked to note that the three Networks; Ards Community Network, County Down Rural Network and North Down Community Network were also partners on the Community Support Steering Group. Council also had a contract with each of the Networks through the Community Support Programme funded by DfC. The Networks were funded to provide advice and sign posting for those affected by the cost-of-living crisis. Although not specified by Council as a recipient of the funding it was recommended that funding was also allocated to the Networks to provide additional advice and signposting to CAAND, SVP, the Foodbanks and SSM's.

3. Kilcooley Social Supermarket

Members would have been aware that there was a second SSM in the Borough, located in Kilcooley, run by Kilcooley Women's Centre (KWC). The Kilcooley SSM had only recently become established and received £10,000 support from Council during Covid to assist in this process. It was not awarded the SSM contract by Council, as the preferred SSM was North Down Community Works, however KWC is represented on the Working Group that had helped establish the SSM operated by North Down Community Works and information, lessons learned and even clients are being referred between both SSM's. It was recommended that in light of the service provided by the Kilcooley SSM that funding was also allocated to KWC for the purchase of food and wrap around support.

4. Recommended Allocations

Based on the estimated budget of £48,847 potentially available from the Community Support Fund the following awards were recommended:

Table 1 – Recommended Awards

Organisation	Purpose of Funding	Funding Recommended
Community Advice Ards and North Down	To collaborate with partners to provide advice, signposting and wraparound support	£6,672

St Vincent De Paul	To collaborate with partners to provide advice, signposting and wraparound support	£6,672
Ards Foodbank	To collaborate with partners to provide food, signposting and wraparound support	£6,672
Bangor Food Bank	To collaborate with partners to provide food, signposting and wraparound support	£6,672
Storehouse Food Bank	To collaborate with partners to provide food, signposting and wraparound support	£6,672
Ards Community Network	To collaborate with partners to provide advice, signposting	£2,872
County Down Community Network	To collaborate with partners to provide advice, signposting by supporting their running costs	£2,872
North Down Community Network	To collaborate with partners to provide advice, signposting by supporting their running costs	£2,872
Kilcooley Womens Centre SSM	To collaborate with partners to provide food, signposting and wraparound support by supporting their running costs	£6,672

By supporting all of the above organisations to work collectively and collaboratively, as they did very successfully during the Covid pandemic, would ensure that the impact of the funding would be maximised for the benefit of those in need across the borough.

Should the estimated underspend from the AND SSM of £48,847 increase or decrease it was recommended that the funding be increased or decreased as a percentage of the total budget detailed in table 1 above.

5. Department of Finance Correspondence regarding Funding for a Hardship Scheme.

Furthermore, on 1 February 2023 Council was informed by the Local Policy Division, of the Department of Finance that a "hardship scheme" was to be able from central government this year to allow councils to provide financial support to the most vulnerable. The exact quantum of the hardship fund had still to be finalised at the time of writing. Any unspent funding in the year at the time of writing could be rolled forward to the 2023-24 financial year.

The Division had asked Council to outline how any scheme would operated, by no later than 10 February 2023. Council would be advising the Division that they could deliver a scheme similar to that detailed in this report.

RECOMMENDED that Council

1. Underspend in the CSP SSM budget for 2022-2023, totalling £48,847, is allocated, as detailed in Table 1, to the organisations listed to address the cost-of-living crisis, avoiding the use of Council Reserves.
2. Should the estimated budget of £48,847 increase or decrease, it is recommended that the funding is increased or decreased as a percentage of the total budget detailed in Table 1.
3. That officers will respond to the Division advising that a Hardship Scheme, funded by Government, could be administered by Council in a similar way as detailed in this report and any financial contribution to be added to the fund for distribution as above.

Councillor MacArthur stood to provide an alternative proposal as follows:

1. Underspend in the CSP SSM budget for 2022/33 totalling £48,847 is allocated to the organisations listed, to address the cost of Living Crisis. However as Kilcooley Social Supermarket based in Bangor is an already existing SSM, that £ 20,000 is allocated to them with the allocations to the other stakeholders remaining as per Table 1. To facilitate this, the additional £14,000 required should be taken from Council reserves if monies are not made available through the DoF Hardship scheme
2. Should the estimated budget of £48, 847 increase or decrease, it is recommended that the funding is increased or decreased as a percentage of the total budget detailed in Table 1.
3. That officers will respond to the Division advising that a Hardship Scheme funded by the government, could be administered by Council in a similar way as detailed in this report and any financial contribution to be added to the fund for distribution as above. Further, that this should include a fuel support scheme, particularly for those that have fallen through the gap in the recent Government Energy Support Scheme.

Councillor MacArthur explained that the amendment was brought forth due to a desire to assist those who had fallen through the gaps with the energy support scheme. She welcomed almost £50k having been sourced from an underspend by the Well-Fed Social Supermarket of Newtownards. Those who had meters and had paid for their energy had discovered they would not receive £600 and may either have spent the money already due to assuming of that money being forthcoming or were disappointed and could not understand why they would not receive the funding.

She welcomed the DoF response that Council could spend the aforementioned £50k as they saw fit.

Furthermore, in making her proposal, Councillor MacArthur explained that it was meant to boost the recommendation of the report as well as supporting local groups and networks who provided advice and signposting as well as wrap-around support. She spoke of the initial allocation of £82k from DfC being awarded to the AND social supermarkets and had been impressed after visiting them especially with the sense of community that surrounded them.

Kilcooley social supermarket had a waiting list of people and as such, a sum of £20k would be a boost in assisting with it. Some research had suggested social supermarkets could overcome problems with food aid and community development by facilitating that empowerment and development. Whilst foodbanks were useful, Councillor MacArthur believed they were a quick fix through money provided by DfC and the work of the supermarkets in Bangor and Newtownards was important. Councillor MacArthur suggested that an additional £14k should be sourced from any DoF hardship fund.

Councillor Thompson agreed with his colleague, believing it worthwhile to look at money allocation and that it would be of huge benefit if assistance could be provided to Kilcooley. He also praised the work of the Newtownards supermarket for their excellent work.

Councillor Woods asked where the outlining rationale of £20k came from and what it had been based on to which Councillor Edmund advised would be addressed upon summing up of the alternative proposal. Councillor Woods explained that she had made a proposal last year of £50k and that sum this year was £48k which she thought would likely be improbable given Q4 had not ended. Councillor Woods had wished to bring her own alternative proposal forth on this item and though she appreciated a different proposal had been entered first, she wished to clarify if the £20k sum was to be taken from the £48k, its basis and if the top-up was to be taken from reserves in the event that DoF did not issue funding. Councillor Woods explained her thought process as being concerned due to no formal letter of offer having been received. The Director of Community & Wellbeing referenced the proposal of £20k being granted to Kilcooley and that as £6k already existed in the report, the extra sum would be £14k which, if it could be sourced from DoF, would be plan A as DoF had confirmed that Council could set the criteria for that fund and seemed to intend to give something. Failing that as he understood the proposal as a backup plan, the sum would be then taken from reserves if the DoF monies did not materialise.

Councillor Smart also queried the £20k sum, suggesting that if Newtownards Food Supermarket had struggled to spend the money, did Officers believe that Kilcooley could spend allocated money within stipulated timeframes. In addition, he referenced the fuel support scheme and the Council's wish to support it and suggested that

unless an appropriate scheme was focused on, a risk existed that more charges would befall the general ratepayers who were already struggling. As such, he asked if additional funding was received, what discussions would take place before any spending occurred. He acknowledged and thanked Officers for their efforts in the proposed recommendation.

The Head of Community and Culture explained that the AND Supermarket had received the allocated grant with a large lead-in time but they had been unable to begin spending that money until September and as such they had managed well with such a short timeframe. Officers had discussed their expenditure with the supermarket who would get another allocation in the next financial year whilst the left-over funding could be used rather than lost. In relation to the fuel package, the Officer advised the division had been working on a hardship scheme and it was up to the Council to set the criteria for it and, Council had already provided a proposal to the department. No letter of offer had been received but instead an email that stated they were working on it with no finite detail or budget, thence the reasoning behind helping individuals suffering fuel hardship through the division's hardship fund.

In regard to Kilcooley spending money, the Officer believed expenditure was possible as the supermarket did not have the same level of support and had a huge demand. The criteria on timing was that there was no limitation regarding the fund from the division who had stated the lateness of the scheme would mean that it could be rolled into the next financial year. Councillor Smart thanked the Officer as well as the work of the AND Social Supermarket in Newtownards.

Councillor Boyle asked for clarification on whether DfC funding had to be spent by the end of Q4. The Officer advised that it had to be spent by the Council by the end of Q4 so if monies were allocated to trusted partners by then, it would suffice. Councillor Boyle understood the reason behind Councillor MacArthur's alternative proposal but believed that the report in its original format had been excellent. He needed guaranteed figures in terms of funds as opposed to the hopes behind the alternative proposal and believed the existing recommendation was safer and would ensure distribution equally. As such, he was unable to support the alternative proposal.

Councillor Douglas thanked Officers for clarifying issues and the report that had been presented. Similarly to Councillor Boyle, she was satisfied with the work that had gone into the report and was satisfied with the original recommendation. Though she agreed with the benefits of social supermarkets and had visited the Newtownards Supermarket, she believed that foodbanks provide more than just a temporary measure, citing foodbanks as being one of her chosen charities as Mayor as could not support the alternative proposal.

Councillor T Smith asked if he was correct in thinking that Kilcooley funding was dependent on DfC funding and where it came from in that it was a reallocation of funds between supermarkets. He cited Council having agreed £50k from funds but

was seeking £14k from reserves to cover the extra money required for Kilcooley which would mean £36k was still in reserves. He asked if it was possible for a report to be commissioned and presented in three months' time which would provide insight into how organisations used allocations that were agreed tonight, in turn allowing for the remaining £36k to be used in the future.

Councillor MacArthur summarised her alternative proposal. She agreed that the initial report was satisfying and that good offers existed for all organisations, but that her alternative proposal was to make the offer better. She understood that Members had previously agreed to use reserves of circa £50k and that this proposal was only asking for £14k which would only happen if DoF money was not realised. She agreed that the money was a reallocation from social supermarkets and believed it was better to see that money go to organisations with large needs who were also trusted partners. She also referenced Councillor Douglas' comments relating to food banks and agreed that they carried out significant and important work.

A recorded vote was taken regarding Councillor MacArthur's alternative proposal with 10 FOR, 6 AGAINST, 0 ABSTAINING and 0 ABSENT. The results have been presented below. As such, the alternative proposal carried.

FOR (10)	AGAINST (6)	ABSTAIN (0)	ABSENT (0)
Aldermen	Alderman	Alderman	Aldermen
Irvine	Carson Wilson		
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors	Councillor
Boyle	Chambers		
Edmund	Douglas		
S Irvine	McRandal		
Johnson	Moore		
MacArthur			
Smart			
T Smith			
Thompson			
Woods			

With 10 voting FOR, 6 AGAINST, 0 ABSTAINING and 0 ABSENT, the alternative proposal carried.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor MacArthur, seconded by Councillor Thompson and by way of a VOTE with 10 FOR, 6 AGAINST, 0 ABSTAINING and 0 ABSENT, that the recommendation be adopted.

14. COMMUNITY & WELLBEING DIRECTORATE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT – DECEMBER 2022

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the Community & Wellbeing Directorate's Budgetary Control Report covered the 9-month period 1 April 2022 to 30 December 2022. The net cost of the Directorate was showing an underspend of £65k (0.8%) – box A on page 3. Tariff risk cost pressures had been mitigated by a transfer from the Council's Ear-Marked Reserve (£331k).

Explanation of Variance

Community & Wellbeing's budget performance was further analysed on pages 4-6 into 3 key areas:

Report	Type	Variance	Page
Report 2	Payroll Expenditure	£284k adverse	3
Report 3	Goods & Services Expenditure	£183k adverse	3
Report 4	Income	£532k favourable	3

Explanation of Variance

The Community & Wellbeing Directorate's overall variance could be summarised by the following table: -

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Payroll	284	The National & Local Pay Agreements were greater than budgeted increase. This impacts all Council Services.
Goods & Services		
Parks & Cemeteries	115	Cemeteries – £149k – range of operational costs over budget (grounds maintenance, fuel, hired services, consultancy). Overspend is mainly offset by increased burials income.

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Leisure	434	Leisure - £476k – tariff risk (£344k) – mostly offset by transfer from the Council's Ear-Marked Reserve (£331k).
Income		
Community & Culture	(145)	Externally Funded Projects – (£101k) – 2021/22 PCSP grant funding not accrued.
Parks & Cemeteries	(149)	Increased burial income (£108k).
Leisure	(227)	Leisure – (£199k) - Leisure Centres (£169k), Londonderry Park (£25k). Community Centres – (£28k)

REPORT 1 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT					
Period 9 - December 2022					
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	174,932	149,300	25,632	204,300	17.2
130 Environmental Health	1,440,520	1,499,700	(59,180)	2,024,900	(3.9)
120 Community and Culture	1,450,936	1,638,600	(187,664)	2,254,300	(11.5)
140 Parks & Cemeteries	2,843,527	2,750,500	93,027	3,745,400	3.4
150 Leisure Services	2,154,996	1,761,000	393,996	2,588,000	22.4
Earmarked Reserves	(331,000)	-	(331,000)	-	-
Total	7,733,910	7,799,100	(65,190)	10,826,900	(0.8)
REPORT 2 PAYROLL REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing - Payroll					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	122,830	117,000	5,830	156,800	5.0
130 Environmental Health	1,723,999	1,745,200	(21,201)	2,330,400	(1.2)
120 Community and Culture	1,159,494	1,174,100	(14,606)	1,563,300	(1.2)
140 Parks & Cemeteries	2,517,989	2,390,900	127,089	3,398,000	5.3
150 Leisure	3,258,064	3,071,000	187,064	4,300,300	6.1
Total	8,782,376	8,498,200	284,176	11,348,800	3.3
REPORT 3 GOODS & SERVICES REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing - Goods & Services					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	52,102	33,200	18,902	48,000	56.9
130 Environmental Health	165,434	191,200	(25,766)	295,200	(13.5)
120 Community and Culture	1,049,189	1,077,300	(28,111)	1,693,300	(2.6)
140 Parks & Cemeteries	738,290	623,300	114,990	935,700	18.4
150 Leisure	1,153,869	719,900	433,969	1,584,500	60.3
Earmarked Reserves	(331,000)	-	(331,000)	-	-
Total	2,827,883	2,644,900	182,983	4,557,700	6.9
REPORT 4 INCOME REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing - Income					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	-	(900)	900	(1,500)	100.0
130 Environmental Health	(448,913)	(436,700)	(12,213)	(600,700)	(2.8)
120 Community and Culture	(757,348)	(612,800)	(144,548)	(992,300)	(23.7)
140 Parks & Cemeteries	(412,752)	(263,700)	(149,052)	(388,300)	(56.5)
150 Leisure	(2,256,937)	(2,029,900)	(227,037)	(2,696,800)	(11.2)
Totals	(3,876,350)	(3,344,000)	(532,350)	(4,679,600)	(15.9)

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

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

Councillor Boyle thanked Officers for the report. He wished to query variance which was located in the leisure section of the report and asked if it was within the £227k budget. The Director of Community & Wellbeing advised that it was and that it was better income than budgeted for. Councillor Boyle congratulated Officers on the good news before asking what the £434k and numbers that had been labelled such as tariff risk meant, as well as if it was with regard to internal leisure. The Director of Community & Wellbeing advised that these were to do with inflation that had been applied to utilities thence £344k above the budgeted amount due to energy prices. Councillor Boyle queried if in-house was £434k over the budget to which the Director of Community & Wellbeing explained that £344k had been an energy tariff cost whilst the remaining £130k was with regard to general inflationary cost pressures.

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

15. VICTORIA PRIMARY SCHOOL PLAY AREA RESPONSE TO NOM

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members should have recalled the update brought on Victoria Primary School Play Area in November 2022. As a result, the following recommendation was adopted by Council:

"Ballyhalbert Sports Clubs no longer avail of facilities at Glastry College (due to facilities being closed to the public in winter months). Further that Council express concerns at lack of lighting and proper footway link connecting the village to Glastry College and write to the Department for Infrastructure requesting the upgrade of existing footway on Victoria Road to include widening curbing along with lighting to promote a safer route to school and connecting the village to Glastry College via a safe and assessable footway.

The possibility for a project fronting Victoria Primary Ballyhalbert could potentially be added to the list of projects being put forward for Peace Plus funding and considered by the Peace Plus Partnership and progressed through the process outlined above in the report. Consideration should also be given to the other sites identified in the Play Strategy for older children provision as part of the Peace Plus process that could be delivered on Council land.

Furthermore, that officers bring back a report to Council following the conclusion of the Peace Plus consultation advising members of any council applications going forward to deliver facilities for children and young people across the Borough”.

In relation to writing to the Department for Infrastructure a letter was sent on 3rd January 2023 (Appendix 1). A response had since been received (Appendix 2).

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the attached reply from the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Infrastructure.

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

Councillor Boyle’s understanding was that the response had not been as positive as Members would have hoped for and that an option which would not result in a standard monitoring response would be beneficial. It was also disappointing for those of the local area considering its growth and a need to consider the safety of residents.

Councillor Thompson agreed with his colleague and wanted to know when the initial assessment had been carried out as housing had increased dramatically over the years. As such, he asked if a response could be drafted to the Department to query when said assessments had been carried out, in particular those relating to street lighting. He believed the response of the area not meeting criteria/ funding not being available was too vague. The Director of Community & Wellbeing advised that if Members were accepting, it would be noted and carried out without the need of a formal proposal.

NOTED

Councillor Boyle agreed that if assessments had not been carried out recently, they would not have taken into consideration the increase in housing density.

Councillor MacArthur agreed with Members and that the referenced stretch was dangerous and whilst scope to extend streetlighting was limited, she believed it was an issue for DfI as opposed to Council to resolve and suggest Health & Safety be a component of the letter.

Councillor Edmund spoke of two large developments existed with one doubling Ballyhalbert’s size and, when the other was completed, would equate to another 400 houses meaning that Ballyhalbert would have quadrupled over the last thirty years.

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

16. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

(A recess was called for at 20:52 with the meeting resuming at 21:01)

16.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Wilson and Councillor Douglas

That this Council acknowledges the environmental and health benefits associated with the recent increase in cycling and declares Ards & North Down a cycling friendly borough. The Council also recognises that people who cycle are among the most vulnerable road users, and tasks officers with producing a report detailing ways in which we can help improve safety. The report should include possible sources of funding, potential partnerships, and ways in which we can promote good relations between users of different forms of transport.

Proposed by Alderman Wilson, seconded by Councillor Douglas, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Alderman Wilson explained that cycling had become exceedingly popular with a 40% increase between 2019-2022. Many benefits were associated with cycling such as physical health and reduction of stress as well as reducing greenhouse gasses and lessening the need for vehicle infrastructure. It protected green spaces and had allowed for other countries such as Holland and Germany to reclaim land for nature. He cited 0.5b expenditure in the cycling market and that existing cycling networks supported 15k jobs, two thirds of which were in the food and drink sector. Despite these benefits, work was required to make cycling a more safe pastime as the cycling infrastructure in Northern Ireland was poor with a risk on roads being much higher. There was a difference in attitudes between automotive transport and cyclists and whilst most automobile drivers were respectful, some behaved in a dangerous manner. This was one of the biggest barriers to cycling with 98% of non-cyclists advising that automobiles were the most important factor in their decision to cycle. An email had been received from the, 'For Another Path,' facebook page asking that the Notice of Motion include safety of pedestrians, and though he agreed with the need to keep pedestrians safe, Alderman Wilson did not want the reasoning behind the Notice of Motion to be diluted by including horse riders, pedestrians and motorbikes. The concern of the Notice of Motion was more in relation to the dangers presented by shared spaces on roads as opposed to shared paths. He hoped that the, 'For Another Path,' group would understand and that Members would approve given the health benefits to residents, the improved economy related to it and most importantly, the want of saving lives.

Councillor Douglas explained that the benefits of cycling were now widely appreciated, explaining that it was a cheaper option in that one only had to consider the recent hike in petrol / diesel prices to note that many were now switching to pedal

power as it was more affordable, especially for those shorter commutes. It was also healthier as even shorter rides had their health benefits by burning calories on the bike, raising metabolism, and availing of a bigger dose of Vitamin D even when it was cloudy. In addition, endorphin levels would be increased, improving one's mood. It was also quicker and easier to park and dependent upon traffic routes and congestion in towns and cities, cycling could be a quicker option, and was usually easier to find a parking space for a bike rather than a car with one car parking space accommodating on average 10 bikes. It was better for the environment as riding a bike was a form of low-emission transport. In terms of resource consumption, producing a bike used just 5% of the energy and materials necessary to produce a car. Vehicles emitted nearly three quarters of UK air pollution and 22 % of CO2 emissions whereas, cycling released none. It was also of benefit to get out into the fresh air and take in the sights of the beautiful borough and spend time with family or friends, or even escape others and enjoy some mindfulness alone!

In making Ards & North Down Borough a Cycling-Friendly Borough, there were several benefits;

- to encourage citizens and visitors to avail of the socio-economic-environmental benefits which I have outlined.
- demonstrate leadership by Council that we are serious about tackling the climate emergency as part of a suite of initiatives and wishing to promote the health of our citizens as outlined in the Big Plan.
- encourage other governmental departments to work with Council and our citizens to develop in more appropriate cycle and pedestrian infrastructure within urban settlements.
- research had indicated when such initiatives are embraced: more people tend to cycle; there is a reduction in vehicle use especially for shorter journeys; it increases leisure and recreational activities; and can increase quality of life.

Councillor Douglas advised that a report from Officers was being sought in that regard. The Notice of Motion had been brought to the meeting to start the conversation. From researching other Boroughs across the UK, many had in place: Cycle routes and maps whilst cycle training occurred at schools, adult cycle training; bike maintenance sessions, cycling safely; bike security initiatives, support to travel by bike and train; bike hire schemes; a cycling network, all of which had required time, inter-agency working, engagement with the local community and a commitment to promote cycle safety across their respective Boroughs.

Councillor Douglas had recently joined the newly formed Ards & North Down Cycle Campaign who were a group of local residents that were keen to promote safe cycling across the Borough. In recently taking up cycling again, having borrowed her

daughter's bike, Councillor Douglas spoke of a nervousness in regard to cycling on certain roads at certain times and that road safety was a major issue.

Councillor Douglas advised that she lived in Bangor where there were numerous cycle lanes which just stop or ad cars parked on them daily, forcing cyclists either onto footpaths which could be hazardous at times for pedestrians or onto the main roads which could also be hazardous for the cyclist as some drivers did not give enough way to overtake. As such, there was much work to do to make the roads, pavements, pathways and greenways safe for all who use them.

Councillor Douglas hoped that members could support the Notice of Motion this evening to declare Ards & North Down a Cycling Friendly Borough.

Councillor Chambers supported the Notice of Motion but was unsure as to the sway and ability of Council to effect change in relation to infrastructure. He believed safety advice could be promoted and spoke of the unfortunate events leading to cyclists feeling unwelcome on the coastal path. Newry, Mourne and Down Council had a similar Notice of Motion for the safety of cyclists and had engaged with local schools to assist in the education of safe cycling. He hoped that the Council could produce a report with initiatives that referenced the healthiness of cycling and environmentally friendly impacts.

Alderman Irvine agreed that cycling was both healthy and a sustainable mode of transport, understanding the concern of danger with traffic especially on main roads such as carriageways and ring roads that had little room for cycling. He suggested that some wording be contained in the Notice of Motion regarding the vulnerability of pedestrians and recalled the main reason for the Comber to Newtownards cycle lane plan not coming to fruition was due to separation distance between cyclists and cars.

Councillor Moore supported the Notice of Motion too, especially having had first hand experience of the difficulties in cycling alongside traffic and agreed that cyclists should remain the named beneficiaries of the motion as opposed to other vulnerable road users.

Councillor Woods mirrored the sentiments of Councillor Chambers in that buy-in would be required from Council and from DfI. She cited figures of £2 per person being spent by the DfI in comparison of £66 per person in Southern Ireland in relation to active travel investment. Councillor Woods believed a missed opportunity existed through Coronavirus with encouraging cycling and that something more needed to be done than just painting lines between car and bicycle users.

Councillor Boyle explained that some parts of the borough attracted more people and that there had been a large increase in cyclists travelling the peninsula which had been beneficial for local businesses in Portaferry. He understood why some members of the public had raised the issue of pedestrian safety but believed the Notice of Motion should focus on cyclists. Councillor Boyle explained that as a driver, he understood the frustrations that could be felt when stuck behind cyclists for three

miles at ten miles per hour but would not overtake unless he was able to fully drive on the other side of the road. Whilst not a cyclist, he thought that road deterioration such as sunken drains would not only potentially destroy bicycles but lead to significant injury. With some roads were plainly unsuitable for shared space, he wished for the report to be produced in an informative and insightful way.

Councillor MacArthur supported a report being brought forth from the Notice of Motion and spoke of purchasing a bicycle during the pandemic. Whilst she lived in a prevalent area for cycling, there had been a recent fatality and in addition, motorcyclists were very vulnerable individuals too, speaking of her own experiences travelling across Europe. On that note, she suggested Members be wary of elevating one group of road users above another given fatalities across those different users and gave her sympathies to the family in Newtownards. Councillor MacArthur suggested that an integrated approach would be useful as road users had to be mindful of one another. She believed Council could support cycle proficiency tests despite many schools being unable to support it given the road dangers surrounding them.

Councillor Wilson summarised the Notice of Motion and thanked Members for their input. He had been unaware of a similar Motion being heard at Newry, Mourne and Down Council. In relation to the DfI, he stated that they had made a commitment to funding the act of travel and commended the work of the Green Party for a recent Notice of Motion they proffered in another committee. He was sad to hear of the fatality in the vicinity of Councillor MacArthur.

AGREED.

16.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Moore and Alderman McDowell

(Alderman McDowell was admitted to the meeting via Zoom at 21:31).

This Council notes its previous sponsorship of the Community Asset Transfer request from Branch Out Community Group and welcomes the agreement from DfI to lease the woodland area to the group for 1 year. Officers will:

- Write to DfI to express Council's support for the work of Branch Out on the DfI-owned site and how it complements The Big Plan for Ards and North Down.
- Write to the EA to express Council's support for their work on the EA-owned site, adjacent to the woodland.
- Bring back a report, identifying what can be offered to support the work of Branch Out including, but not limited to, providing advice, support, equipment and finance.
- Engage directly with Branch Out to identify what support is needed.

Proposed by Councillor Moore, seconded by Alderman McDowell, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Councillor More explained that Branch-Out had operated for a number of years attempting to turn a non-used space in a central urban area into a beneficial area for

residents. Their work included clearing rubbish, undergrowth and planting of a community orchard. They also had plans in place for increasing biodiversity which locals were encouraged to involve themselves in. Dfl had agreed to a one-year lease of the land which would require extension as well as longer term support. Branch-Out had a successful history, proven by the area in question as well as being able to attract funding. The woodland itself had not been maintained for thirty-plus years and partially fallen trees had also been cleared. Branch-Out were a community-based group that Councillor Moore believed should be supported by, and worked alongside by the Council

Alderman McDowell referenced the Greenspaces deputation, advising that this Notice of Motion was a great example of working to that end. Branch-Out required Council support in order to further their plans and agenda, which, if agreed to would open up a wealth of opportunities.

Councillor Woods supported the Notice of Motion and suggested that Members should visit the area and meet those who had been involved. She agreed that Council should support Branch-Out to allow various amenities to be constructed on site and regarded plans of a permaculture food forest and wildflower areas with educational plans as a large benefit to the community.

Councillor Smart agreed the project had been fantastic, especially considering that the area once suffered anti-social behaviour and had a lack of maintenance for a number of years. He recalled that Dfl had denied ownership of the land until Branch-Out had transformed it and was pleased in thinking that Council could sponsor the project. Councillor Smart praised the benefits that could come from the area and work such as engaging community spirit and increasing environmental awareness as well as educating pupils of schools. He suggested that it may be prudent to invite Branch-Out to the Town Advisory Group where they could further raise awareness of their work.

Councillor Douglas had met with the leader of the project when initial plans were being drafted for the site and spoke of its dire state before work commenced. With great leadership, responsibility through volunteering and promoting green spaces, she was delighted it had progressed so well and praised the voracity of Pam for not giving up in the face of negativity.

Councillor Moore summarized the Notice of Motion, thanking members for their input and comments. She agreed that Pam and Branch-Out were a force of nature and was grateful for Councillor Smart's suggestion to extend an invitation to join the Town Advisory Group. The area had a great potential and with the support of the Council, it would make a huge difference.

AGREED

(Alderman McDowell left Zoom at 21:44)

16.3 Withdrawn

17. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

There were no other items of notified business.

NOTED.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman Irvine, seconded by Councillor MacArthur, that the public/press be excluded from the meeting at 21:44..

18. PCSP MINUTES 28TH NOVEMBER 2022

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Minute of the abovementioned PCSP meeting.

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

Following a query from Councillor Woods, it was confirmed that the item was a minute from a public meeting and had been placed for noting in committee in error, and so its content and any related debate could be treated as unclassified.

Councillor Douglas thanked Officers who had been involved and explained that it had been an interesting experience hearing of different services and what they provided. She hoped it could be hosted in the future by the Council and placed her thanks on record.

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

19. WAR YEARS REMEMBERED

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

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

CW 15.02.2023

244

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS

AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor MacArthur, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the public/press be re-admitted to the meeting at 22:07.

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 22:08.

Unclassified

245

ITEM 7.6.1**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	23 February 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	21 February 2023
File Reference	CW 157
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Matter Arising from Item 12 of the Community and Wellbeing Committee - proposed Final Programme of Events to Celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III
Attachments	

In November 2022 the Council agreed the following Notice of Motion:

In light of the fact that the Coronation of King Charles III will take place on 6 May 2023, this Council tasks officers to make provision for community celebrations across the Ards and North Down Borough Council area, and tasks them to allow for this in the forthcoming rate setting process.

In January 2023 Council agreed the following:

It is recommended that Council agrees that a budget of £30,000 is ringfenced for the Coronation Grants Scheme, which is opened for applications in early February 2023 and administered as detailed in this report, and that a further report on other activities will be brought to committee for consideration in February.

In late January, the Coronation Plans were announced by the Royal Family which include:

Unclassified

246

Saturday 6th May 2023 - The Coronation Service at Westminster Abbey**Sunday 7th May 2023 - The Coronation Concert at Windsor Castle and the Coronation Big Lunches****Monday 8th May 2023 - The Big Help Out, to promote and encourage volunteering.**

In January Council further agreed that a Working Group is established to agree a programme of community activities in line with the programme of events. The following Members were appointed to the Working Group:

Councillor Gilmour
 Councillor McArthur
 Councillor Moore
 Councillor Smart
 Alderman Irvine
 Councillor McClean

The Working Group met on Tuesday 14 February to consider possible events and activities which could be delivered by Council to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III, with a particular emphasis on the Royal Family's Coronation Plans i.e. the Big Lunch and Volunteering (see Table 1 below).

Members will be aware that £30,000 from the total Coronation budget of £50,000 has already been ring fenced for grants, therefore the remaining budget for the programme of events is £20,000.

Table 1	Proposed Programme of Activity for the Coronation	Total Budget
Activity	Description	£50,000
Coronation Grant Scheme	The grant scheme is already open. Funding is available for Street Parties and volunteering activities around the Coronation weekend. Open to constituted Community and Voluntary Groups. Applications limited to £500 per group, however groups can pool their funding to arrange larger Street Parties or volunteering activities	30,000
Coronation Party Packs	Party Packs will be made available to non-constituted CV groups and issued on a first come first served basis. Packs will contain biodegradable plates, bowls, cups cutlery, tablecloth, napkins, bunting. The costs are based on circa £50 per party for 60. Party packs	3,000

Unclassified

247

	will be purchased once the official merchandise is available.	
Schools Engagement Programme	A variety of age appropriate digitised activities to include colouring, crafts and letter writing, with an intergenerational theme.	1,000
Two Tea Dances	To be held in Ards and Bangor, co-ordinated by Age Friendly, Community Development and Arts.	3,000
Tree Planting	The tree planting season for whips is December to March, however up to 3 larger mature trees could be professionally planted in Castle Park around the Coronation weekend. The location in Castle Park, Bangor previously saw the planting of trees for the coronations of George VI and Queen Elizabeth II. The Friend of Castle Park group can be involved. Whips can be added during the planting season to create a copse, which can be appropriately named.	2,000
Trees for affil schools and places o worship	A presentation "Royal Oak" can be provided to all schools and worship	2,000
Seeds	A packet of wildflower seeds can be provided to all schools, churches, and community groups	2,500
Birthday card and seeds from Council	Presented to people whose birthday falls on the 6 May (estimated 500)	500
Traditional Craft workshops at the Town Hall, Ards and Demonstrations at a venue TBC	Series of workshops/demonstrations e.g willow making, spinning, crafts etc. Where possible local Traditional Crafters will be involved. Registration and a nominal fee will be applied for some demonstrations/workshops	2,500
Coronation Exhibition at the Museum	Coronation activities including barding of the Courtyard/children's crafts and the ever-popular life-sized Royals	2,500
Groomsport Cockle Row	A series of small-scale family entertainment (met from the events budget)	0
Marketing and PR	Recording and promotion of the events/activities	1,000
Total		50,000

The Working Group felt that the programme detailed above provided events and activities suitable for broad range of residents, young and old alike. As the Coronation is taking place over the weekend and the Bank Holiday Monday, the

Unclassified

248

Council run activities will mostly take place during the week leading up to the Coronation. Members should note that the programme for the Coronation must be agreed this month to give officers sufficient lead in time to arrange and deliver the events and activities.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council agrees the proposed programme of activities to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III, detailed in this report.



To: All Consultees

Dear Consultee

10 February 2023

CONSULTATIVE DOCUMENT ON PROPOSALS TO APPROVE A NEW APPROVED CODE OF PRACTICE (ACOP) — L126 THE RADIATION (EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND PUBLIC INFORMATION) REGULATIONS 2019

The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland ("the Executive") has prepared a Consultative Document (CD) containing proposals to approve the new ACOP L126. The CD has been published on the Executive's website at <https://www.hseni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-approved-code-practice-radiation-emergency-preparedness-and-public> where it can be read, copied or printed.

If you would prefer a printed version, it can be obtained on request. Furthermore, if you require a more accessible format, executive summaries are available in Braille or large print, on disc or audiocassette, or in Irish, Ulster Scots and other languages of the minority ethnic communities in Northern Ireland. To obtain a summary in one of those formats, please contact Gavin Falconer at the address shown overleaf.

The new ACOP and guidance are aimed at duty-holders under the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 (REPPiR 2019 NI). The ACOP was issued by the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and the Health and Safety Executive for Great Britain (HSE). It supports the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2019 and can be read across to REPPiR 2019 NI.

► **Health & Safety Executive
Northern Ireland**

83 Ladas Drive, Belfast, BT6 9FR, Northern Ireland
Telephone: 028 9024 3249 Helpline: 0800 0320 121
Textphone: 07854 212477 Facsimile: 028 9023 5383
Email: mail@hse.gov.uk Web: www.hse.gov.uk





REPIR excludes those who transport radioactive material by road, rail, inland waterway, sea, air or pipeline. The Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010, as amended, are the main Regulations governing the safe transport of radioactive materials in Northern Ireland, and include provisions in relation to planning for radiological emergencies or accidents that occur during such transport.

More detail can be found in the consultation document.

It is anticipated that very few organisations in Northern Ireland will be affected by the ACOP and that the impact to Northern Ireland industry will mainly be restricted to one-off familiarisation.

The Executive proposes to approve the new ACOP for use in Northern Ireland. It is anticipated that any financial impact will be negligible.

Regarding equality of opportunity and rural impact, no adverse or unjustified differential impacts were identified.

Comments, in whatever format you choose to use, should be sent to:

Mr. Gavin Falconer
Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland
83 Ladas Drive
Belfast BT6 9FR
(Tel: 028 9054 6816; Fax: 028 9054 5383; Textphone: 028 9054 6896;
E-mail: REPIRACOPConsultation@hse.gov.uk

so as to arrive not later than **noon on Friday, 14 April 2023**.

Comments are invited on any matters in the consultation document, but particularly on the assumptions relating to costs and the conclusion that there will be no adverse effect on any section 75 group.

I look forward to hearing from you.

► **Health & Safety Executive**
Northern Ireland

83 Ladas Drive, Belfast, BT6 9FR, Northern Ireland
Telephone: 028 9024 3249 Helpline: 0800 0320 121
Textphone: 07854 212477 Facsimile: 028 9023 5383
Email: mail@hse.gov.uk Web: www.hse.gov.uk





Yours faithfully

Gavin Falconer

► **Health & Safety Executive
Northern Ireland**

83 Ladas Drive, Belfast, BT6 9FR, Northern Ireland
Telephone: 028 9024 3249 Helpline: 0800 0320 121
Textphone: 07854 212477 Facsimile: 028 9023 5383
Email: mail@hse.gov.uk Web: www.hse.gov.uk





7 February 2023

Dear Consultee

CONSULTATION: DRAFT DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL ABUSE STRATEGY

A draft Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy for 2023-2030 has been issued for public consultation today. The draft strategy has been developed jointly by the Department of Health and the Department of Justice and it has been informed by the feedback received to a Call for Views exercise undertaken by the Departments in 2022.

The draft strategy has been designed around four pillars:

- **Partnership:** Driving change together through joint commitment, leadership and partnership working.
- **Prevention:** Preventing domestic and sexual abuse from happening by challenging attitudes and behaviour that foster it and intervening early where possible to prevent it.
- **Support:** Ensuring that all victims of domestic and sexual abuse including children can access services supporting them to recover and rebuild their lives.
- **Justice:** Holding individuals who are abusive to account and ensuring justice responses are effective.

Underpinning these pillars are eight connected outcomes (as well as key priority areas) which relate to a coordinated response. These cover:

- awareness raising;
- an increase in the knowledge and skills about forming healthy relationships;
- early identification of domestic and sexual abuse;
- support services;
- access to safe accommodation based services;
- addressing abusive behaviours, holding individuals to account for this;
- reducing the risk of harm and enhancing victim safety; and
- increasing confidence to report abuse, reduce barriers to participation and ensure that Justice responses are effective.

We intend to expand on these in further detail through a series of action plans that will

outline clear responsibilities and timelines for implementation over the next 7 years.

This consultation seeks your views on the content of the proposed strategy which is available at <https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/doj/domestic-and-sexual-abuse-strategy> along with a consultation document and response form. An **Easy Read and Children and Young People's Version** is also available. These, along with, Equality and Rural Needs Impact Assessments can be found on the Departmental websites.

The consultation exercise will also be supported by a number of online public engagement events which anyone can attend. The scheduled dates are:

Monday 06 March 2023	6.00pm to 7.30pm
Tuesday 07 March 2023	10.30am – noon
Thursday 09 March 2023	2.00pm – 3.30pm
Tuesday 14 March 2023	2.00pm – 3.30pm
Wednesday 15 March 2023	6.00pm – 7.30pm
Thursday 16 March 2023	2.00pm – 3.30pm

Further details of how to book these events are on the Departmental websites:

[Domestic and sexual abuse strategy 2023 2030 | Department of Justice \(justice-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

[Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy - 2023 – 2030 | Department of Health \(health-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

We are keen to hear feedback from as many people as possible, particularly those with lived experience of domestic and sexual abuse, including children and young people. Where possible, we would encourage our voluntary sector partners to make their clients aware of the consultation **and to seek their views** using the Easy Read and Children and Young People versions as appropriate.

Consultation responses must be submitted no later than **Tuesday 2 May 2023**.

Should you have any questions about the consultation process email us at DSAStrategyConsultation@justice-ni.gov.uk or write to us at Victims Support Division, Room A4.03, Castle Buildings, Stormont Estate, Belfast, BT4 3SG. We look forward to hearing your views.

Yours sincerely

Gavin Quinn

**Gavin Quinn,
Director of Mental Health
Department of Health**

Julie Wilson

**Julie Wilson,
Deputy Director, Victims Support Division
Department of Justice**

From: DfE Energy Consumers <EnergyConsumers@economy-ni.gov.uk>
Sent: 03 February 2023 10:13
To: DfE Energy Consumers <EnergyConsumers@economy-ni.gov.uk>
Cc: DfE Renewable Electricity <RenewableElectricity@economy-ni.gov.uk>
Subject: Consultation on Design Considerations for a Renewable Electricity Support Scheme for Northern Ireland

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 Consultation on Design Considerations for a Renewable Electricity Support Scheme for Northern Ireland is now live - [Design considerations for a Renewable Electricity Support Scheme for Northern Ireland | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

This consultation is the first step towards the implementation of a support scheme that can ensure electricity generation from a diverse range of renewables in Northern Ireland. Such a scheme is also essential to deliver on the NI Executive's Energy Strategy targets, the ambition of achieving the 80% renewable electricity consumption target by 2030 set out in the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022, as well as ensure NI can effectively attract investors to benefit from green growth opportunities while also protecting consumers from global price shocks.

This consultation sets out and seeks input from stakeholders on the design considerations on which DfE will base the development of a renewable electricity support scheme for Northern Ireland. This includes options to define the principles underpinning the support scheme, as well as more granular aspects of the scheme design such as support structure and eligibility criteria.

We encourage you, or your organization, to share your views and evidence on this consultation to help inform future stages of development and implementation of a renewable electricity support scheme for Northern Ireland.

The consultation closes on 27th April 2023.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Renewable Electricity Team
Email: RenewableElectricity@economy-ni.gov.uk

Unclassified

255

ITEM 8.4**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	22 February 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	N/A
Date of Report	16 February 2023
File Reference	
Legislation	Recreation and Youth Services Order (NI) 1989
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust review of Urgent Care and Minor Injuries Service provision
Attachments	None

The South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust is proposing to develop a new Consultant led Urgent Care Centre, alongside the Emergency Department at the Ulster Hospital. In order to achieve this, the Trust is proposing to close the Minor Injuries Units in both the Ards and Bangor Community Hospitals. The Trust is currently consulting on this proposal.

The consultation will last for 12 weeks and began on 8 February 2023 and closes on 3 May 2023. A copy of the consultation document and information on the consultation process can be found on the Trust's website at the following link:

<https://setrust.hscni.net/getinvolved/consultations>

The Trust plans to hold a series of public and online events to have a conversation about the proposed changes. The dates will be published on its website and in the local media in the coming weeks.

The Council has established a Cross Party Working Group on Health and Social Care which meets with Directors of the Trust to discuss matters mutual interest, and

Unclassified

256

which also acts as one conduit for communication between the Council and the Trust. The next meeting of this working group has been scheduled for 3rd April and it is intended that this will be a consultation event concerning the above for the that working group.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council considers a response to the consultation at the meeting of Council on 26th April, and forwarded as the Council's response before the closing date of 3rd May.

From: Consultation <consultation@setrust.hscni.net>

Sent: 08 February 2023 17:45

Subject: Public Consultation on The Future Provision of Urgent and Emergency Care Services - Ards and North Down area

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

Re: Public Consultation on The Future Provision of Urgent and Emergency Care Services - Ards and North Down area

The Trust would like to consult with you on the future provision of urgent and emergency care services in the Ards and North Down area.

The consultation period will begin on 8 February and will close on 3 May 2023. Comments should be submitted by the closing date. Details of the consultation including the consultation document and information on the consultation process can be found on the Trust's website at: <https://setrust.hscni.net/getinvolved/consultations/>

As part of the consultation, there will be a range of opportunities for staff and the local community to give their views. The Trust plans to hold a series of public events to have a conversation about the proposed changes. The dates will be published on our website and in the local media in the coming weeks.

If you have any queries in relation to the consultation documents, and their availability in alternative formats (including Braille, audio and minority languages) please contact:

Strategic & Capital Development Department
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
Kelly House
Upper Newtownards Road
Dundonald
Belfast
BT16 1RH

Tel: 028 9055 0434

E-mail: consultation@setrust.hscni.net

Comments made during the consultation process will be considered carefully and feedback will be provided.

Please forward this email to any stakeholders who you think may also wish to participate in the consultation.

The Trust is keen to hear your views and looks forward to engaging with you.

Yours sincerely

Helen Moore
Director of Planning, Performance and Informatics
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Unclassified

259

ITEM 8.5

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	22 February 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Environment
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Waste and Cleansing Services
Date of Report	30 January 2023
File Reference	69001
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Consultation on Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Draft Consultation Response

The Department for the Economy has launched a public consultation on the draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland. This draft strategy sets out a vision to create an innovative, inclusive and competitive economy, with responsible production and consumption at its core. A Circular Economy will be a key enabler of the Department for the Economy's 10X Economic Vision for a decade of innovation. The Draft Strategy sets out a vision as follows:

"By 2050, Northern Ireland will have an innovative, inclusive and competitive economy where business, people and planet flourish, with responsible production and consumption at its core."

The document notes that today, like every day, all around the world we will take precious materials from the earth and use them to make things that we may use only once before we throw them away. This 'take-make-use-dispose' approach is known as the Linear Economy. The Draft Strategy highlights that this Linear Economy approach has been around a long time, but it needs to change as:

- It's unsustainable – we will run out of those resources and materials.

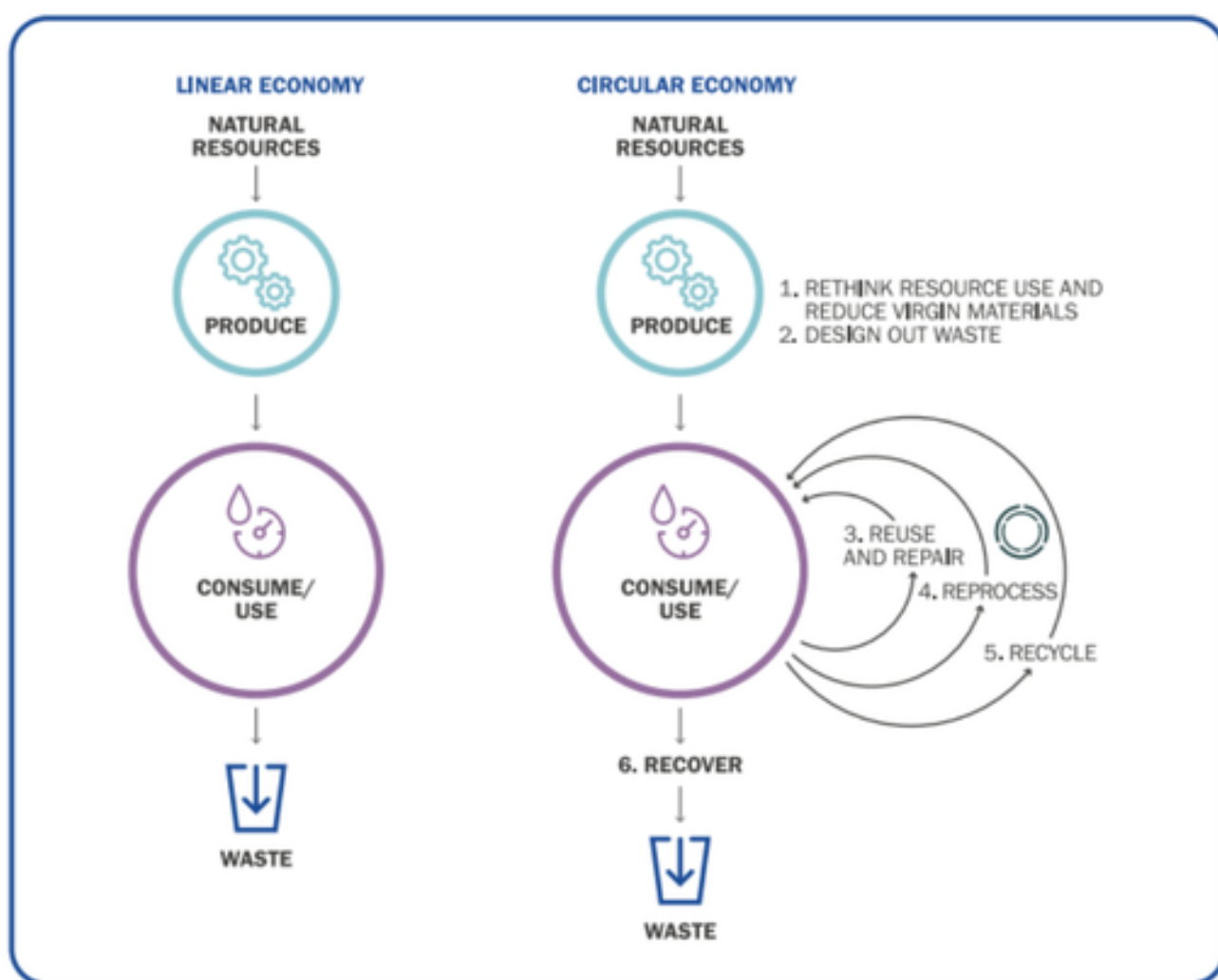
Unclassified

- It's expensive – we make something once, throw it away, and need to make another.
- It's very bad for the environment – we are creating a climate emergency.

The alternative is referred to as a Circular Economy, which is what the proposed strategy addresses.

In a truly Circular Economy:

- We're able to reduce our use of earth's resources that cannot be replenished.
- We switch to materials we can reuse and fuels we can produce over and over.
- We cut down substantially on the waste we create.
- We hold on to products and materials for as long as possible.



RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the draft response to the consultation at Appendix 1 is approved for submission to the DfE.



Department for the
Economy
www.economy-ni.gov.uk

Draft

Circular Economy

Strategy for Northern Ireland

Response Template

Draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland

Response Template

Overview

We are consulting on the draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland which aims to transition our Linear Economy to a Circular Economy, where business, people and planet flourish. Adopting a circular mindset throughout society and business will be essential to a successful transition. This draft Circular Economy Strategy is a key enabler of the Department for the Economy's 10X economic vision for a decade of innovation, facilitating a sustainable, innovative and inclusive approach to economic growth, making the most of new opportunities and possibilities presented by the 4th Industrial Revolution.

We especially want to hear from those across industry, education and the public sector who will be vital in making the change happen, as well as private individuals who we want to embrace this change.

Why your views matter

We want you to tell us if we have accurately assessed the situation and if our proposals are right to kick start the transition to a truly Circular Economy, using a whole system approach. Feedback from this consultation will inform the final Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland and help to shape the design, remit and function of future delivery.

Responding to our Consultation

We would ask that you respond to the consultation using the online survey which can be accessed at the [Circular Economy Consultation page on the nidirect website consultations.nidirect.gov.uk](https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/circular-economy-consultation)

If you are unable to respond using the online consultation survey, please complete this response template and send it to: ces@economy-ni.gov.uk

Before you submit your response, please read the **Privacy Notice** published along with the Consultation Documents, which explains how we will use personal information as part of the processing of responses.

Draft Circular Economy Strategy Consultation Questions

Personal Details

1. Name

2. I am responding as

An individual

On behalf of an organisation

3. Name of your organisation

4. What sector are you from?

Agriculture

Bioeconomy

Central Government

Construction and Built Environment

Education

Local Government

Manufacturing

Representative Body

Research & Development

Services

Social Enterprise / Third & Voluntary Sector

Other

Vision

By 2050 Northern Ireland will have an innovative, inclusive and competitive economy where business, people and planet flourish, with responsible production and consumption at its core.

5. Is this vision the right vision?

Yes

No

Any other comments?

Target

According to the Circularity Gap Report, each person in Northern Ireland is consuming c.16.6 tonnes of resources per year. This is our individual material footprint. With the earth's finite supply of resources and our current production and consumption patterns, we must start to rethink our relationship with resources and reduce our demand for them. To live sustainably, the United Nations (UN) recommends that we should only be using an average of 6-8 tonnes of resources per year.

Within this strategy we have included a target to reduce our annual material footprint to 8 tonnes per person by 2050.

6. Do you agree with this target to halve our material footprint by 2050?

Yes

No

Any other comments?

Proposals for Change

Develop and implement a programme to support and promote behaviour change

Our behaviours and individual choices about what, where and how we purchase stuff, how long we use it for, whether we can reuse or repair it, and when and how we dispose of it, will ultimately determine if Northern Ireland can successfully transform to a Circular Economy.

A recent report issued by the House of Lords 'In our Hands' urged Ministers to lead a public campaign using all government levers to guide public behaviour change in order to stop biodiversity loss and achieve net zero.

Changing mindsets, business models and developing new products and services is going to be a complicated task, especially for Northern Ireland, which has many SMEs with limited time and resource.

This level of intervention is required to transform our relationship with resources.

7. What efforts do you think government should make to promote behavioural change?

Please put the following in order of priority.

(Ranking scale 1 = most preferred / 4 = least preferred)

Provide greater transparency and clarity on what government is doing to show commitment and create momentum.

Provide information and tools to increase awareness and help change attitudes.

Use regulatory and financial incentives to increase affordability and availability of sustainable options.

Provide or adapt physical infrastructure to help make it easier for people to change behaviours e.g. recycling centres, refill stations in supermarkets and bottle banks.

Create clusters and networks to raise awareness and facilitate collaboration

Many of the barriers to circularity will not be addressed without the utilisation of existing and new clusters and networks which will support industry to research, design, test and deliver transformative solutions.

Clusters are a geographic collection of interconnected companies producing similar or related goods/services that are innovation-orientated, seeking to benefit from integration across businesses.

Networks are an alliance of organisations (public/private or other) seeking to work together to achieve an economic goal, this could be within or outside a cluster. Networks may involve organisations within the same sector or across sectors which belong to the same value chain.

8. What existing clusters and networks could be utilised to deliver transformative solutions for increased circularity?

Sustainable Development Forum (managed by SNI)
Northern Ireland Reuse Network
Strategic Investment Board
NI Federation of Small Businesses
International Synergies
Circular Economy Innovation Network

These networks need to be empowered and resourced to better facilitate and promote much more widespread 'mainstreaming' of circular economy activities across all sectors.

9. What clusters and networks do you think will need to be established to maximise resource use?

Models in other jurisdictions should be reviewed and assessed for potential utilisation in NI, e.g.

Circular Communities Scotland
Local Policy Innovation Partnership (currently being bid for, aimed at building new partnerships and develop existing ones around decarbonisation and net zero, nature-based solutions and the transition to a green economy in NI.)
Association of Cities and Regions for Sustainable Resource Management (local NI involvement/buy in to this)

Embed Circular Economy principles in public procurement

In Northern Ireland, public sector procurement has buying power in excess of £3 billion per annum. This provides strong potential to shape markets and behaviours through the development of specifications and contract management clauses to retain the value of materials for example purchasing refurbished computers or supporting leasing business models. This creates opportunity to influence the maintenance of the public estate, supply contracts including food and waste as well as delivery of infrastructure and capital projects.

10. How do you think public sector procurement can best influence the behaviours of industry to increase circularity of resources?

Need for identification/establishment of key circular economy procurement 'rules', with mandated adherence to these by all decision makers involved in public sector procurement. With sufficient advance notice of when commencement of applying these procurement rules, this will allow sufficient time for suppliers of goods and services to prepare and adapt to drive real change across the supply chain.

Clear circular economy rules must be incorporated into existing Green Public Procurement (GPP) or Sustainable Public Procurement (SPP) policies.

Create and support platforms and hubs to share goods and materials

To improve the use of resources and retain their value, people and businesses need to know what is available, where it is and what condition it is in. Information is required for people and business to make choices about what they want to access. This can be provided through online platforms for typical fast moving consumer products e.g. the Olio platform which is dedicated to helping stop food waste within the UK. It can also be provided for industrial materials through established platforms such as International Synergies. We want to create more platforms and hubs to share products and materials.

11. What sorts of platforms do you think would be most useful in the future to enable people and business to share and reuse products and materials?

CE-HUB

EU funded hubs/platforms such as:

DigiPrime

FiberEUse

rEUse

BIOWAYS

Kudoti - a SA based platform aimed at collaborating with businesses to promote a circular supply

Zero Waste Scotland - Circular Suppliers Directory

Maximise the value of materials locally

When products and materials are kept in use, it retains the maximum value of those materials and components, reducing the overall demand for material extraction to make new products. We can do this by increasing the repair and reuse sector, doing more with natural bio-based materials locally available as well as growing our reprocessing sector.

The European Commission established the 'right to repair' for consumers and similar regulations have been introduced for GB.

The 'right to repair' regulation requires manufacturers of household appliances such as dishwashers, washing and drying machines, refrigerators and televisions to ensure their products are repairable for at least ten years through providing repair manuals and making parts available.

12. What are the most effective tools that government could use to encourage and facilitate business and society to extend the life of products and services to keep materials and resources in use for longer?

Clear need to mandate the right to cost effective and practicable repair of goods by consumers; needs to be as wide in scope as possible.

Consider minimum product 'guarantee' periods for wide range of goods, which will promote greater innovation and design by manufacturers to ensure greater longevity and promote repair (rather than disposal) where that is required (under warranty)

Need for extension of Extended Producer Responsibility, to include many more waste streams, e.g. bed mattresses, upholstered furniture. A 'take-back' requirement should be introduced for suppliers/retailers of these types of goods, which will promote advancements in design innovation to maximise recyclability of such goods/greater circularity.

Establish a Circular Economy funding programme

To unlock benefits at scale, we need to create economic incentives that enable Circular Economy solutions to succeed.

13. Which of the following interventions should be a priority focus for government funding?

Please put the following in order of priority.

(1= highest priority and 9 = lowest priority)

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="text" value="3"/> | ▼ | Research and development |
| <input type="text" value="2"/> | ▼ | Secondary material markets |
| <input type="text" value="1"/> | ▼ | Circular supply chains |
| <input type="text" value="9"/> | ▼ | Digitisation and technology |
| <input type="text" value="6"/> | ▼ | Job creation |
| <input type="text" value="8"/> | ▼ | Waste reduction |
| <input type="text" value="5"/> | ▼ | Carbon emissions reduction |
| <input type="text" value="4"/> | ▼ | Reuse and repair |
| <input type="text" value="7"/> | ▼ | Environmentally focused solutions |

Further comments? Please enter response in box below

The above is an arbitrary ranking of these priorities - all are essential and all are interrelated aspects of the circular economy agenda. Achievement in one area will support achievement of another etc.

14. What funding instruments do you consider would be most appropriate in years 1-3?**Please put the following in order of priority.****(Ranking scale 1 = most preferred / 3 = least preferred)**

Loans

Grants and subsidies

Blended finance (i.e. a mix of repayable and non-repayable finance)

15. Do you have any further comments to make on funding instruments that could be used to enable Circular Economy solutions to succeed?

Blended finance is deemed essential to the advancement of the Circular Economy in NI; harnessing public and private investment in a carefully balanced manner, to secure a step change in the CE.

Create a regulatory framework that enables circular solutions to become the norm

Regulations, taxation and enforcement can further reduce waste and improve resource efficiency.

For example, the European Commission rules to establish the 'right to repair' for consumers. These regulations will affect the design, manufacturing and distribution of all applicable goods in Northern Ireland and will facilitate greater reuse and repair of such products.

16. Considering the EU right to repair regulation, what other regulatory tools do you consider government can use to stimulate greater circulation of materials?

See answer to Q12.

Over and above the EU right to repair, there is a need for a regulatory framework to be established with key mandatory requirements that will further drive innovation in design and manufacture of goods.

Consideration should also be given to further extending the regulatory framework around the design of buildings and infrastructure, to promote step change in CE outcomes.

Deliver a Skills programme to support a Just Transition

Unless we plan, anticipate and resource for the transition to a Circular Economy, skills shortages could derail long-term goals for circularity and jobs growth.

As we progress into the 4th Industrial Revolution, some jobs will be lost in traditional sectors and the demand for new skills will increase, for example the demand for diesel engineers will decrease while the demand for those skilled in electric vehicles will increase.

17. What three skills do you consider will be most critical to supporting the Circular Economy?

Skill 1

Transversal skills - include digital, green, and supply chain management skills.

Skill 2

Specific/functional/speciality skills

Skill 3

Material handling/labouring skills

Future delivery

Delivery of Circular Economy Strategy

18. Do you consider that government should play a role in assisting the transition to greater circularity through a dedicated Circular Economy delivery body?

Yes

No

Don't Know

19. What do you think a Circular Economy delivery body should look like? e.g. government led or a public-private partnership.

CE delivery body aligned with the Scottish strategy, where establishing a public body 'would be accountable to Scottish Ministers and/or the Scottish Parliament and have to meet public sector accountability requirements'.

Support the establishment of a network of delivery partners (private and voluntary sector) supporting this public body, as is the case in the Welsh CE Strategy.

Please provide a rationale for your answer.

A public body, held to the standards of public accountability is important in driving forward the Circular Economy agenda at pace and in accordance with key milestones as set out in the strategy. The involvement of private and voluntary delivery partners, working with the public body is of central importance - but the statutory/government-led model is deemed most appropriate given the fundamental importance of the Circular Economy to the whole Climate Change agenda.

Unclassified

273

ITEM 9

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	22 February 2023
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	14 February 2023
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/>
Subject	Request for Deputation from The North Channel Wind Project
Attachments	

A request to make a deputation to the Environment Committee had been received from The North Channel Wind Project. The deputation request stated the following:

“The North Channel Wind project, proposed by SBM Offshore, will see Northern Ireland take a significant step closer to energy self-sufficiency. The current turbulence in energy markets has made it abundantly clear that reliance on piped and shipped fossil fuels will be short lived and that longer term plans for generating our own power is now imperative.

The North Channel Wind project proposes new generation floating wind turbines some 9km to 25km from shore in the Irish Sea, where the Northern Ireland seabed boundary meets Scotland’s.

If consented, the wind farm would be the largest generator in Northern Ireland, producing clean, indigenous, renewable electricity. The development of the project would inject fresh vigour in local economies and create jobs, particularly during construction and operation.

My colleagues and I are particularly focused on ensuring strong local economic participation through supply chains and human resources.

Unclassified

274

We would appreciate the opportunity to present our proposed project to your council so that we can explore their feedback and address any questions before we embark on a public consultation process.

Despite the lack of an Assembly we are making steady progress in terms of environmental surveys, engagement with the grid operator and fishing communities, and we will be commencing public consultation in the Spring.”

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council considers the request for a Deputation from North Channel Wind Project.

Stephen Reid,
CEO Ards and North Down Borough Council
City Hall, The Castle,
Bangor BT20 4BT

02 February 2023

Dear Stephen,

The North Channel Wind project, proposed by SBM Offshore, will see Northern Ireland take a significant step closer to energy self-sufficiency. The current turbulence in energy markets has made it abundantly clear that reliance on piped and shipped fossil fuels will be short lived and that longer term plans for generating our own power is now imperative.

The North Channel Wind project proposes new generation floating wind turbines some 9km to 25km from shore in the Irish Sea, where the Northern Ireland seabed boundary meets Scotland's.

If consented, the wind farm would be the largest generator in Northern Ireland, producing clean, indigenous, renewable electricity. The development of the project would inject fresh vigour in local economies and create jobs, particularly during construction and operation.

My colleagues and I are particularly focused on ensuring strong local economic participation through supply chains and human resources.

We would appreciate the opportunity to present our proposed project to your council so that we can explore their feedback and address any questions before we embark on a public consultation process.

Despite the lack of an Assembly we are making steady progress in terms of environmental surveys, engagement with the grid operator and fishing communities, and we will be commencing public consultation in spring.

Our Northern Ireland based communications agency Jcomms led by Joris Minne and Claire McKee will be in touch with you to arrange meetings with the North Channel Wind leadership team including me.

In the mean time should you have any queries please feel free to contact Joris on joris.minne@jcomms.co.uk or tel: 07876 218978.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Fiana Feeney". The signature is enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Fiona Stevens
Stakeholder Manager

Unclassified

277

ITEM 12.1**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	22 February 2023
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	14 February 2023
File Reference	
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	National Association of Councillors (NAC) Northern Ireland Region - Leadership and Change in Local Enterprise
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Flyer Appendix 2 - Agenda

The NAC is holding a Workshop on Leadership and Change in Local Enterprise in the Lakewood Suite, Craigavon Civic Centre, Craigavon on Thursday 23 March 09.30am-3.30pm.

The Workshop is open to Councillors and senior officers who have a strong passion to improve their understanding of future new local enterprise, jobs and sustainable growth. Information on the event is included in the attached flyer and agenda. The Workshop is free to attend but must be booked in advance as places are limited.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council considers nominating Member(s).



**National Association of Councillors (NAC)
Northern Ireland Region Presents**

**“Leadership and Change in Local Enterprise” –
A Participative Workshop**

On Thursday 23rd March 2023 – 9.30am – 3.30pm

in the Lakewood Suite, Craigavon Civic Centre, Craigavon BT64 1AL

Introducing Local Enterprise Training Solutions (LETS)

Facilitated by Derek McCallan – Local Government Specialist

Speakers Include:

Steve Pollard – Lecturer and Course Director, Ulster University Business School, published Business Start Up and Entrepreneurship Specialist.

Maeve Monaghan - CEO Now Group / Chair of the Community Foundation NI

Adrian McCreesh – Chief Executive of Mid Ulster District Council

Alison Allen – Chief Executive of NILGA

Alderman Alan McDowell – Former Chair of Regeneration and Development Committee on Ards and North Down Borough Council and Social Enterprise director.

Who Should Attend?

Councillors and senior officers who have a strong passion to improve their understanding of future new local enterprise, jobs and sustainable growth. The workshop will gather, present and report on insights from speakers, panellists and attendees which will enable new enterprise opportunities in policy & practice, aligned to the newly elected councils in May 2023.

The Workshop is **FREE** to attend but must be booked in advance as places are limited.

To book please Email Kate at office@nac-ni.org and you will receive confirmation of your place.

Or complete below:

Name:

Council:

Email:

Any Dietary Requirements:

Return to: National Association of Councillors Northern Ireland Region, Sketrick House, Jubilee Road, Newtownards, Co. Down, BT23 4YH or (per above) Email office@nac-ni.org

If you later find you are unable to attend, please contact Kate at office@nac-ni.org, to cancel your booking to enable someone else on the waiting list to attend.



“Leadership & Change in Local Enterprise” NAC (NI) Workshop

Thursday 23rd March ‘23, Craigavon Civic Centre, BT64 1AL

AGENDA

09:30 – 10:00: Registration, Tea & Coffee

10:00 – 10:10: Welcome & Introduction – Cllr Terry Andrews, NI Chair, & Cllr Joe Boyle, Secretary, NAC (NI)

10:10 – 10:45: Councils/Councillors Leading Future Local Economies

Interactive Session – Facilitator Derek McCallan

10:45 – 11:30: Here’s Why, Here’s How: A Post Election Road Map for NI’s Economy

Interactive Session – Steve Pollard, Ulster University Business School

11:30 – 11:50: Refreshments & Comfort Break

11:50 – 12:20: Councils Leading FUTURE Sustainable Enterprise – Roger Wilson, SOLACE Chair (Invited) & Alison Allen, CE, NILGA

12:20 – 12:50: Panel Interactive Session with Delegates

12:50 – 13:45: Lunch & Networking

13:45 – 14:30: Enterprise Ambition - Local, Regional & National

- (i) Mid Ulster District Council – Adrian McCreesh, CE**
- (ii) CEO of NOW Group/Chair, Community Foundation NI – Maeve Monaghan**
- (iii) The Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) – Leah Millthorne, Head of Local Economies**

14:30 – 15:00: A Forward Look: The 2023-2027 Enterprising Councillor - Ald Alan McDowell

15:00 – 15:30: Change, Challenge, Close: Facilitator Derek McCallan/Cllr Beth Adger, NAC UK Chair

Unclassified

280

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	22 February 2023
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	16 February 2023
File Reference	
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Application Form Appendix 2 - Activity Flow Chart

Members will be aware that the Council's Veteran's Champion is Councillor Trevor Cummings. He has been working with the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association (RFCA) recently with regard to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust (AFCFT) and an allocation of £200,000 to Northern Ireland. The Chief Executive of RFCA, Michael Murdoch MBE, has written to the Council to confirm that this funding has been confirmed and that a dedicated Support Officer has been appointed to assist the Veterans Champions community.

This development is welcome as it provides support for the creation of an Outreach Programme to reach out into the veterans community in the Borough. An application process has now been developed for the Outreach Project over a two-year life cycle of funding, explained in appendix 1 and the process of approval further set out in appendix 2.

The Council would apply to draw down the funds to support planned events. Initially it is recommended that publicity material to increase the profile of Veterans support is created including pop-up stands and banners, leaflets and business cards. One event

Unclassified

281

is planned to be held at the Royal British Legion in Newtownards on 9 March 2023. It will be an information session to raise awareness of support to veterans and is jointly promoted with Group 8 Royal British Legion.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council notes the funding secured by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust and the Veterans Outreach Programme; and it further recommends the drawing down of grants from the Outreach Programme, as set out in this report, to support the creation of publicity material and to hold an information event for veterans in association with the Royal British Legion.



APPLICATION FORM – VETERANS' CHAMPIONS OUTREACH PROJECT

Dear Veterans' Champion,

The Veterans' Champion Community Engagement project provides you with financial support to undertake a number of specific veteran community activities over the two-year life cycle of the funding. In outline, these are: -

- Up to a maximum of three local veteran community networking events in your council area each year totalling £1,454 per annum;
- Up to three veteran community social events in your council area each year totalling £3,000; and
- Up to three veteran community outdoor pursuit / family half day activities in your council area each year totalling £1,181 per annum.

The project funding is to help you develop and run a variety of activities, which should deliver a at least one of a number of possible outcomes. In outline, these are:

- To help you raise your profile of the support you provide to the veterans in your council area;
- To help you undertake outreach events and activities targeting hard-to-reach and minority veteran groups;
- To help you develop collaborative working with your Veteran Champion colleagues in other council areas through shared learning and shared experiences; and
- To help you provide a more joined up and better-informed service for Veterans in Northern Ireland.

Once you have identified an event that you would like to run, and which meets one of more of the points raised above, you will need to submit an outline to Bobby Gillespie, the NIVSO Veterans' Champion Support Officer by email to vcspofficer@nivso.org.uk as soon as you can.

Name of Council	
Name of Veterans' Champion	
Mobile Number	
Email Address	

Type of event (Choose 1) Local veteran community networking event; OR Local veteran community social event; OR Local veteran community outdoor pursuit / family half day activity.	As well as explaining what type of event you would like to run you can also describe the event more fully in this section
---	---

<p>When would you like to hold this event (please be as specific as possible).</p>	
<p>Please list the key elements of the event in terms of <u>funding</u> and attach email or written quotations if these are available. Please also indicate the <u>total costs</u> you are seeking funding for.</p>	
<p>What will be the key outputs from this activity? (These are usually easy to measure as they are quantitative, and tangible. They are not the reasons why the project is necessary) – please use bullet points.</p>	
<p>What will be the key outcomes from this activity (these are about creating differences, the benefits, and solutions, the "what")? These may be more intangible and harder to measure but will help to illustrate why the activity is necessary - please use bullet points.</p>	
<p>What do you feel might be the long-term impact of this activity? - please use bullet points.</p>	

Once complete, please send to Bobby Gillespie, the NIVSO Veterans Champion Support Officer, by email to vcspofficer@nivso.org.uk.

ACTIVITY FLOW CHART – VETERANS’ CHAMPION OUTREACH PROJECT



Unclassified

285

ITEM 14**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	22 February 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administration
Date of Report	20 February 2023
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/>
Subject	Review of NILGA Constitution
Attachments	Appendix 1 - NILGA Constitution (Draft Amendments February 2023)

Background

The Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) has undertaken a review of its Constitution to ensure the Association is enabled for success in the 2023-2027 local government mandate.

Survey consultation was undertaken with NILGA Office Bearers, the NILGA Executive and NILGA Policy Network Members by Steve Thomas, former Chief Executive of the Welsh Local Government Association acting on behalf of NILGA. This was followed up with direct engagement with NILGA Office Bearers, the NILGA Executive and Council Chief Executives.

At the NILGA Executive meeting on 10 February 2023, it was approved that the proposed amendments to the NILGA Constitution, following the review, would be issued to Councils for feedback. Accordingly, please find attached the NILGA Constitution with proposed amendments highlighted in red for your convenience.

It is the wish of the NILGA Executive that any amendments to the NILGA Constitution are ratified at a Special Meeting of the Association which will take place on 10 March 2023. Feedback from the Council is requested no later than Thursday 2 March 2023.

Unclassified

286

Officers would like to highlight Sections 12 and 13, which relate to the Council's financial exposure in the event of resignation or dissolution.

Members should consider in detail, the following sub-sections of Section 12, Resignation of Individual Councils and some additional factors are listed below:

- **12.1:** Any member council wishing to terminate its membership shall give not less than 12 months' notice, to expire on 31st March in any year. In practice, this means that the notice period would commence following the first day of the next financial year, which, depending on when notice is given, could be up to 23 months' notice.
- **12.3:** Upon cessation of membership, Councils will forfeit all right to and claims upon the Association and its property and funds and lose any entitlement to any share in the assets of the Association whether on a dissolution or otherwise.
- **12.4:** Past members shall remain liable for its share of the liabilities of the Association for a period of 5 years from the date of membership cessation.
- **12.5:** Associated liabilities would include pensions of any redundant employees.

Officers request that any feedback is discussed, and all comments will be collated into a draft response, which will be submitted to NILGA before the 2 March deadline.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council considers the response to the NILGA Constitution (Draft Amendments February 2023).

Mr Stephen Reid
Chief Executive
Ards and North Down Borough Council
Town Hall
The Castle
BANGOR
BT20 4BT

14th February 2023

Dear Stephen,

You will be aware that NILGA has been undertaking a review of its Constitution to ensure the Association is enabled for success in the 2023-2027 local government mandate.

Steve Thomas, the previous Chief Executive of the Welsh Local Government Association was responsible for undertaking this review on our behalf. Survey consultation was undertaken with NILGA Office Bearers, the NILGA Executive and NILGA Policy Network Members. This was followed up with direct engagement with NILGA Office Bearers, the NILGA Executive and Council Chief Executives.

At the NILGA Executive meeting on 10 February 2023, it was approved that the proposed amendments to the NILGA Constitution following the review would be issued to Councils for feedback. Accordingly, please find attached the NILGA Constitution with proposed amendments highlighted in red for your convenience.

It is the wish of the NILGA Executive that any amendments to the NILGA Constitution are ratified at a Special Meeting of the Association which will take place on 10 March 2023, adjacent to the already scheduled NILGA Executive meeting on this date.

I would therefore be grateful if you could provide any feedback from your Council on the proposed amendments no later than Thursday 2 March 2023 to enable papers to be issued in advance of the Special Meeting.

Yours sincerely,



Alison Allen
Chief Executive



**THE NORTHERN IRELAND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
CONSTITUTION (Draft Amendments February 2023)**

1. **Name**
2. **Aims**
3. **Objectives**
4. **Membership**
5. **Representation**
6. **Meetings**
7. **Full Members Group**
8. **Executive**
9. **Office Bearers**
10. **Finances**
11. **Audit and Risk Management Committee**
12. **Resignation of Individual councils**
13. **Dissolution**
14. **Chief Executive and Staff**
15. **Appointments**
16. **Policy Structures**
17. **Amendment of the Constitution**

1. **NAME**

- 1.1 The name of the Association will be the “Northern Ireland Local Government Association”. (NILGA).
- 1.2 The Association shall consist of all councils in Northern Ireland who agree to be in membership and contribute to its aims and objectives. Full membership is awarded to such members (thereafter ‘member councils’).

2. **AIMS**

- 2.1 To be the inclusive and collective voice of councils in Northern Ireland.
- 2.2 To promote, enable and develop local government in Northern Ireland.
- 2.3 To convene and engage on matters relating to national, regional, and local policy and the financing of local government services as it affects the delivery of local services and outcomes for local people and as the organisation deems appropriate.
- 2.4 To ensure that local government and the Northern Ireland Executive work together in partnership based on principles of mutual respect and interdependency whilst recognising the legitimacy of the roles each play in Northern Ireland governance.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives and powers of the Association will be:

- 3.1 To seek to involve every councillor across Northern Ireland in the work of the Association and support councillors in their role as democratically elected local representatives, including in partnership with the National Association of Councillors.
- 3.2 To provide member councils with full access to a range of cost-effective services in accordance with their membership entitlement.
- 3.3 To formulate strategies and policies enabling the development of local governance, collaboration between councils, transformation and improvement of the local government sector and the enhancement of local democracy in Northern Ireland
- 3.4 To represent the interests of member councils to the Northern Ireland Executive, Assembly, government departments, parliaments, international institutions, and other bodies.
- 3.5 To promote and enable the case for councils throughout public affairs in Northern Ireland in print, media, and social networks when it links to NILGA's aims and communications strategy.
- 3.6 To promote the policies of the Association and to provide information on local government issues and concerns to the public, strategic partners, and outside organisations.
- 3.7 To uphold and promote equality, diversity, and human rights in all of its work with member organisations, partners, the public, and staff; this will also include promoting diversity in the work of the Association and in local democracy.
- 3.8 To ensure that members of different political groups contribute to the Association's work and to the development of policies that seek, if possible, consensus between the political groups and between groups of member councils.
- 3.9 To ensure all councillors and any professional association of local government officers in Northern Ireland can proactively contribute to the Association's policies and actions.
- 3.10 To represent as required the interest of member councils as employers and engage directly with the National Joint Council (NJC) for local government services.

4. MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 Membership of the Association shall be open to all district, borough, and city councils in Northern Ireland with all councillors in Northern Ireland welcomed as members of the Association.
- 4.2 Councillors will be invited to participate in and be nominated for relevant regional bodies from the full membership as co-ordinated by the Association.
- 4.3 All councillors will be able to offer views at all times, attend an annual review and an annual conference of the Association.

- 4.4 All councillors can participate in all other regional, sub-regional events co-ordinated by NILGA, including elected member development and training.

5. REPRESENTATION

- 5.1 Each council shall be entitled to be represented at meetings of the Association on the following principles -
- a) Full Members Group - Eight members per council to sit on the Full Members Group with Belfast City Council granted an additional two members reflecting population size.
 - b) The Executive - The number of members per political group to sit on the Executive will be determined on d'Hondt principles as determined by the outcomes of local government election which commenced the electoral period (see also Section 9 on Office Bearers) and ensuring 11 council representation and political balance
- 5.2 Representatives of any council shall not be entitled to attend meetings after May in each year unless the council has paid its subscription in full.
- 5.3 The Chief Executive of each council or their senior designate shall be encouraged to attend in an ex officio capacity at such meetings.
- 5.4 Each political party having five or more representatives on the Association shall appoint a "nominating officer" and identify that person to the Chief Executive of the Association during the calendar month following each local government election.
- 5.5 It shall be the duty of each nominating officer to convey to the Chief Executive of the Association the names of the party's appointees to the Executive Committee and to act for the party in the distribution of appointments to other bodies (see also section 15 on appointments).
- 5.6 Each nominating officer will serve for an electoral period. If a party wishes to change the nominating officer, the alteration can be made at any time by informing the Chief Executive but must be reported to the next Association meeting.

6. MEETINGS

- 6.1 The Annual Meeting of the Association shall be held each year in the month of June at such place and at such time as may be decided by the Association.
- 6.2 The full membership of the Association will meet at least twice yearly.
- 6.3 The Executive Committee will meet at least 10 times per year.
- 6.4 Special meetings may be summoned at any time on the direction of the President and shall be summoned within twenty-one days of a requisition being delivered to the Chief Executive of the Association, signed by at least ten representatives.

6.5 At any meeting of the Association (or any Committee or Sub-Committee thereof) no resolution shall be introduced, or debate permitted on any issue **which bears no relation to the existing functions of, or any possible additional functions of, district councils.**

7. FULL MEMBERS GROUP

7.1 A Full Members' Group shall be formed from members formally nominated by the councils to attend meetings of the Association.

7.2 The Full Members' Group will comprise eight 'full' members sought from each council aside from Belfast, from which ten members shall be sought. These members will be brought together by the Association at least twice per annum to discuss issues affecting councils and/or the role of a councillor.

7.3 Engagement with the Full Members Group in each specific council area will also occur at least twice yearly. This will be open to all councillors and senior officers from that area.

7.4 At least one meeting per year will take place between the NILGA Office Bearers and Chief Executive, and the Chief Executive of each member council.

7.5 The purpose of the Full Members Group is to provide a politically balanced regional 'pool' of members from which NILGA will draw representatives for the NILGA Executive Committee, policy structures, and 'outside bodies'. Members of the Full Members Group will also be key points of communication for NILGA within their member council.

8. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

8.1 It shall be the function of the Executive Committee:

- (i) To agree, following debate and reports, the four-year Corporate Plan, all operations, and a yearly key action plan of the Association.
- (ii) To apply strategic, policy, investment, and other relevant matters on behalf of member councils and receive and act upon initiatives and proposals derived from them.
- (iii) To consider and advise the Association on any matter which the Chief Executive of the Association presents to the Committee.
- (iv) To agree appointments to outside bodies with reference to direction of the nominating officers
- (v) To make recommendations to the Association on any proposal to change the Association's constitution.
- (vi) The two mentor Chief Executives, and the invited PPP members shall be entitled to attend meetings.

- 8.2 The Executive Committee shall be composed of –
- (i) The Office Bearers, Office Bearer alternates, and 23 ordinary members, derived from Full member nominations from member councils.
 - (ii) The Association shall, in conjunction with the regional d’Hondt process and political parties, ensure that two members from each council (three from Belfast) are represented on the Executive (see also clause 5.1)
 - (iii) No less than two Chief Executives drawn from the 11 councils are encouraged to attend in an advice-giving capacity.
- 8.3 Each political party holding at least five seats on the Association shall be entitled to appoint ordinary members to the Executive Committee
- 8.4 The representative principle is that in proportion to the number of seats which are held on the Association that all councils (in accordance with the relevant clause) shall have no less than two members represented.
- 8.5 Representatives on the Political Partnership Panel (PPP) as determined by the relevant statutory instrument, and who are not already NILGA Executive members, shall be invited to attend NILGA’s Executive meetings. It also applies to those on an appropriate alternative central/local government forum. This ensures communication in councils’ interests, at times determined by the Executive & member councils.
- 8.6 In exceptional circumstances, the Association may create the position of President Emeritus for a notable past President. The President Emeritus will be entitled to attend any NILGA meeting, in perpetuity.
- 9. OFFICE BEARERS**
- 9.1 Any political party with five or more representatives on the Association shall nominate an Office Bearer of the Association whose duties will include regional, political leadership and being consulted on issues relevant to the management and policy direction of the Association.
- 9.2 The Office Bearers shall be consulted by officials to facilitate decision making in urgent circumstances or to clarify policy intent.
- 9.3 Public statements made in the name of the Association by the Office Bearers will represent the views of the Association as a whole and not those of any one political group.
- 9.4 An annual meeting shall occur between NILGA Office Bearers and Chairs/Mayors and Chief Executives of constituent councils collectively to seek comments and feedback they may have in relation to any aspect of the ongoing work of NILGA.
- 9.5 The Office Bearers of the Association shall be the President and the Vice-Presidents. They shall continue in office until the appointment of Office Bearers at the next Annual Meeting following local government elections, provided that they relinquish office:
- i. Upon ceasing to be councillors, or
 - ii. Upon ceasing to be representatives of a council on the Association, or

- iii. As the result of a decision by their party, or
- iv. A casual vacancy thus created shall be filled at any meeting of the Association.

9.6 Once they have served 9 years (or two electoral mandate terms), it is best practice that the recommendations of the UK Corporate Governance Code apply, and Office Bearers stand down. The Association will seek to operate this principle other than in the most exceptional circumstances and in consultation with each party nominating officer.

9.7 The Nominating Officer of each party shall designate another Executive member of the Association as a substitute Office Bearer, who shall represent their party in regard to clauses 9.1-9.4 in place of the nominated office-bearer, when required. These members shall represent their party for the electoral period and an alteration can be made as long as it is reported to the next Association meeting.

9.8 Office Bearers and their substitutes must be councillors selected from the full membership of the Association.

9.9 These nominations shall be formally endorsed by the Association at the Annual Meeting.

9.10 At each Annual Meeting one of those so nominated as Office Bearers shall be elected President, with each President serving for one year only within the electoral period, in accordance with the local government electoral cycle.

9.11 The Presidency shall rotate among the political parties and to that end (a) no party may hold the Presidency more than once in any period of four years unless the office has been offered to, and refused by, another party; and (b) each party shall be offered the Presidency in descending order of seat numbers on the Association, as determined in the local government election which commenced the electoral period.

10. FINANCES

10.1 Before the end of each calendar year the Chief Executive of the Association shall submit to a meeting of the Association an estimate of net expenditure for the next financial year.

10.2 The Association's financial year shall end on 31st March following which a statement of accounts, and the Auditor's report thereon, shall be submitted to a meeting of the Association.

10.3 Subscriptions to the Association shall be based on a banded population model, using the most recent NISRA population estimates figures for each council, with subscription amounts specified in February each year.

10.4 Each council shall pay its subscription in full to the Association before the end of April in each year.

10.5 If a council chooses to withdraw from the Association, it will be required to give at least one full year's notice of its intention to do so. (see 12.1 of this constitution for supporting principles and process).

10.6 The Chief Executive of the Association will be the designated Accounting Officer and an Office Bearer selected on an annual basis will be designated as the Treasurer of the Association.

11. AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

11.1 Each council shall be entitled to participate in the audit and risk management work of the Association, including an Audit and Risk Management Committee which shall meet at least twice yearly.

11.2 Membership will consist of 5 councillors drawn from the 11 councils on a cross-party basis. The NILGA Treasurer and Chief Executive will also be in attendance and there should be an independent member recruited in line with recent best practice.

11.3 The purpose of the Audit and Risk Management Committee is to provide to those charged with governance independent assurance on the adequacy of the risk management framework, the internal control environment and the integrity of the financial reporting and governance processes.

12. RESIGNATION OF INDIVIDUAL COUNCILS

12.1 Any member council wishing to terminate its membership of the Association shall give not less than 12 months' notice, in writing, to the Chief Executive of the Association, to expire on 31st March in any year. If a member council intimates notice to terminate its membership in any financial year, the 12-month period of notice will not commence until the first day of the next financial year.

12.2 At the expiration of the period of notice the member council shall cease to be a member of the Association and shall become a past member. At any time until ceasing to be a member council, the member council can withdraw its notice of termination, in which case it shall continue to be a member council.

12.3 Any past member shall, upon ceasing to be a member of the Association: -

- (a) Forfeit all right to and claims upon the Association and its property and funds; and
- (b) Lose any entitlement to any share in the assets of the Association whether on a dissolution or otherwise.

12.4 Any past member shall remain liable for its share of the liabilities of the Association for a period of five years from the date when the past member ceased to be a member of the Association provided this liability was incurred or entered into prior to the date of their termination, the proportion of such liability to be calculated in the same proportion which the subscription paid by that past member bears to the total subscription of the Association in the financial year immediately preceding the date of termination.

12.5 Any liabilities associated specifically with officers and/or employees of the Association in relation to their contractual terms and conditions arising as a result of the dissolution of the Association are explained in 13.3

13. DISSOLUTION

- 13.1 If at any meeting of the full membership a motion for the dissolution of the Association shall be passed by at least two thirds of members from the member councils, where at least seven of such member councils are represented at the meeting, the NILGA Executive, Chief Executive upon request and up to four appointed senior officers from member councils shall realise the assets and pay the liabilities of the Association as a dissolution group. The group shall make arrangements whereby the member councils, both existing and past, shall distribute / discharge the Association's net assets / liabilities.
- 13.2 All member councils shall be entitled to a share in the Association's assets and liabilities on a proportionate basis, to be determined in a schedule drawn up, owned, and agreed by the eleven councils and administered by the group, defining the outcomes associated with any investment coming to the Association and / or its potential cessation.
- 13.3 Any sums which are or may in the future become due and payable specifically to officers and/or employees of the Association, in accordance with the local government terms and conditions of such officers, as stated in the relevant policies of the Association and local government existing at the date of the passing of the motion for dissolution, shall be paid from the Association's assets. Any outstanding balance shall be met by the member councils and administered by the group, in accordance with 13.1 and 13.2 above, and apply to all member councils who are members on or who join the Association after 1st April 2015, including past members.

14. CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND STAFF

- 14.1 There shall be a Chief Executive of NILGA to be appointed with appropriate terms and conditions set by the Association and recruited in line with the principles of equality and diversity. The appointment must be ratified by the Executive Committee.
- 14.2 The Chief Executive can appoint on behalf of the Association other staff as required for the purpose of implementing the Association's aim and objectives upon such terms and conditions as the Chief Executive deems appropriate following consultation with Office Bearers. The Association will be proactive and give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity in how it performs all its functions.
- 14.3 The Association will produce a Pay Policy Statement that will be submitted to the Executive and published on an annual basis.
- 14.4 The staff of the Association will be politically impartial. They will adhere to the principles of integrity, honesty, and objectivity. They will give all groups and members groups equivalent advice, assistance, and support, as resources allow. All staff will ensure that the rules and conventions governing the Association's work are implemented fully and fairly.
- 14.5 Political groups may, with the agreement of the Chief Executive, invite officers of the Association to attend Group meetings to provide information, advice, or confidential briefings on particular matters.
- 14.6 The Association will adopt a Pre-Election Publicity Protocol to ensure the period between the notice of an election and its commencement should avoid proactive publicity in all its forms of candidates and other politicians involved directly in the election. Publicity in this period

should not deal with controversial issues or report views, proposals, or recommendations in such a way that identifies them with individual members or groups of members.

15. APPOINTMENTS

- 15.1 The Chief Executive shall maintain a register of outside bodies to which the Association has a right of appointment, and shall record in it, details of appointments made.
- 15.2 The distribution of appointments by the nominating officers shall be on the d'Hondt system.
- 15.3 Appointments to outside bodies will be for an electoral period. Casual vacancies may be filled at any meeting of the Association.

16. POLICY STRUCTURES

- 16.1 The Association can establish sub groups, networks and/or task and finish groups as it sees fit to consider issues of importance to local government at any time ensuring appropriate regional and cross party political representation so far as is possible.
- 16.2 Any Chair and Vice Chair of any groups identified at 16.1 will be determined using the d'Hondt system and appointed by NILGA.
- 16.4 The work of all sub groups, networks and/or task and finish groups should be reported back to councils and the NILGA Executive Committee on a regular basis and all substantive decisions will be brought forward as recommendations to councils and NILGA as appropriate.
- 16.5 Regular review of any sub groups, networks and/or task and finish groups will take place on an annual basis to ensure that they are relevant, timely and add value.

17. AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION

- 17.1 This Constitution may be amended at any time by the Association on the recommendation of the Executive Committee if the recommendation is passed by at least two-thirds of the representatives present and voting at the quorate meeting of the Association, including formal consultation with all member councils.
- 17.2 Amendments to the constitution can only be considered at the Annual Meeting of the Association or a Special Meeting of the Association in accordance with clauses 6.1 and 6.4.

ITEM 15**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	22 February 2022
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	14 February 2023
File Reference	CG 12172
Legislation	Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Subject	Notices of Motion
Attachments	Notices of Motion - Status Report

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. Please note that as each motion is dealt with it will be removed from the report.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council notes the report.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS UPDATE – FEBRUARY 2023

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
31/05/15	Permanent recognition of Rory McIlroy in Holywood	Councillor Muir	24/06/15	Corporate Services Committee – October 2015	Agreed	June 2022	Update sought at Jan 22 Council – To be reported to CSC in June 2022. Further report to follow in 2023.
21/1/19	Shelter at slipway in Donaghadee	Councillor Brooks & Cllr Smith	Council – January 2019	Environment Committee	Agreed	TBC	
25/9/19	Report on feasibility of holding annual remembrance service for those lost to suicide	Councillor Martin	Council – October	Corporate Services – November 2019	Agreed	Reported to CSC January 2020. Further report to come	On draft agenda for CSC March 2023.

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
						back. (September 2022).	
16/01/20	Closing of a public right of way at Andrew Shorefield, Groomsport	Alderman Keery	Council – January 2020	Corporate Committee – February 2020	Agreed	Reported to CSC in March and October 2020. Further report to come back (September 2022).	On draft agenda for CSC March 2023.
20.10.20	"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	Councillor Brooks	Council October 2020	Community & Wellbeing Committee – December 2020	Agreed	TBC	Officers to liaise with Regeneration and consideration of Masterplan and also take into account play strategy local consultation when it takes place in

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	garden, both should be considered as options in the report. The process should involve consultation with the local community."						Donaghadee and bring back a report thereafter.
19 April 2021	Flying of Union Flag on all Council buildings and war memorials all year round. Flags at half mast on death of any monarch or any other member of the Royal Family or Prime Minister of the UK for the period of mourning.	Councillor Cooper	Council April 2021	Corporate Committee – September 2021	NOM as amended agreed at March 2022 Council	CSC - October/Nov 2022	Council January 2023 – Decision called-in and to be reported back at next possible Council meeting.
10 May 2021	That officers are tasked to bring back a Report on how the Council might approach a Climate Change Action Plan and perhaps including - but not limited to - a review of all Council long-term investment, a Borough-wide engagement via an Innovation Lab, a	Councillors Walker & Egan	23 June 2021	Environment Committee – October 2021 (deferred from September Committee)	Agreed	TBC	

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	Conference of Ideas, and values-based recommendations for next steps.						
20.10.2021	That officers bring back a report to consider the option of transferring responsibility for bins which are currently the responsibility of the Parks Section into the Environment Directorate.	Alderman McIlveen & Councillor Cathcart	Council November 2021	Community & Wellbeing December 2021	Agreed	Report to C&WC April 2022. Report to October 2022 C&WC	Further consideration by officers, update report to March 2023 C&W Committee
3.11.2021	That this Council, in liaison with the Department for Infrastructure, will seek permission for and explore a source of funding in order to make an artistic feature of the steps which lead from Princetown Road to Queen's Parade at Bangor seafront as part of Bangor Town regeneration, and	Councillor Douglas & Alderman Wilson	Council November 2021	Regeneration & Development December 2021	Agreed	June P&P Committee	Urban Team working up a scheme which will be forwarded to DfI for approval.

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	brings back a report to Council addressing how this can be achieved as a pilot for the Borough.						
31.12.21	Coastal and Storm Damage to Ballywalter Harbour, repair costs and reinstatement costs	Councillors Adair and Edmund	Council January 22	Environment February 2022	Agreed	TBC	Report to be brought back.
09.03.22	Calls for Council responsibility for a devolved Regeneration Budget	Councillor Walker and Alderman McDowell	Council -March 22	Regeneration and Development Committee – April 22	Agreed	Reported to Oct R&D Committee and ratified by Oct Council	Report to P&P Feb 23 – to be ratified by Council.
13.04.22	Environmental damage caused by modern day packaging	Councillors McRandal and Douglas	Council – April 2022	Environment Committee – June 2022	Agreed - ratified by June Council		Report to be brought back - TBC.
14.04.22	Locking up schedule for Playparks	Alderman Irvine and Alderman Keery	Council – April 2022	Community & Wellbeing Committee May 2022	Agreed (to be ratified by April Council)	Report to Oct 2022 C&WC	Local Consultation now underway by officers and further report to be brought back

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
							to future C&W Committee when complete for members consideration on next steps.
10.05.22	Discussions with EA re redevelopment of the play area fronting Victoria Primary School as a potential Peace Plus project for Ballywalter	Councillors Adair and Edmund	Council – May 2022	Community and Wellbeing June 2022	Agreed (to be ratified at June Council)	Reported to Nov 2022 CWC	Report to February CWC
17.05.22	2028 Centenary of the internationally renowned Ards TT races. Asking Council how best to commemorate this important sporting anniversary.	Alderman McIlveen and Councillor Kennedy	Council – May 2022	Community and Wellbeing June 2022	Agreed (to be ratified at June Council)	TBC	Officers considering report to be brought back to future Committee

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
19.05.2022	Business case for redesign of the parallel sports pitches and facilities at Park Way, Comber	Councillors Cummings and Johnson	Council – June 2022	Community and Wellbeing Committee – September 2022 – deferred to October 2022		TBC	Officers considering report to be brought back to future Committee.
20.06.2022	Review of health and safety process re community groups	Councillors MacArthur, Brooks, T Smith and Kennedy	Council – June 2022	Corporate Services Committee – Sept 2022 - deferred to October 2022	Agreed	Ratified at October Council	Further report to follow.
20.06.2022	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.	Councillor Greer and Councillor McKee	Council – June 2022	Corporate Services Committee – Sept 2022 – deferred to October 2022	Agreed	Ratified at October Council	Further report to follow.
21.06.2022	Engagement with relevant community stakeholders to ascertain community need and desires in respect of the Queen's Leisure Complex	Councillors Kendall, McRandal and McClean	Council - June 2022	Community and Wellbeing Committee – September 2022 – deferred to October 2022		TBC	Officers considering report to be brought back

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
							to future Committee
5.07.2022	<p>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.</p> <p>*** Amendment Received from Councillor Cathcart</p> <p>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</p>	Alderman Irvine & Keery	Council – July 2022	<p>Environment Committee - September 2022</p> <p>Referred to Corporate Services Committee</p>	Amdt agreed.		<p>Sept 2022 - Recommendation to Council that item is referred to Corporate Services Committee and report to be brought to a future meeting - TBC</p>

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	Bangor being a Platinum Jubilee City.						
19.07.2022	<p>This Council notes with concern that a number of planted trees in urban settings along roads which have died or have been removed but not replaced; Notes the importance of environmental and social benefits of such trees in the built environment;</p> <p>Notes that DfI Roads formerly had a partnership arrangement with Belfast parks for the replacement of trees but that this partnership ended some time ago;</p> <p>That Council officers are tasked with opening discussions with DfI Roads</p>	Alderman McIlveen & Councillor Cathcart	Council – July 2022	Community and Wellbeing Committee – September 2022 Deferred to October 2022		TBC	Meeting with DfI Roads and DAERA to be organised. Officers will bring back a report thereafter.

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	and DAERA with a view to exploring the possibility of a partnership which will involve the supply and replacement of lost trees in the Borough and then providing a report to Council for further consideration.						
29.6.2022	That this Council notes with concern the significant impact rising energy costs are having on households across Northern Ireland; recognises the need for ongoing intervention from every level of Government and agrees to write to Her Majesty's Treasury to impress upon them in the absence of a functioning Northern Ireland Executive the need to urgently deliver the energy bills support scheme to households here.	Councillor P Smith and Councillor Smart	Council – August 2022	Agreed to accept NOM to be heard at Council and amended to include: This Council also resolves to write to the Dept. for Communities to request a special fund for Councils in relation to the Cost-of-Living crisis in order to-	Letters sent from CEx to SoS and Minister – response from DfC received 27 Oct.	Report to December 2022 C&W Committee Report to January Council	Report to February C&W

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
				<p>a. provide for the direct provision of localised responses; and</p> <p>b. assist local community and voluntary organisations</p> <p>Any such support would be additional to that provided by the Westminster Government and at Northern Ireland level.</p>			
29.07.2022	That this council withdraws all funding to any sporting organisations with any political objectives or named references to terrorism in	Cllrs Cooper, T Smith and Councillor Irvine	Council – August 2022	Corporate Committee – September 2022 – deferred to October 2022	Agreed with amdt	TBC	Officers to discuss with stakeholders report to future C&W

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	their constitution, club names, stadiums or competitions, and tasks officers to bring back a report outlining the specific relevant council policy.						
14.08.2022	That this council notes the widespread move to low traffic neighbourhoods in city centres across the UK and Europe and tasks officers with producing a report detailing the steps involved in progressing a project for Bangor City Centre. The report should highlight the benefits that a low traffic neighbourhood can bring, including how it could support the Council's ambitions to revive local retail and hospitality, encourage active travel,	Alderman Wilson and Councillor Douglas	Council August 2022	Corporate Committee – September 2022 – deferred to October 2022	Agreed	TBC	Further report to follow, to future Environment Committee meeting

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	support families, and play a positive role in tackling climate change. A preliminary consultation should also take place to obtain views and ideas directly from City Centre businesses, residents, and other relevant stakeholders.						
22.08.22	Street Clutter Audit for the Borough	Councillor Dunlop and Councillor Douglas	September 2022	Environment Committee – October 2022	Agreed	Reported to October 2022 EC Committee	Letter sent to Minister at DfI – update report to be brought to future meeting
14.09.22	Care Workers and Penalty Charge Notices for Parking	Councillor Cathcart and Councillor Gilmour	September 2022	Corporate Services Committee – October 2022 - deferred to November 2022		To be considered at CSC November 2022	Response to NOM to be taken at CSC in February 2023
19.09.22	Establishment of an Animal Abuse Register for the Borough and write to the	Councillor T Smith and	September 2022	Environment Committee October 2022	Agreed	Reported to October 2022 EC Committee	Update report to be brought

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	DAERA Minister to ask for the introduction of Lucy's Law and Reggie's Law for Northern Ireland.	Councillor Cooper Amendment received from Councillor Woods					to future meeting
21.09.22	Humane control of Pigeons in Conway Square, Newtownards	Alderman McIlveen and Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	September 2022	Environment Committee 2022	Agreed	Reported to October 2022 EC Committee	Update report to be brought to future meeting
21.09.22	That this Council notes with concern the situation regarding Priory Surgery, with the potential of services ceasing from February 2023 affecting over 14,000 patients across Bangor West and Holywood. We ask that this Council calls for a deputation from the Department of Health	Councillor McRandal and Alderman Wilson and Councillor Irwin	October 2022	Corporate Services Committee – November 2022	Agreed	January 2023	DoH, BMA & Royal College of GPs non-attendance at January 2023 committee. To be rescheduled. Announcement made that the SE Trust will take on

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	and British Medical Association alongside the Royal College of Surgeons to discuss options for the practice should partners not be found to take over the contract. Given the urgency of the situation, this should happen at the earliest possible opportunity.						running of the surgeries until GP partners can be found.
12.10.22	In light of the fact that the Coronation of King Charles III will take place on 6 May 2023, this Council tasks officers to make provision for community celebrations across the Ards and North Down Borough Council area, and tasks them to allow for this in the forthcoming rate setting process.	Councillor MacArthur and Councillor Gilmour	October 2022	Corporate Services Committee – November 2022		Report to January Council	Report to February C&W

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
17.10.22	<p>This this Council reviews its policies in relation to the Northern Ireland Protocol; Provides a list to Members of what measures are currently undertaken in the implementation of that Protocol;</p> <p>Highlights which of these measures being taken by the Council are obligatory and which are discretionary;</p> <p>And in the meantime, ceases actions which relate to the now expired Service Level Agreement with Causeway Coast and Glens Council and reverts to actions undertaken pre-Service Level Agreement.</p>	Alderman McIlveen and Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	October 2022	N/A	Heard and Agreed at Council October 2022	Report to January Council	Further discussions taking place regarding enforcement policy and a further report may follow depending on the outcome of these.

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	Council requests that officers action these matters with due urgency in order that Members may take any necessary actions without undue delay.						
9.11.22	That Council task officers to work with The National Trust to source external funding to develop and regenerate the Car Park at both Glastry Clay Pits & Knockinelder Bay for the benefit of residents and tourists alike in seeking to deliver the Councils Tourism Strategy for the Ards Peninsula	Councillors Adair & Thompson	November 2022	Environment Committee - December 2022 Heard at R&D Dec 2022	Agreed	Sept P&P Committee	
10.11.22	That this Council requests officers bring back a report on the possibility of serving an Urgent Works Notice on the owners of Ballyrolly House, Millisle, in light of its status as	Councillors Irwin and McAlpine	November 2022	Planning Committee - December 2022 - Not heard.	NOT AGREED	Feb Planning Committee	No action to be taken

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	a Grade B2 listed building which is in a perilous state.						
16.11.22	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.	Alderman McIlveen & Councillor Cummings	November 2022	Community & Wellbeing - December 2022	Agreed	-	Officers considering report to be brought back to future C&W
24.11.22	That Council task officers to bring forward a report on options and potential funding opportunities to enhance and improve Council Football Pitches at Abbey Road Millisle to	Councillors Thompson & Adair	December 2022	Community & Wellbeing Committee – January 2023	Agreed		Officers investigating funding opportunities and considering report to be

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	ensure they can be used and enjoyed by the local sporting clubs and community of Millisle,						brought back to future C&W
09.12.22	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.	Councillors Douglas & Walker	December 2022	Corporate Services Committee – January 2023	Agreed		Report to come back to CSC.

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
13.12.22	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	Councillors Cathcart and MacArthur	December 2022	Environment Committee – January 2023	Agreed	TBC	

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	<p>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>						

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
13.12.22	That this council supports all NHS staff who provide unstinting and unwavering service and will write to all trusts in Northern Ireland assuring them of our support for their industrial action and their objectives of safe staffing levels and adequate remuneration in the current cost of living crisis, in line with other government and council employees.	Councillors S Irvine & Cooper	December 2022	Corporate Services Committee – January 2023	Agreed		Letters to Trade Unions and responses to be reported back - TBC
08.12.22	This Council acknowledges the environmental and health benefits associated with the recent increase in cycling and declares Ards & North Down a cycling friendly borough. The Council also recognises that people who cycle are	Alderman Wilson & Councillor Douglas (Postponed from Dec	January 2023	Community and Wellbeing Committee – February 2023			

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	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	Council to Jan Council)					
07.12.22	That this Council values the contributions and opinions of our younger residents and works to engage with them to ensure we represent their views alongside those of other sectors in our community. Officers are tasked to identify at least one issue during 2023 for full consultation with Youth	Councillors Walker & Irwin (Postponed from December Council due to another NOM)	January 2023	Community and Wellbeing – February 2023			

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	Voice and subsequently provide a report outlining possible roadmaps that might lead to the development of a Youth Council. Additionally, this Council agrees to extend an invitation to Youth Voice to make a deputation to outline the work they are undertaking.						
	Building on the practice of other council areas, that this council tasks officers to liaise with DfI Roads as a matter of urgency to offer its assistance in providing self-service grit piles for residents and to post locations of such grit piles on the council website	Alderman McIlveen & Councillor Cathcart	January 2023	Environment Committee – February 2023			

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
24.11.22	That this Council notes its declaration of a climate emergency in 2018 and the passage of the Climate Change Act 2022; agrees the need to reduce emissions to ensure happy and healthy communities and engages with community and government partners with the aim of piloting 'car free' days in our City, towns and villages.	Councillors Woods & Dunlop (Resubmitted from December Council meeting)	January 2023	Corporate Services Committee – February 2023			To be considered at CSC in February.
08.01.23	That this Council writes to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Infrastructure expressing concern that the provision of a footpath at Shore Road Ballyhalbert is currently not considered a priority by the	Councillors Adair & Edmund	January 2023	Place & Prosperity – February 2023	Agreed to adopt Notice of Motion, and that Council asks in its response if	When DfI response received	Subject to ratification at Feb Council – write to DfI and bring response back when received

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	Department following the completion of a feasibility study which demonstrated need. That the Council highlights the road safety concerns raised by residents for pedestrians using the Shore Road from the village to the residential developments including Park Homes and St Andrew's. That Council requests that the Department for Infrastructure makes the installation of a footpath a priority and commits to deliver the scheme as a matter of urgency.				consideration has been given to an alternative route along the green area at the back of the houses that would come out at High Street. Subject to ratification at Feb Council		
17.01.2023	This Council supports local residents who have started a petition which calls for a pedestrian crossing on Moat Street, Donaghadee, near to	Councillors T Smith and Brooks	January 2023	Corporate Services Committee – February 2023			To be considered at CSC in February.

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	the Spar store. This road can be extremely busy and residents have real safety concerns when trying to cross it. Not only do many people use this area to cross to shop at the Spar store, others need to cross the road to get children to and from the local schools. This Council will write to the Department of Infrastructure and call on them to listen to local residents, take on board their concerns and take the necessary steps to install a pedestrian crossing in this vicinity.						
17.01.2023	This Council notes its previous sponsorship of the Community Asset Transfer request from Branch Out Community Group and welcomes the agreement	Councillor Moore and Alderman McDowell	January 2023	Community and Wellbeing Committee – February 2023			

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	from Dfl to lease the woodland area to the group for 1 year. Officers will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write to Dfl to express council's support for the work of Branch Out on the Dfl-owned site and how it complements The Big Plan for Ards and North Down. • Write to the EA to express council's support for their work on the EA-owned site, adjacent to the woodland. • Bring back a report, identifying what can be offered to support the work of Branch Out including, but not limited to, providing advice, support, equipment and finance. • Engage directly with Branch Out to identify what support is needed. 						

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
12.01.2023	This Council honours the 50th Anniversary of the UDR CGC Greenfinches following the introduction of the Ulster Defence Regiment Bill in July 1973, which permitted the recruitment of women into the regiment, recognising those who joined within the Borough, and brings back a report to outline how the Corporate Services Committee can work with local UDR Associations along with other relevant bodies to support anniversary events in the Borough.	Councillor Cummings and Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	January 2023	Corporate Services Committee – February 2023			To be considered at CSC in February.
18.01.2023	The prolonged cold weather spells just before Christmas and last week resulted in icy, slippery, and dangerous footpaths and car parks in	Councillors Morgan and McRandal	January 2023	Environment Committee – February 2023			

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	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.						



**Minutes of the 497th Meeting
of the Northern Ireland Housing Council held on
Thursday 12th January 2023 at 10 am via Zoom**

Present

Cllr Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Chair)
Cllr Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough (Vice Chair)
Cllr Victoria Moore	Ards & North Down Borough
Ald Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
Ald Adrian McQuillan	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough
Ald Allan Bresland	Derry & Strabane Borough
Ald Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City
Cllr Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough
Ald Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough
Cllr Michael Ruane	Newry, Mourne & Down District

In Attendance:

Paul Price	Director of Social Housing Policy & Oversight, Department for Communities
David Polley	Director, Housing Supply Policy, Department for Communities
Grainia Long	Chief Executive, NIHE
Valerie Crozier	NI Water Service
Davy McGrath	NI Water Service
Fiona Neilan	Project Manager, NIHE
Kelly Cameron	Secretary (NIHE Secretariat)

Apologies:

Cllr Micky Murray	Belfast City Council
-------------------	----------------------

1.	<p><u>Welcome</u></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Paul Price and David Polley from the Department for Communities and from the Housing Executive, Grainia Long</p> <p>She also welcomed the Presenters, Valerie Crozier and Davy McGrath both from the Water Service and Fiona Neilan from the Housing Executive.</p> <p>The Chair also welcomed the new representatives for Ards & North Down, Councillor Victoria Moore to her first meeting of the Housing Council.</p> <p>Alderman Nicholl thanked Members for their sincere wishes during his recent illness.</p>	Secretary
2.	<p><u>Declarations of Interest</u></p> <p>No declarations were received.</p>	

3.	<p><u>To adopt the Minutes of the 496th Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday, 8th December 2022</u></p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Mark Cooper seconded by Cllr A McQuillan and resolved, that the Minutes of the 496th Meeting of the Housing Council held on Thursday 8th December 2022 be approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Matters Arising from the Minutes</u></p> <p>Matters arising were dealt with through the Meeting.</p>	
5.	<p><u>Forward Workplan</u></p> <p>The forward workplan was noted.</p>	
6.	<p><u>Report from Grainia Long, Chief Executive, Housing Executive</u></p> <p>The Report provided the Housing Council with a monthly update summarising a range of strategic, major or routine matters, including any emerging issues. A summary of the current / emerging issues are outlined as follows:-</p> <p>6.1 Industrial Relations</p> <p>Councillor Cooper requested further details the percentage figures in monetary terms for the lower grade workers. It was agreed that a presentation on the Housing Executive's Pay Grading and Review would be arranged for a future Meeting.</p> <p>6.2 Review of Damp & Mould following Awaab Ishak inquest</p> <p>Councillor Cooper referred to 5 cases presented to him within the last couple of months in the Monkstown area with severe damp issues, his main concern was the timeframe of 2/3 months for an Independent Damp Surveyor's report to be issued.</p> <p>Several Members expressed concern in relation to private landlords and their properties not always up to the required standard. The Chair added that some properties also being used as 'emergency accommodation' are not up to standard and asked if there was an opportunity to terminate these leases.</p> <p>Mr Polley confirmed that the Housing Executive are not responsible for private rented tenancies and he undertook to provide Members with related links from NI direct on the rules and regulations for the private rented sector.</p> <p>Ms Long urged Members that if there are any specific properties that Members feel are of inadequate standard properties should be brought to the Housing Executive's attention.</p> <p>Members recognise that the Housing Executive properties are ageing and investment into the stock is required, in particular referred to single window glazed properties and air circulation management can often be an issue causing condensation.</p>	<p>KC</p> <p>D Polley</p> <p>All</p>

	<p>Members requested if the Housing Council could feed into the review and to contribute with their views.</p> <p>Agreed that a presentation on the final report on the Review of Damp & Mould would be arranged for a future Meeting.</p> <p>6.3 Ark Housing Association, Derrytrasna - New Build Property Addition & Allocation issue</p> <p>6.4 Green End, Rathcoole (incident on Friday 7 October 2022) NIHE Revitalisation Programme - Progress Update</p> <p>6.5 Corporate Plan</p> <p>6.6 NIHE - Asset Management Strategy</p> <p>6.7 Sustainable Development Strategy Update</p> <p>6.8 Contribution to the Development of the NI Climate Action Plan</p> <p>6.9 Implementation of the NIHE Cost of Living Plan</p> <p>6.10 Future Working Practices and Accommodation Strategy</p> <p>6.11 Ongoing Engagement with Political Parties and other stakeholders</p> <p>6.12 Fundamental Review of Allocations (FRA)</p> <p>6.13 Bonfires</p> <p>6.14 Ukrainian Resettlement Programme</p> <p>6.15 Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation</p> <p>G Long undertook to have Deborah Reid contact Councillor Mark Cooper, in order for him to explain exactly the statistical information on a rolling basis, he is looking for in relation to homelessness and to include the total number of homelessness in Northern Ireland at this time.</p> <p>D Polley undertook to provide Members with links to Homelessness statistics.</p> <p>6.16 Review of Muckamore Abbey Hospital Resettlement</p> <p>6.17 Review of Disabled Facilities Grants</p> <p>6.18 Finlock Gutters and Contribution to Costs by Homeowners</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>G Long</p> <p>D Polley</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><u>Presentation by the Water Service</u></p> <p>Valerie Crozier and Davy McGrath gave a presentation (Copies of the Slides are appended to these Minutes – Appendix A). Members had asked for reassurance that on the tactical solution of separating foul and storm water, but in particular the separation of storm water, and how it could be made sure this in itself didn't pollute watercourses if it was going straight and un-treated into them. A detailed presentation was given on the challenges and economic</p>	

	<p>constraints NI Water Service are facing and how the NI Water are addressing capacity issues and financial constraints, the way forward and the new process which are being put in place to tackle the issues.</p> <p>The clear message to Members that prior to any development in their area, the water service is the first point of contact to ensure the proposed infrastructure has the capabilities for the area.</p> <p>It was confirmed that some Housing Association properties have Rainwater Harvesting projects, for the collection and storage rain.</p> <p>Alderman Speers referred to mixed Storm & Sewer systems in the Markethill area and asked how they are going to deal with these systems. He referred to an environmental scheme being developed in Richill and he was disappointed that NI Water weren't willing to attend meetings to create an infrastructure for future residents to avail of and felt it was a failure of NI Water not tackle the storm and foul which is creating a huge issue in developments. He felt that an investment is being carried out in an area, a detailed programme should be in place to ensure a sewage capacity.</p> <p>Mr McGrath agreed that there is an issue with the amalgamated storm and sewage system Pre 1970's. Mr McGrath undertook to contact Alderman Speers directly in relation to specific queries in his area.</p> <p>Ms Crozier confirmed that NI Water works closely with local Councils and attend meetings annually in relation to their Council Development Plans.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Ms Crozier and Mr McGrath for a very informative Presentation.</p>	D McGrath /J Speers
8.	<p><u>Presentation on the Housing Executive's Fundamental Review of Allocations</u></p> <p>Due to time constraints, it was agreed that this presentation would be postponed until the February Meeting.</p>	Secretary
9.	<p>The following three papers had been requested at the last Meeting, were circulated for Members information.</p> <p>9.1 <u>Homeless Statistics by Local Council Area</u></p> <p>9.2 <u>SHDP Schemes expected to start in 2023</u></p> <p>9.3 <u>Affordable Warmth Scheme Statistics</u></p> <p>The above papers were noted.</p>	
10.	<p><u>Housing Starts – December 2022</u></p> <p>The Report was noted.</p>	

11.	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>11.1 <u>Housing Council Membership 2023</u></p> <p>Paper was noted.</p> <p>11.2 <u>Housing Council Meetings during 2023</u></p> <p>Paper was noted.</p> <p>11.3 <u>Central Housing Forum Annual Community Conference titled 'the Cost of Living'</u></p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Mark Cooper and seconded by Cllr Anne-Marie Fitzgerald to sponsoring and supporting the Conference on 23rd February 2023 in Girdwood Community Hub.</p> <p>The Secretary undertook to confirm the terms of sponsoring this event.</p>	Secretary
12.	<p><u>Date of next Meeting</u></p> <p>The next Housing Council Meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 9th February 2023 at 10 am in the Housing Centre or via Zoom,</p>	

The Meeting concluded at 12.30 pm

Appendix A



Northern Ireland Housing Council 12th January 2023

Valerie Crozier – Stakeholder Manager - Asset Delivery Directorate
David McGrath – Head of Developer Services - Customer & Operations Directorate



NI Water: Vital Infrastructure



Capital Expenditure Overview: PC15 vs PC21



Our PC21 Capital Plan requires approx. £2.2bn of critical capital investment over the 6 year period.

The £2.2bn capital investment is divided between the following service areas:

- Sewerage Provision = ca £1,100M
- Planned/Reactive Maintenance = ca£450M
- Water Provision = ca£170M
- Capital Programme Running Cost = ca £330M
- Planning for the future & M&G = ca£200M



PC21 Final Determination



- PC21 FD published on 13th May 2021
- Company Acceptance 6th July 2021
- Focus moving immediately to funding the FD

Final Determination Highlights

- NI Water Efficiency Journey Recognised
 - Challenged to reduce annual operating costs by £15.4M
 - **Overall Opex £1.3bn**
- Enhanced Capital Investment Need Recognised
 - Delivering £117M of capital efficiency
 - **Overall Capex £2.2bn**



Key Challenges for NI Water



Why do we have Capacity Constraints?

- Legacy of chronic underinvestment in our wastewater infrastructure
 - Insufficient biological / hydraulic capacity at our treatment works i.e. WWTW operate at or over their design PE (population equivalent)
 - Significant Wastewater network capacity issues due to Unsatisfactory Intermittent Discharges UIDs, DG5s (internal flooding and external flooding)
 - Some Water capacity issues also exist, with more developing.
 - generally less significant for planning than Wastewater capacity issues
- The image shows a decorative graphic of overlapping blue and teal shapes at the bottom right of the page.

Consequences of New Connections to Overloaded Sewers



Unsatisfactory Intermittent Discharges (UIDs)



Out of Sewer Flooding



Internal Property Flooding

Physical Evidence of Pollution from Sewers: Aquatic Environments



Development Constraints – Current Situation



- Estimated – over **100** economically constrained areas in NI impacting local development
- We plan to address **49** of these in PC21 (subject to funding and statutory approvals)
- A further **30** constrained areas may arise during PC21 (2021 – 2027)
- **> 80%** of properties in NI affected by wastewater capacity constraints

How is NI Water addressing Capacity issues and their associated Economic Constraints?

Two level approach:

Strategic level

- Identified that sustained investment is needed for 12-18 years to address the historic under investment in our wastewater systems
e.g. Living With Water Programme
- We received a £2.2 billion Final Determination on our PC21 business plan
(First 2 years of the PC21 capital programme funded - need multi-year ring fenced funding; Need for security of energy funding for PC21)
- NI Water advocates the strategic phasing of land as part of the Local Development Planning process and that it is cognisant of infrastructure investment and lead times

Tactical level

- We have designed and constructed, Developer led and financed solutions, on a bespoke site by site basis. These options are being continually refined.

What is NI Water doing to address the Economic Constraints Problem?

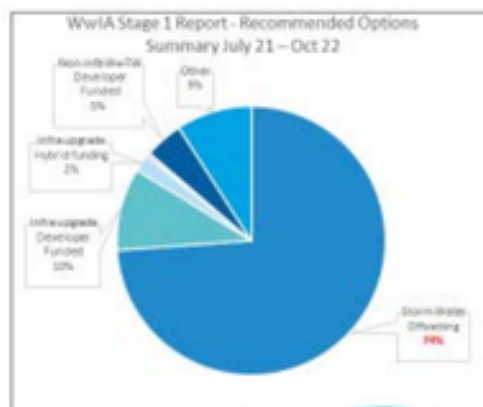
Two level approach:

- **Strategic level**- capital investment as previously noted
- **Tactical level** - we have designed and implemented, Developer led and financed solutions, on a bespoke site by site basis. These options are being further refined.

A Development Constraints Project Team has been put in place which provides:

- Additional resource (internal + external)
- New processes and procedures (Pre Planning)
- New responses to planning requests
- **Early two way dialog and engagement** continues between all stakeholders
- **Solutions Engineering Team is fundamental**

New Processes – Pre Planning



Solution Engineering Prioritisation Checklist

Item	Requirement	Risk
1	Capital Works scheme to fix the issue within the catchment.	Risk that the Capital Works scheme, if planned, is delayed, cancelled or not aligned to Developer's programme. Proposal will be time dependent. Any planned Capital Scheme programme must align with developer programme.
2	Dev/fully/partial funded capital scheme to fix the issue within the catchment.	Any developer funded capital scheme will be cost dependant and subject to a financial feasibility assessment in comparison with size of planned development. Mechanism as to how Developer actually pays NIW for this being investigated – may need Legislative change.
3	Phased development	Risk that there is no solution to allow the phased development to proceed after the initial phase allowance. Risk that any planned solution to allow the other phases of the development to connect is delayed or cancelled.
4	Storm offsets – within the site	No detriment solution approach has been agreed with NEA and is constantly reviewed. Risk that assumption of what was going into the combined system in the past from the site is incorrect. Risk that the site has been derelict for an extended period and the no detriment solution is therefore not viable. It is already a prerequisite of any new development to separate out storm flow.
5	Storm offsets – outside the site	Zero detriment solution (no deterioration of a performance threshold) approach has been agreed with NEA. Large developments may pose a risk of too much storm being removed from the catchment causing odour or operational issues within the system.

Solution Engineering Prioritisation Checklist c'ont

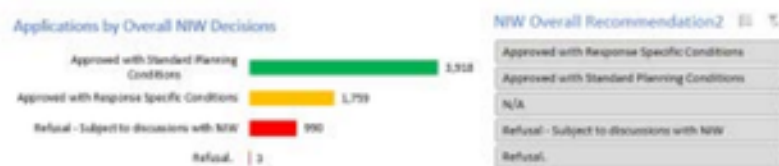
Solution	
Accommodation Works within Catchment to divert flows	Investigate whether there is any solution to divert flows within the catchment to another area of catchment with capacity, to free space for the development.
New gravity sewer or pump away	New gravity sewer or pumping arrangement to point in the sub catchment or other parts of the catchment / different catchment where there is capacity. Details around how this is delivered and who pays need to be agreed.
Flow attenuation and release during low flow – smart networks	Likely that a model will be required to carry out the detailed assessment required to assess the viability of this solution. Risk that no model exists. Use of emerging technologies that needs to be fully understood and integrated into NIW systems
Dedicated waste water treatment works for the site/s sites provided by the developer/s.	Risk of NI Water having to adopt an increasing sprawl of minor WwTW across Northern Ireland or that they are not constructed to an adoptable standard and pollute the environment. One WwTW per site only and if there are multiple developer they should be encouraged to work collaboratively.
Development of a De-minimis approach	Risk that this facilitates uncontrolled development. On a catchment by catchment basis this could prove successful but will require oversight and control Need significant buy-in from other agencies and Councils

34

NI Water Planning Responses

- **Unconditional Approval:** NI Water is satisfied that the development proposal may be served.
- **Conditional Approval:** NI Water is satisfied that the development proposal may be served subject to identified Conditions e.g. Belfast WwTW no connection to the network prior to completion of Phase 0 July 2023
- **Refusal:** NIW has established detriment risk which may not be resolved by Condition
 - Developer advised to contact NI Water to establish if an alternative solution can be identified to serve the site, with the option that subject to a positive outcome the recommendation could be re-considered (majority of recommended refusals fall into this category)
 - Where **zero detriment** is unachievable, for example where statutory nuisance is likely or non-compliance with a PPC permit, then a recommendation to refuse will be returned to the Planning Authority.

NI Water Planning Responses – April 2021 to December 2022 Total 6,671



Development Constraints & The Way Forward

- Decades of historic under-investment in the wastewater network has resulted in Economic Constraints.
- Decades of sustained investment will be needed to remove the constraints and enable development and growth without further pollution to the environment (12 – 18+ years.)
- We are committed to maximising the infrastructure we have:
 - Early engagement via Pre-Development Enquiries is essential
 - Robust planning responses, with conditions are necessary
 - **Use of Developer led and financed solutions, noting budgetary implications.**
- NI Executive sets NI Water's level of investment.

How can others help with capacity challenges?

Future Planning

- Security of Funding
- Engage with NI Water on constraints and the zoning of new land for development and phasing of its release
- More foresight of proposed areas for development
- Closer liaison between all parties
 - new housing/schools etc.

New Standards

- Water/energy efficient homes
- Review housing design standards
 - Water efficiency mark
 - Water consumption targets
 - Water efficient showers/toilets
 - Rainwater harvesting
 - SuDs, including soft & small-scale SuDs



Summary

- Without sustained, adequate investment our society will have to choose between **environmental protection** and **economic development**
- Engagement with public and private developers on engineering solutions to address constraints over the short/medium term
- NI Executive must secure the funding necessary to deliver the investment in Water and Wastewater required for NI
- NI needs continued investment funding in critical infrastructure





CHAIR
Councillor Anne-Marie Fitzgerald

The Housing Centre
 2 Adelaide Street
 Belfast BT2 8P8

T: (028) 9598 2752
 E: kelly.cameron@nihe.gov.uk
 W: nihousingcouncil.org

343

FEBRUARY HOUSING COUNCIL BULLETIN

The Northern Ireland Housing Council met on Thursday, 9th February 2023 at 10.00 am in the Boardroom, the Housing Centre of via Conference Call.

For Information, a report of the attendance is undernoted:-

Present

Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Chair)
Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough (Vice Chair)
Victoria Moore	Ards & North Down Borough
Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
Micky Murray	Belfast City
Amanda Grehan	Lisburn & Castlereagh City
Allan Bresland	Derry City & Strabane District
Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough
Michael Ruane	Newry & Mourne District

Apologies

Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough
Adrian McQuillan	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough

Discussions on the undernoted matters took place as follows:-

Report from Paul Price & David Polley from the Department for Communities on the Housing Top Issues.

A summary of the current / emerging issues are outlined **as follows**:-

- Social Newbuild starts
- Co-ownership
- Programme for Social Reform
- Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy
- Housing Executive's House Sales Scheme
- Supporting People Delivery Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Regulation of the Private Rented Sector
- Increasing Housing Supply
- Affordable Warmth Scheme
- Review the Caravans Act (NI) 2011
- ERDF Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014 -2020
- Housing Executive historical debt and exclusion from having to pay Corporation Tax

- Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes Framework
- Long term rent trajectory
- Affordability of social rents
- Housing Executive Rent
- Non ACM Cladding Remediation Scheme
- Climate Act DfC will lead on the 'Residential and Buildings Sector Plan'

Members also received a Presentation on the Fundamental Review of Allocations

Once the minutes of the meeting are ratified at the March Meeting, they can be accessed on the Housing Council website: www.nihousingcouncil.org

The next Housing Council Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 9th March 2023 at 10.00 am via conference call.

Should you require any further information or have any questions regarding the content.

Contacts

Secretary, Kelly Cameron

The Housing Centre,

2 Adelaide Street

Belfast

BT2 8PB

Kelly.cameron@nihe.gov.uk Tel: 028 95982752