

March 28th, 2023

**Notice Of Meeting**

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Wednesday, 29th March 2023 at 7:00 pm** in **Hybrid - City Hall, Bangor & via Zoom.**

# Agenda

## Virtual Meeting Guidance

📄 *Guidance for virtual Council meetings.pdf*

*Not included*

## Agenda

📄 *C 29.03.2023 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 (Report attached)**

📄 *5. March 2023.pdf*

*Page 5*

6. **Deputation**

6.1. **Deputation – South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (Report attached)**

📄 *6.1 Cover report - Deputation on South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.pdf*

*Page 10*

📄 *6.1 Appendix 1- SR to Roisin Coulter Chief Executive - Public Consultation on closure of MIU.pdf*

*Page 12*

📄 *6.1 Appendix 2 - 20230310 letter Stephen Reid.pdf*

*Page 13*

7. **Minutes of Council Meeting held on 22 February 2023 (Copy attached)**

📄 *C 22.02.23 Minutes.pdf*

*Not included*

📄 *C 22.02.23 MinutesPM.pdf*

*Page 16*

7.1. **Matters Arising from Minutes of Council meeting dated 22**

## February- Invite to Musical Tribute to HM Queen Elizabeth II

Report attached

📄 *7.1 Matters Arising from Minutes of Council meeting dated 22 February- Invite to Musical Tribute to HM Queen Elizabeth II.pdf* Page 46

📄 *7.1. Appendix QEII Letter of invitation.pdf* Page 48

### 8. Minutes of Committees

#### 8.1 Planning Committee dated 7 March 2023 (Copy attached)

📄 *230307 PC Minutes PM.pdf* Page 49

📄 *230307 PC Minutes.pdf* Not included

#### 8.2 Environment Committee dated 8 March 2023 (Copy attached)

📄 *EC.08.03.23 Minutes.pdf* Not included

📄 *EC.08.03.23 Minutes PM.pdf* Page 66

#### 8.3 Place & Prosperity Committee dated 9 March 2023 (Copy attached)

📄 *PP 09.03.2023 Minutes.pdf* Not included

📄 *PP 09.03.2023 MinutesPM.pdf* Page 87

#### 8.4 Corporate Services Committee dated 14 March 2023 (Copy attached)

📄 *CS 14.03.2023 Minutes.pdf* Not included

📄 *CS 14.03.2023 Minutes PM.pdf* Page 115

#### 8.5 Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 15 March 2023 (Copy attached)

📄 *230315 CWB Minutes.pdf* Not included

📄 *230315 CWB MinutesPM.pdf* Page 152

#### 8.6. Minutes of Meeting of Audit Committee dated 20 March 2023

## **(Copy attached)**

📎 *AC 20.03.2023 Minutes.pdf*

*Not included*

📎 *AC 20.03.2023 MinutesPM.pdf*

*Page 227*

## **9. Conferences and Invitations**

### **9.1. NAC UK Conference Learning Weekend 14th–16th April 2023 Scarborough – Mental Health & Wellbeing**

Report attached

📎 *9.1. NAC Conference Report.pdf*

*Not included*

📎 *9.1. NAC UK Conf Details 14th 16th April 2023 Scarborough.pdf*

*Not included*

📎 *9.1. NAC UK Booking form 14-16 April 23 Scarborough.pdf*

*Not included*

## **10. Resolutions**

### **10.1. Fermanagh & Omagh District Council - South West Acute Hospital**

Correspondence attached

📎 *10.1. Resolution - South West Acute Hospital.pdf*

*Not included*

### **10.2. Newry, Mourne & Down District Council - Reduction in Voting Age**

Correspondence attached

📎 *10.2. Resolution - Reduction in Voting Age.pdf*

*Not included*

### **10.3. Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council – Energy Company Profits**

Correspondence attached

📎 *10.3. Resolution - Energy Company Profits.pdf*

*Not included*

## **11. Grant of Entertainment Licence**

Report attached

📎 *11. Grant of Entertainment Licence.pdf*

*Not included*



## 12. Grant of Outdoor Entertainment Licence

Report attached

[12. Grant of Outdoor Entertainment Licences.pdf](#) *Not included*

## 13. Approval of Grants for Kings Coronation

Report attached

[13. Approval of Grants for Coronation of King Charles III.pdf](#) *Not included*

[13. Appendix 1 - Collective CA Letter re Coronation Funding - signed.pdf](#) *Not included*

[13. Appendix 2 - 2023-03-22 Jan Nixey to Community Volunteers - Coronation of King Charles III - Grant Scheme \(003\).pdf](#) *Not included*

## 14. Service Level Agreement between the Department of Justice and District Councils for Warranted Officers

Report attached

[14. Service Level Agreement between the Department of Justice and District Councils for Warranted Officers .pdf](#) *Not included*

[14. Appendix - SLA between DoJ and District Councils.pdf](#) *Not included*

## 15. Battle of the Somme Pilgrimage

Report attached

[15. The Battle of the Somme Pilgrimage 2023.pdf](#) *Not included*

## 16. Scheme of Allowances of Councillors (Report attached)

Report attached

[16. Scheme of Allowances of Councillors.pdf](#) *Not included*

[16. AND Scheme of Allowances v11 2023-24 Draft.pdf](#) *Not included*

## 17. Request from Market Fresh to use the former Hamilton House site, Hamilton Road, Bangor

Report attached

[17. Request from Market Fresh.pdf](#) *Not included*

## 18. Consultation

### 18.1. Department for Energy Security & Net Zero – Stakeholder Letter on UK Policy on management of radioactive substances and nuclear decommissioning

Stakeholder Letter on UK Policy on Management of Radioactive Substances and Nuclear Decommissioning - The Consultation will close on 24 May 2023

(Correspondence attached)

18.1. UK Policy Consultation - stakeholder letter.pdf

Not included

## 19. Sealing Documents

## 20. Transfer of Rights of Burial

## 21. Notice of Motion Status Report

Report attached

21. NOM Covering Report - March.pdf

Not included

21. NOM Tracker March 2023.pdf

Not included

## 22. Notices of Motion

### 22.1. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Smart and Irvine

In acknowledging the many negative impacts of long term commercial and residential dereliction, officers are tasked with reviewing current powers and how Council could best effect positive change.

As part of this review officers would investigate using part or all of Newtownards town centre as a pilot scheme to tackle dereliction, which could then be broadened across the Borough if successful. The review may form a working group which would consider what incentives could be provided through, DFC whom hold regeneration powers, the Planning system, Building Control, or by other means, to encourage the re-use or redevelopment of local derelict buildings to provide new business opportunities or homes. Consideration would also be given to what limitations can be placed on public and private property owners who are not willing to work in partnership for regeneration and the public good.

Any potential pilot would have relevance for all of the Ards and North Down Borough and may highlight the need for additional powers for Council or new partnerships with central government departments. The

research of officers would be expected within a reasonable timeframe but would not be time limited. Should other professional expertise be required for elements of this research, a report seeking consent to spend would be returned to committee for consideration.

## **22.2. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Gilmour & Cathcart**

That this Council explores the possibility of supporting the Bookstart Early Years Pilot across Ards and North Down. A report is brought back detailing information about the programme, how it could be supported across the Borough, including cost and potential delivery partners.

## **22.3. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillors Thompson & Adair**

That this Council recognises the issues and concerns detailed in the letter sent to the Chief Executive by The Kircubbin Harbour Action Group and agrees to write to the Permanent Secretaries of the Departments of Infrastructure and Communities, asking them to provide details of the responsibility they have in ensuring the public safety of the harbour and listing any details of dealings their departments have had with the owner.

## Circulated for Information

- a) a) Census 2021 Further results released (Correspondence attached)
- b) b) Department of Justice - Publication of a new draft protocol governing the use of restorative interventions in the criminal justice system in Northern Ireland (Correspondence attached)
- c) March Housing Council Bulletin & February Housing Council Minutes (Correspondence attached)

<a href="#">a) Census 2021.pdf</a>	<i>Not included</i>
<a href="#">b) Dept for Justice Consultation Info.pdf</a>	<i>Not included</i>
<a href="#">c) Members Bulletin - 9 March 2023.pdf</a>	<i>Not included</i>
<a href="#">c) Housing Council Minutes - 9th February 2023.pdf</a>	<i>Not included</i>

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

### **23. Portaferry Environmental Improvement Scheme - Appointment of Integrated Construction Team**

Report attached

<a href="#">23. Portaferry EIS Appointment of ICT.pdf</a>	<i>Not included</i>
<a href="#">23. Appendix Portaferry PR EA Report 270422.pdf</a>	<i>Not included</i>

### **24. SEAFLAG – Portavogie Harbour EIS – Project Update**

Report attached

<a href="#">24. SEAFLAG - Portavogie Harbour EIS Update.pdf</a>	<i>Not included</i>
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 **24. Appendix A - AECOM Mural Design.pdf** **Not included**

 **24. Appendix B - Local Community Mural.png** **Not included**

## **25. Call-In of the Council Decision on the EQIA on the Flying of the Union Flag**

Report attached

 **25. Call in of motion on the EQIA on Flying of the Union Flag.pdf** **Not included**

 **25. Appendix 1 - Call-In requisition form 2022 - Item 18 EQIA on the flying of the Union Flag Council meeting 26 January 2023.pdf** **Not included**

 **25. Appendix 2 - Legal Advice from Philip McAteer BL (final opinion).pdf** **Not included**

 **25. Appendix 3 - Legal advice from Fiona Cassidy.pdf** **Not included**

 **25. Appendix 4a - Draft Public Questionnaire (1).pdf** **Not included**

 **25. Appendix 4b Draft Staff Questionnaire (1).pdf** **Not included**

 **25. Appendix 4c Draft Equality Impact Assessment Final Decision Report.pdf** **Not included**

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

22 March 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, 29 March 2023 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 March 2023 (Copy attached)
6. Deputation
  - 6.1. South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (Report attached)
7. Minutes of Council meeting dated 22 February 2023 (Copy attached)
  - 7.1 Matters Arising from Minutes of Council meeting dated 22 February-Invite to Musical Tribute to HM Queen Elizabeth II (Report attached)
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Scarborough – Mental Health & Wellbeing (Report attached)
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17. Request from Market Fresh to use the former Hamilton House site, Hamilton Road, Bangor (Report attached)
18. Consultation
- 18.1. Department for Energy Security & Net Zero – Stakeholder Letter on UK Policy on management of radioactive substances and nuclear decommissioning - The consultation will close on the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 2023 and can be accessed at the following link:  
[www.gov.uk/government/consultations/managing-radioactive-substances-and-nuclear-decommissioning](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/managing-radioactive-substances-and-nuclear-decommissioning) (Correspondence attached)
19. Sealing Documents
20. Transfer of Rights of Burial

21. Notice of Motion Status Report (Report attached)

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Any potential pilot would have relevance for all of the Ards and North Down Borough and may highlight the need for additional powers for council or new partnerships with central government departments. The research of officers would be expected within a reasonable timeframe but would not be time limited. Should other professional expertise be required for elements of this research, a report seeking consent to spend would be returned to committee for consideration.

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- c) March Housing Council Bulletin & February Housing Council Minutes  
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**\*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\***

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24. SEAFLAG – Portavogie Harbour EIS Project Update (Report attached)
25. Call-In of the Council Decision on the EQIA on the Flying of the Union Flag (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 ( <b>Deputy Mayor</b> )	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 ( <b>Mayor</b> )	Councillor Thompson
Councillor S Dunlop	Councillor Walker
Councillor Edmund	Councillor Woods

**LIST OF MAYOR'S/DEPUTY MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**  
**FOR MARCH 2023**

**Monday 27 February**

11:00 hours Meeting – Mayor's Big Spring Clean on Sunday 26 March – Mayor's Parlour, City Hall, Bangor

**Tuesday 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

**Wednesday 1 March**

10:00 hours **Deputy Mayor** – Launch of the Volunteer Friendly Award Wellbeing Centre, North Down Community Network, Main Street, Bangor

**Thursday 2 March**

09:30 hours Photoshoot – BeeSafe Event – Ards Arena Youth Resource Centre, South Street, Newtownards

10:0 hours Reval 2023 – Presentation by Department for Economy – Main Street, Bangor

12:30 hours Traidcraft Lunch – Mayor's Parlour, City Hall, Bangor

18:00 hours Women in Business Awards 2023 – Crowne Plaza Hotel, Belfast

**Friday 3 March**

10:30 hours Bangor Central Committee of World Day Of Prayer – Salvation Army Church, Crosby Street, Bangor

14:00 hours Tree Planting – Rotary Club – Cromellin Wood, Donaghadee

15:00 hours Photoshoot for ANDBC Big Spring Clean – City Hall, Bangor

**Saturday 4 March**

11:00 hours Stand Up Fight Back – International Women's Day Rally 2023 – Belfast

**Sunday 5 March**

11:30 hours World Book Day Event – Walled Garden, Bangor

**Monday 6 March**

18:30 hours Reception for K9 Search & Rescue NI – City Hall, Bangor

**Tuesday 7 March**

- 10:30 hours Photo – City and Town Masterplans – City Hall, Bangor  
 11:00 hours Visit to Abbey Primary School – Movilla Road, Newtownards  
 12:45 hours Badger Baiting NI Report Launch – The Long Gallery, Stormont

**Wednesday 8 March**

- 11:30 hours International Women’s Day Panel Discussion with Bangor  
 Rotary Club – Bangor Golf Club  
 14:00 hours **Deputy Mayor** – Translink Ulster In Bloom Awards – Guildhall,  
 Londonderry

**Thursday 9 March**

- 12:15 hours Mayoral Lunch – Mayor’s Parlour, City Hall, Bangor  
 14:00 hours Launch of the Percy French Exhibition – North Down Museum,  
 Bangor  
 14:45 hours Photoshoot – Ultimate Strongman Event / Our Place in Space  
 Event – Bangor Marina  
 15:30 hours Meeting with Arty McAlinden – Online  
 18:00 hours Spring Exhibition at The Curve Gallery – Carnegie Library,  
 Bangor  
 19:00 hours Hollywood Creative Festival – Hollywood Methodist Church

**Friday 10 March**

- 12:00 hours Visit by AGEna Volunteers – Mayor’s Parlour, City Hall, Bangor  
 14:00 hours Visit by Ballywalter Community Action Group – Mayor’s Parlour,  
 City Hall, Bangor  
 18:00 hours 2022 Ards and North Down Sports Awards – Clandeboye Lodge  
 Hotel, Bangor

**Saturday 11 March**

- 09:00 hours Mayor’s Charity Bucket Collection – Tesco, Castlebawn,  
 Newtownards

**Sunday 12 March**

- 18:00 hours Visit to Big Hits Radio – Frances Street, Newtownards

**Monday 13 March**

- 09:45 hours Commonwealth Day 2023 – Flying of Flag of Peace – City Hall,  
 Bangor  
 13:30 hours Photoshoot – Community Relations through Sports – Ards Blair  
 Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex – Newtownards

**Tuesday 14 March**

10:30 hours Unveiling of Two New Defibrillators – Seahaven Park Homes, Groomsport

**Wednesday 15 March**

10:30 hours Bangor Integrated Nursery School – Transformation Celebration – Castle Park Road, Bangor

12:00 hours Visit to Simon Community - Drug and Alcohol Drop In Service – Bangor Foodbank, Balloo Avenue, Bangor

15:15 hours Matilda the Musical – Rathmore Primary School – Rathmore Road, Bangor

18:30 hours St Patrick's Day Reception hosted by the Joint Secretaries of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Secretariat – Ulster Museum, Belfast

**Thursday 16 March**

11:00 hours Meeting of the Intercultural Forum – Craig Room, City Hall, Bangor

12:15 hours Intercultural Forum Lunch – Craig Room, City Hall, Bangor

14:00 hours Meeting with David Polley from DfC – Mayor's Parlour, Council Offices, Newtownards

16:30 hours Meeting with Yvonne Ross (NDA Road Safety Committee) – Mayor's Parlour, City Hall, Bangor

**Friday 17 March**

10:45 hours UDR St Patrick's Day Celebration – Royal British Legion, Bangor

**Saturday 18 March**

13:00 hours Launch of Ultimate Strong Man Competition – McKee Clock, Bangor

19:30 hours Final Night Bangor Drama Festival 2023 – Studio 1A, Hamilton Road, Bangor

**Monday 20 March**

14:30 hours Visit by Senior Citizens Group from Ballyholme Presbyterian Church – Council Chamber, City Hall, Bangor

**Tuesday 21 March**

11:00 hours Visit by RVH Liver Support Group – Mayor's Parlour, City Hall, Bangor

**Wednesday 22 March**

12:30 hours            Mayoral Lunch – Mayor’s Parlour, City Hall, Bangor

**Thursday 23 March**

11:30 hours            Photo to launch Sports Development Grants Programme – Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex

13:00 hours            Consultative Panel Lunch – Craig Room, City Hall, Bangor

18:30 hours            SERC’s Excellence Awards, Bangor Campus

**Friday 24 March**

10:45 hours            Celebration Day – Killard House School, Donaghadee

13:00 hours            Lunch with Friends of Columbanus – Mayor’s Parlour, City Hall, Bangor

19:00 hours            Blair Mayne Awards Evening – Ards Arts Centre, Conway Square, Newtownards

**Saturday 25 March**

12:30 hours            Official Opening of Refurbished Bangor Aurora Playpark

13:00 hours            Awakening Walled Gardens Event – Walled Garden, Bangor

13:50 hours            Project 24 Farewell Event – Queen’s Parade, Bangor

**Sunday 26 March**

08:00 hours            Ards and North Down Big Spring Clean – Borough Wide Event

11:00 hours            Game of 3 Halves – Spafield Pitches, Holywood

18:00 hours            Closing Event of My Space Exhibition – City Hall, Bangor

**Monday 27 March**

19:00 hours            Chat with Community Volunteers – Ebenezer Hall, Church Street, Bangor

**Tuesday 28 March**

10:45 hours            The Shine Programme Event – SIGNAL, Balloo Road, Bangor

13:00 hours            Celebration Lunch for The Link Volunteers – West Street, Newtownards

14:00 hours            Meeting with Tom Sarsfield (Manager) – Tesco Castlebawn

19:00 hours            School Production – Bangor Central Integrated Primary School

19:00 hours            **Deputy Mayor** – School Production, Towerview Primary School, Bangor

**Wednesday 29 March**

10:30 hours            Photo Opportunity – ANDSEP – Walled Garden, Bangor

11:00 hours            MTAC Meeting – Online

- 14:00 hours Meeting with Tim McKane – NI Business Facebook Group – Mayor’s Parlour, City Hall, Bangor
- 15:15 hours Photo Opportunity – Promotion of Tourism Programme 2023/24 – City Hall, Bangor

**Thursday 30 March**

- 09:20 hours Donaghadee Townscape Heritage Initiative – Project Completion Celebration Event – Lemon’s Wharf, Donaghadee
- 11:00 hours Visit to Bangor Sure Start’s Health Fair Event – Curves Room, Carnegie Library, Bangor

**Friday 31 March**

- 13:00 hours Lunch for Big Spring Clean Event Participants – City Hall, Bangor
- 19:30 hours Donaghadee Male Voice Choir – Evening of Song celebrating 90 Years – Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church, Bangor

Unclassified

10

**ITEM 6.1.****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	29 March 2023
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	20 March 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	Cover report - Deputation from South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Letter from Stephen Reid, Chief Executive to Roisin Coulter, SEHSCT Chief Executive Appendix 2 - Letter from Roisin Coulter, SEHSCT Chief Executive to Stephen Reid, Chief Executive

**Background**

At the February meeting of the Council, Members considered the proposed public consultation on the future provision of urgent and emergency care in the Borough and agreed to write to the South-Eastern Health and Social Care Trust to:

1. ask for an extension to the time frame for the consultation to give the Trust time to remove the current survey which, in the opinion of Members, is 'hugely complex and biased, and fails to give the community an understanding of all 4 options'.
2. express concern around the expectation of the public to manage two large (consultation) documents whilst going back and forth to answer the questions. Members expressed that constituents have written to say that they had 'given up, finding it too complex'; and

Unclassified

11

3. request that the South-Eastern Health and Social Care Trust send a clinician led delegation to present the Urgent Care Centre and Minor Injuries Unit proposals to the Council meeting on 29 March. Council will then respond to the consultation at its April meeting.

Included as appendices are the letter from the Chief Executive to Roisin Coulter, Chief Executive of the South-Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, and Ms Coulter's response.

Four representatives from the Trust will be in attendance at the March Council meeting to deliver a presentation and take questions from Members on the proposals for the Urgent Care Centre and Minor Injuries Unit.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council note this report.





Ms Roisin Coulter  
Chief Executive  
South-Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

7 March 2023

Sent via email only: [Roisin.coulter@setrust.hscni.net](mailto:Roisin.coulter@setrust.hscni.net)

Dear Roisin,

At a recent meeting of Ards and North Down Borough Council, the Council considered the South-Eastern Health and Social Care Trust proposed public consultation on the future provision of urgent and emergency care services in the Borough.

The Council debated and unanimously agreed that I write to you, on their behalf, to:

1. ask for an extension to the time frame for the consultation to give the Trust time to remove the current survey which, in the opinion of Members, is 'hugely complex and biased, and fails to give the community an understanding of all 4 options';
2. express concern around the expectation of the public to manage two large (consultation) documents whilst going back and forth to answer the questions. Members expressed that constituents have written to say that they had 'given up, finding it too complex'; and
3. request that the South-Eastern Health and Social Care Trust send a clinician led delegation to present the Urgent Care Centre and Minor Injuries Unit proposals to the Council meeting on 29 March. Council will then respond to the consultation at its April meeting.

I would be grateful if you could please consider this letter and respond to me accordingly.

I would be grateful if you could also confirm the names of the clinicians who will be available to attend the Council meeting on the evening of 29 March to the Council's Democratic Services team at: [member.services@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:member.services@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Reid".

Stephen Reid  
**Chief Executive**

**Chairman (Acting)**  
Jonathan Patton

**Chief Executive**  
Roisin Coulter

10 March 2023

Mr Stephen Reid  
Chief Executive  
Ards and North Down Borough Council

Sent via email only: [stephen.reid@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.reid@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

Dear Stephen

Thank you for your correspondence dated 7 March 2023.

In relation to the queries and comments raised by the Council, please see the following responses below.

1. *Ask for an extension to the timeframe for the consultation to give the Trust time to remove the current survey which, in the opinion of Members, is 'hugely complex and biased, and fails to give the community an understanding of all 4 options'.*

In January 2023 the Trust sought and secured support from the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG) and Public Health Agency (PHA) to commence a public consultation on the Future Model for Urgent and Emergency Care in Ards and North Down. The SPPG and PHA advised the Trust that their support would be required for any proposed closure or change in use, upon the conclusion of the consultation exercise.

The Trust is committed to genuine and meaningful consultation with our staff, the public and elected representatives. The consultation documentation has been developed in line with Department of Health Policy on the Change or Withdrawal of Services – Guidance on Roles and Responsibilities (September 2019) and the timeframe of 12 weeks is in line with this guidance.

The Trust considered nine options against a range of key factors. Only one option was considered viable and deliverable and this option forms the proposal which the Trust is publicly consulting on. The Trust believes that it would be disingenuous to consult with the public on any option that would not be considered viable or deliverable. All nine options and the key factors considered are outlined in the Trust's consultation document.

2. *Express concern around the expectation of the public to manage two large (consultation) documents whilst going back and forth to answer the questions. Members expressed that constituents have written to say that they had 'given up, finding it too complex'.*

The Trust understands that public consultation processes which involve any proposed change to public services can be complex due to the nature of information which is required to outline proposals and the need for change, and also to ensure 'due process' is considered, such as completing Equality Impact Assessments and Rural Needs Impact Assessments. These documents are a statutory requirement.

The Trust has endeavoured to ensure that sufficient information is made available to the public, whilst also trying to provide a range of opportunities for the public to give feedback on the proposed change. The survey provided by the Trust is one way in which the public can provide feedback and as advertised on the Trust's website and in local media, there are a number of alternative ways for people to engage with the consultation process and express their views. The public can provide responses to the consultation:

- in writing, by post
- by email
- by telephoning the Trust directly to give comments or receive assistance with either accessing consultation literature or completing the consultation questionnaire.

The Trust is also happy to meet with any group or representative organisation during the consultation period upon request.

The Trust is hosting a series of public engagement events both in person and online - the most recent on 6 March in Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex, where a number of elected were in attendance. The Trust hopes that these events will provide an opportunity for the public to hear more about the proposal, as well as provide an opportunity to engage directly with senior clinicians about the need for change. The meeting on 6 March 2023 was very useful for the Trust to hear feedback and listen to and respond to the concerns the public had.

Printed copies of both the consultation document and an 'Easy Read' version were made available on the evening of the public event. Printed copies are also available on request by contacting the consultation phone number made available in the consultation document and on the Trust's consultation webpage. This phone number also provides access to Trust staff for anyone who may have any queries on the consultation or who may require support in providing feedback to the Trust.

Following the consultation period, the Trust will carefully consider all feedback received and a report will be drafted summarising the feedback alongside the Trust's response. The consultation outcome will be subject to Trust Board and Ministerial approval.

3. *Request that the South-Eastern Health and Social Care Trust send a clinician led delegation to present the Urgent Care Centre and Minor Injuries Unit proposals to the Council meeting on 29 March. Council will then respond to the consultation at its April meeting.*



I can confirm the following attendance at the Council's meeting on 29 March 2023:

- Dr David Robinson, Executive Director of Nursing and Midwifery and Director of Allied Health Professionals and User Experience
- Dr Andrew Dobbin, Emergency Medicine Consultant and Clinical Director for Unscheduled Care
- Maggie Magowan, Emergency Nurse Practitioner and Unscheduled Care Service Improvement Lead.
- Naomi Dunbar, Assistant Director of Strategic and Capital Development.

Please confirm arrangements for the meeting with my office.

I hope that this information is helpful.

Yours sincerely



**ROISIN COULTER**  
Chief Executive

cc: Ms Helen Moore, Director of Planning, Performance & Informatics

## 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 Wednesday, 22 February 2023 commencing at 7.00pm.

**In the Chair:** The Mayor (Councillor Douglas)

**Aldermen:**

Armstrong-Cotter	Keery
Gibson	McIlveen
W Irvine	Wilson

**Councillors:**

Adair	Kennedy
Blaney (7.25 pm)	MacArthur
Boyle	McAlpine
Brooks	McClellan
Cathcart	McKee
Chambers	McKimm
Cooper	McRandal
Cummings	Moore
Dunlop	Morgan
Edmund	Smart
Gilmour	P Smith
Greer	T Smith
S Irvine	Thompson
Irwin	Walker
Johnson	Woods

**Officers:** Chief Executive (S Reid), 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), Head of Communications and Marketing (C Jackson), Democratic Services Manager (J Wilson) and Democratic Services Officer (H Loebnau)

### 1. PRAYER

The Mayor (Councillor Douglas), welcomed everyone to the meeting and the Chief Executive read the Council prayer.

**NOTED.**

### 2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Aldermen McDowell, M Smith and Carson. An apology for lateness was received from Councillor Blaney.

NOTED.

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

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

Councillor Morgan – Item 17 – Award of Tender for the Provision of Speciality Marina Consultancy Services.

Councillor Cathcart – Item 14 – Review of NILGA Constitution

NOTED.

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

The Mayor asked Members to stand for a moment in silence for the victims of the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria.

She reported that Members would be aware of K9 Search and Rescue which was set up locally by a Bangor man and that team had been deployed to help locate and rescue people from the devastation in Turkey and Syria. She said that she had had the pleasure of meeting the K9 Search and Rescue team twice last year and had agreed to host them at Bangor Castle. A date had been circulated to Members this week and she asked them to show the Council's sincere gratitude for their work in this rescue mission, the Cresslough tragedy and many other difficult situations.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Keery, seconded by Councillor McKimm, that the Mayor's comments be noted.**

### **5. MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR ENGAGEMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 2023**

(Appendix I)

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

A list was circulated and the Mayor sought a proposer and seconder to note.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman W Irvine, seconded by Alderman Gibson, that the information be noted.**

### **6. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2023**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above minutes.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman W Irvine, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that the minutes be agreed.**

## **7. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

### **7.1. Minutes of Planning Committee dated 7 February 2023**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

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

### **7.2. Minutes of Environment Committee dated 8 February 2023**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

Proposed by Councillor Thompson, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter that the minutes be adopted.

#### **Matter Arising from Item 7 – Proposed Street Naming and Numbering Policy**

Councillor T Smith asked for further clarification on dual language street signs and if that was a discretionary matter for the Council. The Director of Environment explained that discretion came where the Council decided to adopt or not the policy as it came before the Environment Committee. The Member continued querying if the Council could use a degree of discretion not to push to have dual language street signs within the Borough. The Director went on to say that if and when a request was received by the Council it would be exposed if there was no policy already in place. The Member wondered if the Council's policy could be English only and it was noted that this policy which had been brought to the Environment Committee had been adopted by other councils and met with the required standard in terms of equality. The Member did not believe that dual signage for streets was necessary, particularly with the added expense and administration that it would bring and would therefore not agree with the recommendation in the minutes.

**NOTED.**

#### **Matter Arising from Item 8 – Trial of Surface Markings and Signage for Existing Dogs on Leads Area**

Councillor McKimm expressed his support for the report and looked forward to the changes which he believed were vital in tackling the dangers of some dogs to the public when they were off lead. He referred to the Council officers who had recently had to deal with a family in huge distress after a dog attack and he sent his good wishes to the victim of that savage attack for a speedy recovery. He hoped that the Council would do all it could to prevent that happening in the future.

**NOTED.**

#### **Matter Arising from Item 9 – Increase in Fixed Penalty Limits for Littering/Dog Fouling and Dog Control Order Offences**

Councillor Smart welcomed the changes and the increased levels of penalties for certain offences and held the view that it was absolutely right that the polluter paid and was a move that brought the Borough more in line with the practice in other parts of the United Kingdom. He also believed that the Council's ultimate goal should be the removal of the need to serve any penalties at all. He asked how quickly the Council would roll out a communications campaign to the residents of the Borough and what format that would take.

The Director of Environment informed Members that the Communications team was already aware of the proposed changes and if they were agreed by the Council the message would be sent out promptly through the Council's normal range of channels including the local press and signage would be erected in particular problematic areas.

Councillor McClean shared the views of Councillor Smart and was delighted to have the increased penalties and hoped that this would be ratified by the Council. He had asked for the increases way back in 2020 since he did not believe the current penalty of £80 to be a strong deterrent. Dog fouling and littering in general was the number one concern for most residents of the Borough. He had a sense that the detection rate was currently not where he would like it to be.

In reply the Director stated that the Member was correct, and the number of detections had reduced compared to the peaks of up to four years ago. A reason for that was that staff resources had been depleted within the section and there had been issues with the recruitment and retention of staff, however that had now been resolved and the section had reached a full complement. He added that it would also be of some concern if the numbers of Fixed Penalty Notices remained high into the future since it would show that the Council's message of zero tolerance and behaviour change was not getting out. He reported the encouraging news that the Council's LEAMS score, which measured cleanliness, had shown a significant jump from 72 to 80 which provided evidence that there was a higher level of compliance in terms of littering. He assured Members that the Council would continue to be fastidious and target hotspot problematic areas and would not shirk from continuing to issue higher level fixed penalties.

Alderman McIlveen paid tribute to Councillor McClean for bringing the Notice of Motion in the first instance. He personally was finding the streets very dirty and that was of some concern, but he hoped that the changes would help to bring about some improvement in the appearance of the Borough in general.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter referred to new stickers which had recently been placed in some areas showing the lower amounts of fines which would now be out of date. She sought assurances that the new signage would be of good quality and would maintain a clean and crisp look into the future. The Director replied that the signs being referred to had been placed there in good faith at the time.

(Councillor Blaney entered the meeting at 7.25 pm)

Councillor T Smith was of the opinion that what was being discussed united the Chamber since it was clear that litter and dog fouling detracted from any area. He



thought that a lot of enforcement was focused on shopping centres and food outlets when it could be better focused on towns, greens spaces and streets. The Director said there was no scientific formula for dealing with the matter but that the Council did not simply seek out what could be considered soft targets and hotspot areas to the exclusion of other areas. He urged Members and residents to continue to report areas which were problematic and that also helped maximise the limited resources available.

Councillor Adair shared the view that dog fouling levels were not improving and thought that publicising the names of offenders in the press could also be used. He had regular complaints of dog fouling and it was particularly distressing outside primary schools. He believed that offenders should be hit hard with tough fines.

Councillor Gilmour welcomed the report and referred to the dog fouling which was often carried out under the cover of darkness. The Director confirmed that Enforcement Officers did work in the early morning and evenings and those patrols would continue to be fully managed.

**NOTED.**

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Thompson, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the minutes be adopted.**

**7.3. Minutes of Place and Prosperity Committee dated 9 February 2023**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

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

Arising from Item 6 – Rural Regeneration – Overview of Funding and Projects

Councillor McKimm repeated that it had been a pleasure to work with this group over a period of time and believed that Members were often guilty of being over invested in their own patch. On the night of the Committee he had asked that Council take an opportunity to thank members of that team and he hoped that would indeed be done. He also thanked the support team for being well organised and efficient.

Arising from Item 9 – Independent Review of Invest NI

Councillor P Smith asked to make an amendment to that proposal in the minutes to add;

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, to highlight that our Borough has the lowest GDP per head of any council area yet Invest NI's latest report shows that we receive only 2.7% of assisted jobs when we account for 9% of Northern Ireland's population, and invites a senior representative

from Invest NI to address a meeting of the Committee on future plans to build a better partnership and improve economic performance in the Borough.

Councillor P Smith hoped that his amendment would be uncontroversial, and he had wanted to build on what had been put into the Committee and highlight Invest NI's poor record in the Borough. The amount that the Borough received was the lowest of any other area in Northern Ireland and the area was not receiving its fair share of the resources available. He thought that what was being proposed would give Invest NI the opportunity to show how it was going to change that fact and build greater partnership with the Council.

Councillor Blaney seconded that amendment and echoed the comments of his party colleague stating that he had been told repeatedly by businesses in Ards and North Down that they felt that the door to Invest NI was closed to them.

Councillor Cathcart thanked Councillor P Smith for bringing the amendment forward and he shared the view that Invest NI had no interest in listening to the needs of local businesses in the Borough. The organisation had a track record of poor performance in his view and did not seem to care and for that reason he believed that it needed to be reformed and he would welcome the independent review.

Councillor Adair was reminded of a time previously when three fish processing factories were being shut in Portavogie and intervention and assistance was called for from Invest NI and on that occasion as well the residents of the village were failed.

Alderman Armstrong Cotter and Councillor Walker also expressed support for the amendment in the spirit with which it had been brought and thought that the Council needed to ensure that Invest NI worked more closely with it to develop the business potential within the Borough.

#### **NOTED.**

#### Arising from Item 3 – Donaghadee Commons Masterplan

Councillor Brooks referred to the Donaghadee Masterplan and had been unable to attend the meeting but had noted the remarks of Councillor Gilmour and the call for consultation. He hoped that the Commons would be protected as a green space and that lessons could be learnt from the Greenways and that officers proceed with care, cautiously and with consultation.

The Director of Place referred to the significant public consultation that had taken place to date on different occasions where the plans were presented and there had been very positive feedback.

Councillor T Smith had proposed the same thing during the Covid lockdown and stressed that the use of Zoom was not the panacea when it came to public engagement and consultation and too much was better than too little, and he cautiously welcomed the plans.

Councillor MacArthur agreed with the comments and reiterated the importance of having checks along the way. She asked the Director about Donaghadee Harbour and its inclusion in the Masterplan sitting as it did outside the town centre boundary. The Harbour was special and drew visitors of itself and it would be good to have it incorporated within the Masterplan. The Director explained that the town centre did not include the Harbour and that the budget available from the Department for Communities was for the Commons alone and not for the town centre.

Alderman McIlveen followed on from that and asked was it within the gift of the Council to have the town centre boundary changed to include the Harbour. At this point the Director of Prosperity said that it would but that there was strict criteria for that purpose to make a compact and condensed area in which to concentrate retail.

Councillor Walker agreed that there should be wide consultation to allow people to express their views and he looked forward to the further development of the town.

#### Arising from Item 8 - 4C UR Future Event

Councillor Thompson praised the event which had been well received and had encouraged young people to think about their careers. He asked if the Council was planning to hold more of these in the future. The Head of Prosperity replied that there were no further plans since the programme had been cut in the Rates setting process which had been presented the previous week.

#### **NOTED.**

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor McKimm that the minutes be adopted and that an amendment be made to Item 9 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, to highlight that our Borough has the lowest GDP per head of any council area yet Invest NI's latest report shows that we receive only 2.7% of assisted job when we account for 9% of Northern Ireland's population, and invites a senior representative from Invest NI to address a meeting of the Committee on future plans to build a better partnership and improve economic performance in the Borough.**

#### **7.4. Minutes of Special Council Meeting dated 14 February 2023**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

Proposed by Councillor P Smith, seconded by Councillor Blaney, that the minutes be adopted.

Arising from the meeting Councillor Irvine referred to cost cutting and was concerned at what was thought to be the cutting of the delivery of football training within the Borough and that the Irish Football Association (IFA) and Education Authority (EA) would share responsibility for that delivery in future. He asked if those organisations had been consulted on that and if they had agreed to facilitate football development in the Borough. The Council was the first to have a football development officer and

that had been very successful and the wider benefits of the sport outside of physical fitness should not be ignored.

In response the Director of Community and Wellbeing explained that there was a misunderstanding that football development would be stopped and that that was untrue, rather the delivery model was changing and a number of alternative ways of delivering the service were being considered. A report on that would be brought to the March meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee and would help to inform the response that Members should use for those in the community. He agreed that there was some misinformation circulating but that the Council was continuing to work with the IFA and EA. There would be many opportunities for the sport ahead.

Members expressed the desire that that happen promptly since any delay did not send out a good message or put the Council in a good light. Councillor McKimm reminded Members that the Council had cut its funding and needed to admit that, but that clarity was needed on how the programmes would be delivered in future.

Alderman McIlveen was concerned about casual coaching roles and the need to communicate with schools to get this set up as soon as possible and the impact the changes would make on competitions and leagues. He did not want to see the Council sit on a cliff edge as the end of March approached.

Members referred to the excellent provision of the past and hoped that the proposal would not be detrimental for the future. It was an unfortunate position to be in financially, but Members were content to wait for the report and thanked the Director and the team for the ongoing role in that work.

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

#### **7.5. Minutes of Corporate Services Committee dated 14 February 2023**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

Proposed by Councillor P Smith, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that the minutes be adopted.

##### **7.5.1 Arising from Item 9 – Invite to Musical Tribute to HM Queen Elizabeth II (Appendix II)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive detailing 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 costing £65 would allow for the holders to access VIP seating, relax in a VIP lounge with drinks and canapes before and during the interval of the show.

Full details are attached.

RECOMMENDED that the Council consider this invitation.

Proposed by Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter that the Armed Forces Champion, Councillor Cummings, be nominated.

Proposed by Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor Morgan that the Mayor, Councillor Douglas be nominated as well as Councillor Greer.

**RESOLVED, that the invitation be noted and that the Armed Forces Champion (Councillor Cummings), the Mayor (Councillor Douglas) and Councillor Greer be nominated to attend.**

**7.6. Minutes of Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 15 February 2023**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

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

In respect of Item 13 – Cost of Living Crisis Response to Notice of Motion

Councillor Chambers reported an inaccuracy on page 25 and that he voted FOR and not AGAINST the alternative proposal.

Councillor Boyle reported an inaccuracy on page 25 that he had voted AGAINST and not FOR the alternative proposal.

Councillor McKimm referred to the Community and Wellbeing Committee being given delegated powers to spend £50k to help in response to the cost-of-living crisis and the additional funding which had come for £14k and how that would be divided.

Councillor T Smith believed that the £50k was made available from reserves but that it was not reserves it was the underspend from the social supermarkets. The Director explained that £14k had come from the Department of Finance and the Council could find itself in a position of not needing to use the reserves at all.

Alderman McIlveen thought that there should be no confusion since a proposal from the Green Party had been agreed that the underspend should be applied to the social supermarkets since that was where it had been earmarked and he understood that there was a waiting list for that service. That was the decision of the Committee.

Councillors Gilmour and MacArthur were in agreement that the key was to distribute the funding to those most in need as soon as possible.

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

**7.6.1 Arising from Item 12 of the Community and Wellbeing Committee – Proposed Final Programme of Events to Celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III**

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 include:

**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 be 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 the 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 would be aware that £30,000 from the total Coronation budget of £50,000 had already been ring fenced for grants, therefore the remaining budget for the programme of events was £20,000.

<b>Table 1</b>	<b>Proposed Programme of Activity for the Coronation</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Total Budget £50,000</b>
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 will be purchased once the official merchandise is available.	3,000
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 all schools and places of worship	A presentation "Royal Oak" can be provided to all schools and places of 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

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27

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
<b>Total</b>		<b>50,000</b>

The Working Group felt that the programme detailed above provided events and activities suitable for a broad range of residents, young and old alike. As the Coronation was taking place over the weekend and the Bank Holiday Monday, the Council run activities would 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.

RECOMMENDED that the Council agrees the proposed programme of activities to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III, detailed in this report.

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

Councillor Gilmour was aware that when the Working Group had met it had expressed the view that the ideal budget would have been greater. However, it had been accepted that Buckingham Palace itself was also scaling back the celebrations for the Coronation in keeping with the economic climate. There was a desire to tap into what the Palace was advising and the issues that were important to His Majesty the King such as environmental matters. A small additional report was called for identifying what could be done within the Borough.

Alderman Irvine was happy with the report but suggested that some believed that the funding was too small to put on a worthwhile celebratory event for their communities. The Director of Community and Wellbeing explained that the deadline for applications was the following day and that at this point only half of the funding had been allocated. He suggested that some communities might wish to combine funds to put on a larger event but that if there was an underspend in the budget further decisions would need to be taken on its allocation.

Councillor Greer also welcomed the report but questioned if events in town centres could be planned to help bring people into towns to celebrate. She suggested that consultations take place with the Chambers of Commerce for example.

(Councillor McClean left the meeting at 9.01 pm)



Councillor MacArthur thought there was a good programme of events which would appeal to everyone. She had just been made aware that churches were eligible to apply and wondered if the closing date for applications could be extended. The Director suggested that could possibly be extended by one or two weeks and that the application form itself was simple to complete.

Proposed by Councillor MacArthur, seconded by Councillor Adair, that the funding deadline for Coronation celebrations be extended for a period of two weeks. It was suggested that the Council promote that extension using the normal social media channels so that no one missed out.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Greer, seconded by Alderman Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted and that the funding deadline for Coronation celebrations be extended for a period of two weeks.

**AGREED.**

**RECESS 9.06 pm**

**RECOMMENCED 9.16 pm**

(Councillor Smart and Councillor Dunlop left the meeting)

## **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**

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor T Smith, seconded by Councillor P Smith, that the information be noted.

### **8.2 Department for Health and Department of Justice – Consultation Draft Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy**

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor P Smith, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the information be noted.

### **8.3 Department for the Economy – Consultation on Design Considerations for a Renewable Electricity Support Scheme for Northern Ireland**

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Morgan, seconded by Councillor P Smith, that the information be noted.

### **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 (Appendix III)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust was proposing to develop a new Consultant led Urgent Care Centre, alongside the Emergency Department at the Ulster Hospital. In order to achieve that, the Trust was proposing to close the Minor Injuries Units in both the Ards and Bangor Community Hospitals. The Trust was currently consulting on that proposal.

The consultation would last for 12 weeks and began on 8 February 2023 and close on 3 May 2023. A copy of the consultation document and information on the consultation process could be found on the Trust's website at the following link:

<https://setrust.hscni.net/getinvolved/consultations>

The Trust planned to hold a series of public and online events to have a conversation about the proposed changes. The dates would be published on its website and in the local media in the coming weeks.

The Council had established a Cross Party Working Group on Health and Social Care which met with Directors of the Trust to discuss matters of mutual interest, and which also acted as one conduit for communication between the Council and the Trust. The next meeting of that Working Group had been scheduled for 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2023 and it was intended that that would be a consultation event concerning the above for the that Working Group.

RECOMMENDED that the Council considers a response to the Consultation at the meeting of the Council on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2023, and forwarded as the Council's response before the closing date of 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

Councillor McKimm made an alternative proposal, seconded by Councillor Irvine.

That this Council writes to the Trust, asking for an extension to the time frame for the consultation to give the Trust time to remove the current survey which is hugely complex and biased, and fails to give the community an understanding of all 4 options.

Councillor McKimm believed that the consultation was hugely flawed and difficult to engage with and was biased in favour of the Trust. Many people old and young, technically savvy and not so had reported that they had wished to respond but had given up. He asked the Council to write to the Chief Executive of the Trust with a collective voice so that everyone could fully understand the review and consult with it.

Councillor T Smith had no problem supporting that and expressed that he wished to see the whole undertaking binned. He proposed an amendment which was seconded by Alderman Irvine.

That the Council promotes the consultation via its website and social media and encourages people to respond as part of the campaign to retain these important services.

Councillor McKimm agreed to add that to his proposal.

Councillor T Smith hoped that people would wish to respond to the consultation even though he believed that the Trust might already consider the decision to be a fait accompli. A strong public voice would be needed to challenge the Trust in an attempt not to lose public services within the Borough.

Alderman Wilson explained that he had looked at the consultation and while admitting he was quite tech savvy, he had found it to be a straightforward process with other options available such as a phone call or email for those who might find the process difficult. If it needed to be looked at further he had no problem with that.

Councillor P Smith stated that he had no issue with Councillor McKimm's proposal but wondered if he could make a further addition to add:

Asks the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust to send a clinician led deputation who can present the Urgent Care Centre and MIU proposals to the March Council meeting. Council will then respond to the consultation at its April meeting.

Councillor McKimm also agreed with that addition to be taken into his proposal.

Alderman McIlveen had no difficulty with any of the suggestions put forward since he believed that it was important that everyone had the time and information to make informed consultation responses. Referring to the online consultation process he had been left stunned by what Alderman Wilson had said. Alderman Wilson ran a technology company and his suggestion that he had no difficulty so therefore found it difficult to acknowledge that many in the population might not find the system so straightforward was simply arrogant. He thought Members should be aware that the rapid development of technology had left some people feeling left behind but that their voices still needed to be heard.

Councillor Walker defended Alderman Wilson stating that while the Member had accepted that he had found it straightforward he pointed to the other forms of engagement which had been laid out. His only concern was with Councillor T Smith's addition and would be concerned if the Council was taking on a position of cheerleaders for one particular outcome. He believed that those feelings should be reserved until the people of the Borough had had their say. At the end of April he felt the Council would be in a better position to base its response.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter suggested the addition was clear and stressed the need for all voices to be heard and warned Members to be careful not to be ageist or exclusive and it was not always easy for every person to have their voice heard.

Alderman Gibson remembered a time when similar decisions were being taken about Ards Hospital and the facilities there were now very limited. He thought Newtownards and Bangor had lost so much and wondered if the decisions being taken would lead to safety.

Councillor Adair agreed with Alderman Gibson's comments and pointed out that the Borough had the highest older population in Northern Ireland and many residents in

his community had no access to cars which further added to their accessibility and need to have more local services.

Councillor Morgan supported the consultation period to be extended and the presentation by a support clinician but agreed with Councillor Walker that the Council must be impartial before it had heard the views of the community.

Councillor MacArthur stated that she had no problem standing up for services in the area she represented particularly since the Ulster Hospital's A&E section seemed to be grinding to a halt. She believed that it was important to maintain a service which already existed on the Borough's doorstep.

Councillor Kennedy thought that government departments had lost their communication skills and even before a body such as the Trust would introduce a consultation they would know the direction they were headed as an organisation. He agreed with the two additions to the proposal which had been brought forward. He asserted that the Alliance Party seemed to have lost its fear of the public and was afraid to nail its colours to the mast instead supporting the direction of the Trust's leading.

Councillor Moore reiterated what Councillor Morgan had said that decisions should not be pre-empted and that she had not found the services at the Bangor hospital to be effective in the Spring of last year.

Councillor McAlpine agreed with her colleague Councillor Moore and her experiences had been similar. She added that she had never been afraid of consultation but could not support a one-sided approach by supporting a campaign to retain services.

Alderman Wilson spoke under Standing Order 20.12 in response to Alderman McIlveen's comments that he had shown arrogance and he did not appreciate what had been said nor the attempts to paint him in that light. He had made it clear that other formats for response were available if they were needed.

Councillor Gilmour and Councillor Edmund were in agreement with the additional words to be added and feared what would come next such as cuts to GP services. Those who lived on the Peninsula already had a 27 mile journey to access services in Newtownards.

(Councillor Boyle left the meeting at 10 pm).

In conclusion Councillor McKimm thought that no services should be changed unless they were being made better and he asked for a recorded vote on the proposal including the additional words which had been combined.

On the proposed amendment being put to the meeting with 23 voting For, 8 voting Against and 1 Abstained and 8 Absent it was declared CARRIED.

**FOR (23)**  
**Aldermen**

**AGAINST (8)**  
**Alderman**

**ABSTAINING (1)**  
**Councillor**

**ABSENT (8)**  
**Aldermen**

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32

Armstrong-Cotter	Wilson	Douglas	Carson
Gibson	<b>Councillors</b>		McDowell
Irvine	Greer		M Smith
Keery	Irwin		<b>Councillors</b>
McIlveen	McAlpine		Boyle
<b>Councillors</b>	McRandal		Cooper
Adair	Moore		Dunlop
Blaney	Morgan		McClellan
Brooks	Walker		Smart
Cathcart			
Chambers			
Cummings			
Edmund			
Gilmour			
Irvine			
Johnson			
Kennedy			
MacArthur			
McKimm			
McKee			
P Smith			
T Smith			
Thompson			
Woods			

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McKimm, seconded by Councillor Irvine, that the amendment be adopted;**

**Agreed that:**

- 1. The Council promotes the consultation via its website and social media and encourages people to respond as part of the campaign to retain these important services.**
- 2. That this Council writes to the Trust, asking for an extension to the time frame for the consultation to give the Trust time to remove the current survey which is hugely complex and biased, and fails to give the community an understanding of all 4 options.**
- 3. Asks the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust to send a clinician led deputation who can present the Urgent Care Centre and MIU proposals to the March Council meeting. Council will then respond to the consultation at its April meeting.**

#### **8.5 Consultation on Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland** (Appendix IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing that the Department for the Economy had launched a public consultation on the draft Circular Economy Strategy for Northern Ireland. The draft strategy set out a vision to create an innovative, inclusive and competitive economy, with responsible production and consumption at its core. A Circular Economy would be a key enabler



of the Department for the Economy's 10X Economic Vision for a decade of innovation.

The Draft Strategy set 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."

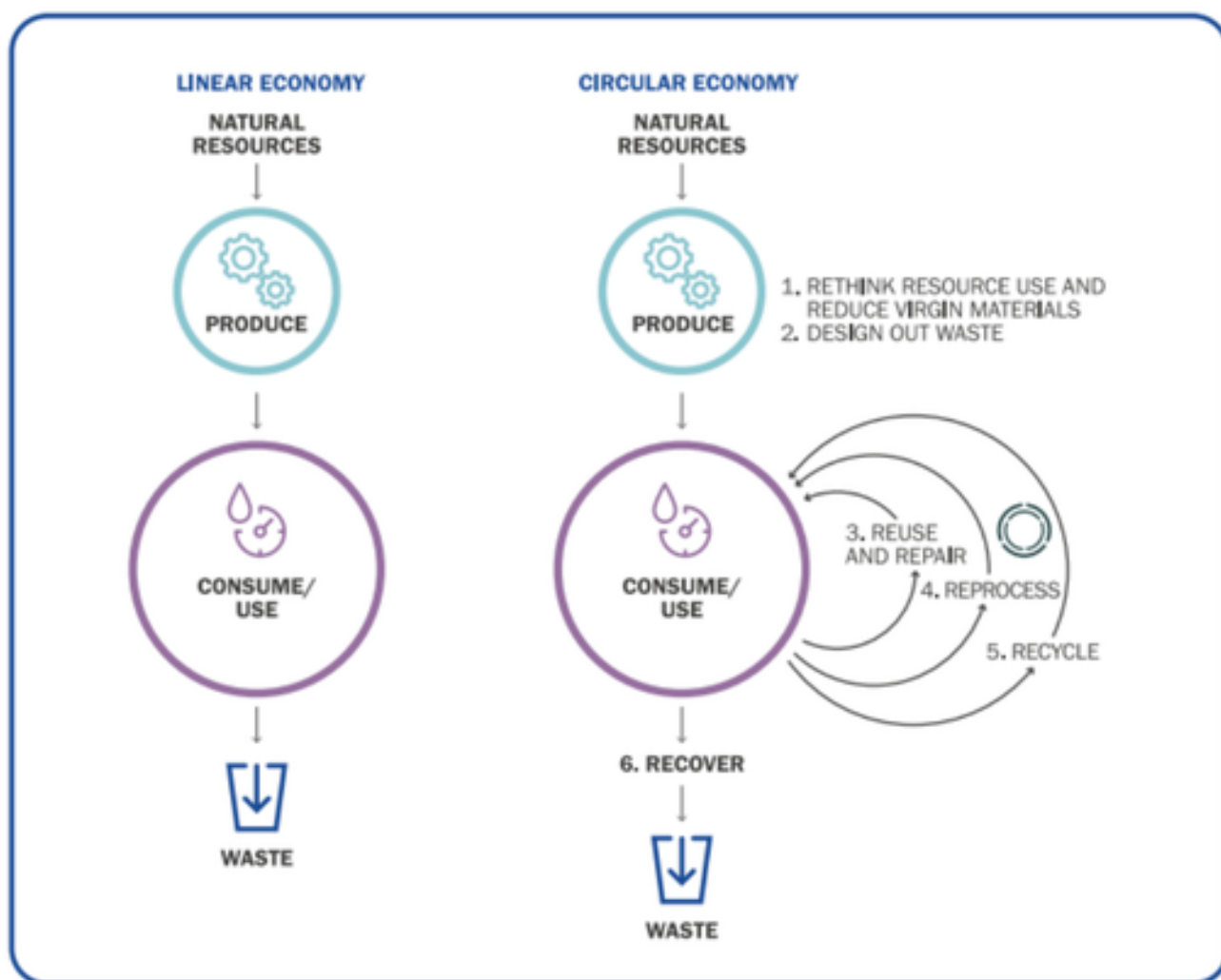
The document noted that today, like every day, all around the world precious materials would be taken from the earth and used to make things that may be used once before being thrown away. That 'take-make-use-dispose' approach was known as the Linear Economy. The Draft Strategy highlighted that the Linear Economy approach had been around for a long time, but it needed to change as:

- It was unsustainable – resources and materials were finite.
- It was expensive – to make something once, throw it away, and create a need to make another.
- It was bad for the environment – contributing to a climate emergency.

The alternative was referred to as a Circular Economy, which was what the proposed strategy addressed.

In a truly Circular Economy:

- We are able to reduce the use of the earth's resources that could not be replenished.
- We can switch to materials that could be reused and fuels that could be produced over and over again.
- We are able to reduce waste substantially.
- We can maintain and hold on to products and materials for as long as possible.



RECOMMENDED that the draft response to the consultation at Appendix 1 is approved for submission to the DfE.

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

## 9. REQUEST FOR DEPUTATION – THE NORTH CHANNEL WIND PROJECT, SBM OFFSHORE

(Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive detailing that 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.

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."

RECOMMENDED that the Council considers the request for a Deputation from North Channel Wind Project.

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

## **10. SEALING DOCUMENTS**

**RESOLVED: -** (On the proposal of Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor Adair)

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

- (a) Grant of Rights of Burial: Nos 14546-14590  
Typo Clandeboye Cemetery JX 3810 Collins  
Typo Clandeboye Cemetery PX 6625 Matchett
- (b) Deed of Transfer – Land at Bridge Street Link Car Park, Comber
- (c) Service Agreement for the Water Fountain at Portavogie Harbour
- (d) Deed of Exchange between Radox Ltd and Council (land at Hibernia Street, Holywood)
- (e) Ice Cream Licence for Banks Lane, Ballyholme
- (f) Ice Cream Licence for Luke's Point, Ballyholme



- (g) Ice Cream Licence for Harbour Road, Groomsport
- (h) Ice Cream Licence for Seapark, Holywood
- (i) Ice Cream Licence for Millisle Beach Park
- (j) Hot Drinks Licence for Luke's Point, Ballyholme
- (k) Hot Drinks Licence for Banks Lane, Ballyholme
- (l) Hot Drinks Licence for Seapark, Holywood
- (m) Hot Drinks Licence for Millisle Beach Park
- (n) Hot Drinks Licence for Cairn Wood, Craigantlet
- (o) Hot Drinks Licence for Kiltonga, Newtownards
- (p) Lease of land at 100 Ward Avenue, Bangor – ANDBC to Office Bearers of Bangor and North Down Camera Club.

## **11. TRANSFER OF RIGHTS OF BURIAL**

The following transfer application was received:-

Transfer/Assignments:

- (a) Loughview Cemetery B Grave 201 Brewster to Johnston
- (b) Loughview Cemetery B Grave 270 Brewster to Johnston
- (c) Comber Cemetery 16 Grave 16 Beers to Treacy
- (d) Clandeboye Cemetery AM Grave 3799 Robinson to Robinson

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

## **12. CONFERENCES**

### **12.1 National Association of Councillors (NAC) Northern Ireland Region – Leadership and Change in Local Enterprise** (Appendices VI &VII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive explaining that the NAC was holding a Workshop on Leadership and Change in Local Enterprise in the Lakewood Suite, Craigavon Civic Centre, Craigavon on Thursday 23 March 2023 9.30 am - 3.30 pm.

The Workshop was open to Councillors and senior officers who had a strong passion to improve their understanding of future new local enterprise, jobs and sustainable growth. Information on the event was included in the attached flyer and agenda. The Workshop was free to attend but must be booked in advance as places were limited.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council nominate Member(s).

Proposed by Councillor McRandal, seconded by Councillor Woods, that Councillor Moore be nominated with a senior officer.

Proposed by Alderman Irvine, seconded by Councillor P Smith, that Alderman Keery be nominated.

**RESOLVED**, that **Councillor Moore, Alderman Keery and a senior Council officer attend.**

### **13. ARMED FORCES COVENANT FUND TRUST** (Appendices VIII & IX)

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:-** Report from the Chief Executive detailing that Members would be aware that the Council's Veteran's Champion was Councillor Cummings. He had 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, had written to the Council to confirm that the funding had been confirmed and that a dedicated Support Officer had been appointed to assist the Veterans Champions community.

The development was welcomed as it provided support for the creation of an Outreach Programme to reach out into the veterans community in the Borough. An application process had now been developed for the Outreach Project over a two-year life cycle of funding, explained in an appendix and the process of approval further set out in an appendix.

The Council would apply to draw down the funds to support planned events. Initially it was recommended that publicity material to increase the profile of veterans support be created including pop-up stands and banners, leaflets and business cards. One event was planned to be held at the Royal British Legion in Newtownards on 9 March 2023. It would be an information session to raise awareness of support to veterans and was jointly promoted with Group 8 Royal British Legion.

**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.

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

Proposing the recommendation Councillor Cummings said it was a pleasure to do so as the Council's Veterans' Champion.

(Councillor Smart entered the meeting at 10.15 pm)

In doing so he took the opportunity to thank the NIVSO (Northern Ireland Veterans' Support Office) which had drawn down the funding on the Council's behalf from the Armed Forces Covenant Trust. This was a modest figure to be distributed amongst the nine support organisations and the eleven Councils of Northern Ireland. For our part this was the beginning and other events would follow from the proposal being heard this evening.

The significance of this was not the amount of funding, it was the message and start of a process that reinforced the Council's determination to enhance the proud bond that the Borough had with local veterans.

We were tempted to think of a veteran as an elderly man on memorial days but while they did represent a section of the veteran community in these times the veteran was increasingly much younger and did not automatically align themselves with the Royal British Legion or the Regimental Association from which they came. For them the challenges remained the same around housing, employment, education and health and the detachment they felt when settling in their communities.

He concluded by stating that he believed this funding would enable the Council to engage more effectively, and in doing so over the coming years with hard work and endeavour ensure that the veteran experience within the Borough would be a positive one.

Alderman Keery thanked Councillor Cummings and said he was doing a good job and should be given support. This had been a long battle to obtain the funding for Councils across Northern Ireland. He ended by informing the Council that in the past hour a policeman had been shot and seriously injured in Omagh.

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

(Councillor Cathcart declared an interest and left the meeting at this stage)

#### **14. REVIEW OF NILGA CONSTITUTION**

(Appendices X & XI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Letter from NILGA to the Chief Executive and The Northern Ireland Local Government Association Constitution (Draft Amendments February 2023).

There was no proposer so no decision was taken on this matter.

(Councillor Cathcart returned to the meeting)

#### **15. NOTICE OF MOTION STATUS REPORT**

(Appendix XII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive detailing that attached was 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 Councillor Thompson, seconded by Alderman Gibson, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **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, 2<sup>nd</sup> Marquess of Londonderry, who was known by the courtesy title of Viscount Castlereagh during most of his life, in the 200<sup>th</sup> year of his passing.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Environment Committee.**

### **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.

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

### **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.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor P Smith, seconded by Councillor Smart, that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Corporate Committee.**

**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.

Councillor T Smith asked for the Motion to be heard at this evening's meeting because he believed that the matter was a fait accompli by the Trust and while the consultation ran until May he believed that the Council should be preparing to take a stand.

The Mayor did not agree that this was an urgent matter and it had been discussed already earlier in the meeting.

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

**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.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Corporate Committee.**

**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 26<sup>th</sup> 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.



Councillor Gilmour asked for the Rescinding Motion to be heard by the Council meeting this evening as it was an urgent matter and the Mayor agreed.

Proposed by Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Councillor McKee, that the Rescinding Motion of Motion be adopted.

Councillor Gilmour began by outlining the background of how the Council had reached this position. Since the Council merger legacy North Down playparks had been as per the policy locked from dusk until dawn by external contractors. In 2020 the locking was brought in-house and was fulfilled by the Council's Neighbourhood Environment Team. From early 2022 the officers took an operational decision not to lock the seven playparks and that was done without consultation with the local communities where those playparks were situated.

Since the time when the locking was stopped residents living near some of these playparks had reported incidents of antisocial behaviour, unacceptable noise throughout the night, drinking, littering, dog fouling and vandalism. Councillor Gilmour reported that Clandeboye and Bloomfield were two areas which had particularly been affected. A Notice of Motion was brought by Alderman Irvine in May 2022 and at that stage it was agreed "that this Council notes with concern the recent decision taken to no longer lock playgrounds and Mugas in the Borough, that a report be brought back on the matter that will look at maintaining a locking up schedule." Further consultation since that time had not resolved the issues.

The Member welcomed those from Clandeboye Community who had attended the meeting this evening and had waited patiently to hear the debate. She believed Members would have received an email from the Chairman of the Clandeboye Village Community Association highlighting the issues which existed there.

The Clandeboye Community had lobbied hard for a playpark for the area, there had been community consultation and engagement to the extent that they even had an input as to the specific design and what was going into that playpark. There was a real sense of community, ownership and pride from those who fought hard for the playpark. As part of the process it was at that time agreed that in order to keep people safe it was necessary to ensure the site was well maintained and to prevent noise and antisocial behaviour occurring. The playpark was well used by local children, the local preschools and in better weather St Andrews Presbyterian Mums and Tots group.

However, since the playparks had been unlocked at night those living around the playpark had their lives become a misery. The constant banging of footballs off the Muga fencing late into the night, along with the noise of young people getting drunk in the park was seriously impacting on the mental wellbeing and quality of life of those living next to the park. That had caused some residents to move from their homes.

This was not simply an issue with young people since there were numerous occasions where vehicles had been driven into the area in the darkness and dogs had been let out of the vehicle and taken in to the Muga where the owners had

thrown a ball around to exercise their animals, allowing them to toilet there without cleaning up afterwards.

Bangor West Councillors had had multiple meetings and correspondence with officers regarding the issues and had met with the Community Association, with the Director and other Council officers present. The feeling was that the issue could be resolved with enforcement however Councillor Gilmour disagreed that it would not be cost effective to have the site guarded through the night.

There had also been instances where cars had driven up turned headlights on to light the Muga and playpark to allow people to play and generally be antisocial under the cover of darkness. The Muga surface itself had been damaged with a large red strip of the surface having been ripped off, which, having been reported by the Clandeboye Village Community Association at the end of last summer had never been repaired.

The police had also identified an increase in incidents around the playpark in Clandeboye however it did not always have the manpower to respond and had also said that the cases they had been able to identify in relation to the area may only be a snapshot due to the nature of how incidents were recorded on the PSNI system. Incidents were recorded via a post code/postal address and as the playpark did not have its own postal address the incidents were recorded using the complainants address which was often in the surrounding area.

Councillor Gilmour had spoken to people from Clandeboye but she knew it was the same position in Bloomfield and would let the Members representing that area speak about that with more insight.

She explained that the playpark and Muga at Clandeboye were probably closer to the backs of houses than some other playparks in the Borough but it was designed in such a way to try to create enough space for a grass pitch beside it.

The Rescinding Motion was asking that the Council resume the locking of the playpark and Muga at Clandeboye and the playpark at Bloomfield from dusk to dawn for a trial period of 6 months, subject to review and it monitors concerns and carries out local consultation at parks affected by the changes in the locking up schedule in the Borough. She believed that that consultation should have taken place before changes were implemented initially. The residents had had enough and it was not right to expect them to sit around for longer waiting on a consultation to be made.

Seconding the Rescinding Motion Councillor McKee explained that the situation at both Clandeboye and Bloomfield was untenable and that there had been a massive increase in anti-social behaviour reports to the police and dog fouling in the Muga and playpark making those facilities a dangerous place for families and young people to use. As a result of the welcome intervention of Community Associations in Clandeboye and Bloomfield and members of the public reaching out to elected Members, Councillors responded to their call for help.

The Council did agree to undertake local consultation before making any further decisions on the future locking arrangements but unfortunately that consultation



could not take place until the Autumn which is why the Rescinding Motion was required. He did not believe it was acceptable that residents must wait another six months to be consulted while they continued to suffer the outcome of this poorly made decision to stop the locking up.

The Community and Wellbeing Committee have been working to address the issues caused by the end of the night-time lock up at Clandeboye and Bloomfield, but there was no doubt in his mind, that if the Committee had known that consultation would take the best part of a year to take place, that they would not have agreed that consultation would be the only course of action.

It was his understanding that in the past the Council had to step up and address issues of anti-social behaviour on Council land before. At Linear Park the Council faced a challenging situation, adapted to an ongoing problem that existed and created a solution that suited the issue, that included locking up at night. He felt that should be done similarly for Clandeboye and Bloomfield.

He believed that the situation should not be permitted to continue and the Council owed it to residents to sort the problem out. This Rescinding Motion asked that residents in those two areas be given respite from the anti-social behaviour by providing locking of the sites for a six month trial to allow the consultation to take place. He hoped that the Council could agree to that and demonstrate that it listened to the concerns of residents and would adapt when a process had been followed poorly.

He concluded by stating that the residents of Clandeboye and Bloomfield did not want special treatment, they just wanted to be treated with the respect they deserved.

(Alderman Wilson left the meeting at 10.26 pm)

Councillor Irwin thanked her fellow Bangor West Councillors and felt working with the communities had been a great example of working together to reach solutions. She agreed with all that had been stated and thanked residents for their tenacity and love for their area and she hoped that an agreement would be reached on the issues being faced.

(Councillor P Smith left the meeting at 10.28 pm)

Councillor T Smith fully supported the Rescinding Motion and placed responsibility for those areas on to the Council.

Councillor Chambers stated that he had not intended to speak on the Motion but drew parallel with what had happened in the Linear Park a number of years previously which had led to the locking of gates overnight. He thought the locking of the parks at Clandeboye and Bloomfield would be a saving to the Council in the long run.

(Councillor Walker left the meeting at 10.30 pm)

Alderman Irvine, Councillor MacArthur, The Mayor and Councillor McKimm added their support to the Motion and praised the community spirit which had been demonstrated and wished to let the communities know that their voices had been heard and the Council was listening.

Councillor Gilmour thanked Members for their support and stressed the importance of consultation with communities. She also pointed to the risks and dangers of adopting a one size fits all approach.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Councillor McKee that the Rescinding Motion be adopted.**

### **Circulated for Information**

(Appendices XIII & XIV)

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

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Gibson, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the information be noted.**

(Councillor Brooks left the meeting at 10.45 pm)

### **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

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

#### **7.5.2 Arising from Item 16 – Community and Wellbeing Committee - Romas Outdoor Seating Area at Mill Street Carpark, Newtownards**

**\*\*\*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)**

#### **17. AWARD OF TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF SPECIALITY MARINA CONSULTANCY SERVICES**

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

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

**SCHEDULE 6 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information)**

### **READMITTANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED**, on the proposal of Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the public/press be readmitted to the meeting.

### **TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 10.57 pm.

Unclassified

46

## ITEM 7.1

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	29 March 2023
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	20 March 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	Matters Arising from Minutes of Council meeting dated 22 February- Invite to Musical Tribute to HM Queen Elizabeth II
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Matters Arising - Invite to Musical Tribute to HM Queen Elizabeth II

At the February meeting of the Council, Members considered a Matters Arising report, from the Minutes of the Corporate Services Committee dated 14 February 2023. The report detailed an invitation received 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.

At the meeting, it was agreed that:

**"the invitation be noted and that the Armed Forces Champion (Councillor Cummings), the Mayor (Councillor Douglas) and Councillor Greer be nominated to attend".**

Since then, Councillor Greer has tendered her resignation from Council effective 1 April and will no longer be in a position to attend the event. This seat will remain vacant until the Local Government Election on 18 May.

Unclassified

47

As such, a nomination is now sought to re-allocate this place at the concert.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council nominate a Member to attend the concert in the place of Councillor Greer, who will have ceased to be a Member from 1 April 2023.





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](mailto:ni@soldierscharity.org) [www.soldierscharity.org](http://www.soldierscharity.org)

NI Councils List A.

12<sup>th</sup> 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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](mailto: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 meeting of the Planning Committee was held (hybrid) on Tuesday 7th March 2023 at 7.00 pm via Zoom and at Council Offices on Church Street, Newtownards.

### PRESENT:

**In the Chair:** Alderman Gibson

**Aldermen:** Keery (Zoom)  
McIlveen

<b>Councillors:</b>	Adair (Zoom)	McKee (Zoom)
	Brooks (Zoom)	McRandal
	Cathcart (Zoom)	Moore (Zoom)
	Kennedy	Thompson (Zoom)
	McAlpine (Zoom)	Walker
	McClellan	Smith, P (Zoom)

**Officers:** Director of Prosperity (A McCullough), Head of Planning (G Kerr) and Democratic Services Officer (R King)

### **1. APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies.

**NOTED.**

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

No Interests were declared.

**NOTED.**

### **3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023** (Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>TH</sup> February 2023.

RECOMMENDED that the minutes be noted.

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor McRandal, seconded by Councillor Walker, that the recommendation be adopted.**



#### 4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

##### 4.1 LA06/2021/1125/F – CHANGE OF USE FROM GARAGE TO SHORT TERM HOLIDAY LET (RETROSPECTIVE)

(Appendices II - III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report outlining the planning application.

**DEA:** Ards Peninsula

**Committee Interest:** A Local development application 'called-in' from delegated list w/c 30 January'23 to Planning Committee by a member of that Committee

**Proposal:** Change of use from garage to short term holiday let

**Site Location:** 116 Portaferry Road, Newtownards

**Recommendation:** Refusal

The Head of Planning outlined the above application, advising that it was for the change of use from a garage to short term holiday let at 116 Portaferry Road, Newtownards, and the application was before members due to a call in by Alderman McIlveen. The recommendation was to refuse planning permission.

Providing some context for members, the building under consideration was previously used as a garage in association with the dwelling on the site. The garage was converted into holiday let accommodation without the benefit of planning permission.

An enforcement case was opened (LA06 2021/0054/CA) for alleged unauthorised tourist accommodation and an application for retrospective permission was now sought.

The holiday let was featured on numerous websites including Booking.com, Discover Northern Ireland and Visit Ards and North Down.

Members should note that all tourist accommodation was centrally uploaded by Tourism NI on the Discover Northern Ireland website and these listings were then 'fed' into the shared web platform of visitardsandnorthdown.com.

The Council had no ability to upload accommodation listings separately as Tourism NI determined the certified status of the property. NI Tourism did not check if a facility had planning permission.

The site was located on the Portaferry Road directly opposite the coastline. It was a countryside location within a designated AONB in the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015.

The site contained a bungalow and also the building under consideration of this retrospective application which was located to the east of the site with a parking and turning area to the front of the buildings.

The building consisted of one room which was used as a bedroom with an ensuite. It had a sitting area within the room and coffee station with a small fridge. The room appeared to have the same furniture and facilities similar to that of a standard hotel room.

In terms of policy consideration, Policy TSM 5 of PPS 16 which dealt with tourism proposals referred to the construction of new units or conversion of buildings within clachans which were associated with existing tourism enterprises. The proposal did not involve a new build or a clachan so it did not fit neatly within Policy TSM 5.

The justification and amplification section of TSM 5 explained that the intention of the policy was to avoid random development throughout the countryside and with the policy providing sustainable economic benefits with new self-catering accommodation linked with an existing tourism enterprise.

Paragraph 7.29 of Policy TSM 5 of PPS 16 referred assessment back to Policy CTY 4 of PPS 21 for the conversion of existing buildings. Consequently, the reader was directed from paragraph 7.29 of Policy TSM 5 to CTY4 of PPS 21 which dealt with the conversion and re-use of existing buildings.

The policy thrust of CTY 4 was in regard to older buildings in the countryside in order to secure their retention and reuse.

With the introduction of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement there was a change of policy direction and therefore this was the primary policy for consideration over CTY 4 regarding the conversion of existing buildings.

The SPSS at paragraph 6.73 provided clarity when dealing with conversion of buildings and took precedence over CTY4 as there was a policy change from a 'suitable building' to a 'locally important building'.

It could not be argued that the proposal was a locally important building as interpreted within the policy.

It was a garage that had been clad to the front and while making it distinctive, it did not make it locally important. By considering this building as locally important would be sending out the message that by carrying out certain works to existing buildings in order to make them distinctive or stand out would be thus making it locally important. It was not what the policy intended.

While it was acknowledged that each application must be assessed on its own merits, the PAC also stressed the importance of locally important buildings – one appeal being dismissed within the Borough.

In summary, whilst acknowledging the particular circumstances of each application, the Council's Planning Department had sought to apply the policy for tourism proposals in a consistent manner.

An inconsistency of approach to the application could open the Council to potential challenge. The policy on conversion of a locally important building was surely not

meant to permit the cladding of a garage building to make it a more modern or quirky building and then being able to convert to another use, one which was also not supported under the Tourism policy.

To authorise this would set a precedent for other people to construct or reuse a building, convert it, and then have a dearth of such 'tourism' properties. By setting the precedent for such forms of development could detrimentally change the character of an area whereby there were more traffic movements, and amenity issues.

The Planning Department was not against the development of tourism provision within the Borough and had approved proposals for tourism along the Ards Peninsula such as glamping pods and self-catering in the countryside such as self-catering pods.

The approval of the proposed development would have the potential to create a precedent for future applications that would undermine the policy. Compliance with planning policy was in the public interest and a matter of acknowledged importance.

Refusal of planning permission was therefore recommended.

Alderman McIlveen outlined the reasoning for his call-in on the application, advising that he wished to draw out SPPS 6.265 which referred to a positive approach to determining applications in relation to tourism and development which also included rural areas and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). He felt that the planning officer had not put enough weight on that particular part of planning policy when assessing this application.

The Head of Planning advised that as with every planning application, all aspects had been weighed up and policy CTY 4, in relation to the conversion, had been the determining factor for the recommendation to refuse and the whole proposal had fallen under that particular test, so therefore the tourism and AONB aspects had not carried as much weight.

Responding, Alderman McIlveen took the view that the CTY 4 policy was not exclusive to older buildings and felt the opinion taken by the case officer had been too restrictive in terms of the tourism objectives set out in the planning policy which he had referred to.

Explaining that policy, the officer advised that the intention was to seek the retention of locally significant buildings and the bar had been set high because there had been incidents of the policy being abused as it was hard to interpret what should be considered as a significant building. The policy had therefore sought to address this and referred to conversions of churches and old school buildings, for example.

She added that an old farmhouse had been approved for conversion at Greengraves Road under this policy previously and alluded to further examples of glamping pods approved under the tourism policy for the southern shores of the Ards Peninsula.

The officer warned that if the existing application was approved then it would send a message that any garage which was prominent from the roadside would be worthy of conversion. There were many examples in equally attractive areas and that was the reason why the bar was set high with the policy setting clear direction for what should be considered as a significant building. She referred to a conversation of an outhouse on Thorny Hill Road which had been refused planning permission previously despite being in close proximity to part of the Columban Way.

Alderman McIlveen felt that Strangford Lough was different, describing it as a huge tourism asset for the Borough and pointed to the sustainability objective within in the SPPS, arguing that conversion was more sustainable than allocating portions of land for glamping pods. In terms of a precedent being set for other similar types of conversions, he argued that each application was always assessed on its own merit and therefore felt that should not be a factor.

Councillor Cathcart was concerned that CTY 4 was too restrictive in terms of the types of buildings it sought to retain and furthermore restricting the Borough's tourism potential. He did not see a danger for setting a precedent, pointing out that he could not envisage anyone wanting to spend a night in his own garage in the suburbs of Bangor. This application should be assessed in the context of the location and the tourism potential.

As a conversion of an existing building, he asked what harm officers felt the proposed use would bring and what would happen if it was an application for the change of use from an existing dwelling to a holiday let.

In terms of the potential harm, the Head of Planning explained this was an unauthorised conversion of a garage to tourist accommodation and the harm was that allowing it to continue on that basis was not taking account of the main policy consideration of the relevant SPPS in regard to conversions.

Change of use from a dwelling to a holiday let would still be considered under the same policy. A holiday let changed the nature of that use of the building and there were impacts on comings and goings of guests to the property and impacts on neighbours to take into account.

Councillor McClean agreed with previous comments and had always been of the understanding that regardless of any precedent, each application needed to be considered on their own merits. He felt that if anything ever came to the planning committee that was deemed detrimental to the area, then it was the responsibility of the committee to refuse that regardless of any precedent.

He was of the understanding that the policy's direction was to look favourably on locally important buildings and did not necessarily state that refusal should be applied if a building was deemed not be of local importance. He asked for clarity on that and the Director of Prosperity added that the SPPS was applying a higher test than what was in PPS 21 in relation to suitably important buildings. The PAC had set out what it considered to be in that category and those PAC decisions had never been subject to a successful Judicial Review. Therefore William Orbison QC would advise this to be a clear material consideration for planning authorities.

On that basis, this was not considered to be a locally important building, of historical or architectural value, where allowing it to operate as tourist accommodation would retain and secure its future.

The chair invited Mr Jason Martin (agent) to join the meeting who spoke in favour of the application and had submitted the attached speaking notes.

The Chair invited questions from Members to the speaker.

Alderman McIlveen referred the speaker to his earlier comments which suggested planners had not taken in to account the policy around tourism and asked the speaker for his own thoughts on that.

Mr Martin felt there was a balance to be struck and this was a very niche application and 'slapping cladding' on any other building would not work in many other locations.

It was the mix of the location and the architectural importance of the building and he felt that the group of buildings in that area, on that part of the road made this application suitable under SPPS. If you were to take away the public visibility it would become less important, but it was the prominence on Strangford Lough mixed with architectural features of other buildings that made it of local importance. He felt that the new and old policies failed to provide clear direction on tourism for Northern Ireland and we were relying on policies that were created 10 and 20 years ago. The tourism industry in Northern Ireland had changed in terms of more demand for staycations and planning policy had failed to keep up with that.

He argued that there was a severe lack of accommodation in the Borough and a balance needed to be struck. Precedents were not being set because every application had to be assessed on its own merit. He added that there had been no objections to the application from any of the statutory consultees or neighbours.

Alderman McIlveen asked about the online ranking of the accommodation referred to in the speaker's notes and Mr Martin advised it was ranked in the top 13 quirky accommodations on Buzzfeed for the whole of the United Kingdom.

In a further query, Alderman McIlveen asked the speaker for his view on the need to assess the application on the building's previous use as a garage.

Mr Martin stated that the building had not been used as a garage for a number of years and under permitted development there had been no requirement to apply to change the garage into a garden room when it was used for the occupants.

Responding to a further query from Alderman McIlveen, the speaker added that if the application was unsuccessful the building would be maintained as a garden room and not as a garage. He believed that this met the requirements of permitted development. He felt that the building should be assessed on its current physical appearance.



Responding to queries from Councillor McClean, Mr Martin confirmed the property was last used as a garage in 2017. He agreed it was right not to grant permission to every single garage for conversion to a holiday let and that there had to be certain parameters and he felt that given the prominence of the building and the architecture it should be considered suitable under 6.73 of SPPS which while not an exhaustive list, it was not an explicit one. He confirmed that the accommodation looked the same now as it did as a garden room which had been used by friends and family.

Pointing to the retrospective aspect of the application, Councillor McClean asked why permission was not sought previously and the speaker advised that the physical changes were done under permitted development but he could not comment why his client had not sought planning permission for the change of use but he had acted immediately to try and resolve the matter once he had received an enforcement letter.

In response to a question from Councillor Cathcart, Mr Martin confirmed that the building had become a property let in 2018.

Councillor Walker understood that the building had been used as a holiday let from 2021 but it was clarified that the enforcement action was taken in 2021.

Mr Martin clarified for Councillor Walker that it was used from 2017 to 2018 as an extra room for the house and even now was blocked out for personal use by the occupants.

Responding to a final query, Mr Martin confirmed to the chair that the client had evidence that the building was used for private use in 2017.

The Chair thanked the speaker for attending.

Alderman McIlveen had taken an approach from a tourism point of view and recognised that Mr Martin's argument was that the building was of special character. He asked officers for a specific definition of special character.

The Head of Planning referred him to the wording of section 6.73 which mentioned locally important buildings such as a former schoolhouse, churches and older traditional barns. The thrust of the policy was for older buildings and not for garages with finishes that made them more noticeable.

He asked for clarity if there was anything in the PAC decisions that defined locally important or if the list she had referred to was exclusive. The officer did not believe the list was exclusive but she said that the building was not architecturally significant. It was only because of the distinctive finishes added to the building that made it stand out but this did not make it locally important.

Alderman McIlveen pointed out that members were being asked to consider this as a garage conversion, however Mr Martin had advised that works had been undertaken under permitted development to convert it to a summer house which had been its most recent use. The officer confirmed that the building was being assessed on its

existing visual appearance and the images of a garage had been provided for context as was normal practice.

Councillor Walker thanked Alderman McIlveen for calling in the application as it had highlighted issues in planning legislation, but he felt that there was nothing that could be done in the existing meeting that would enable the Planning Committee to grant planning consent. He agreed the policy was too restrictive and he had been concerned to hear that Tourism NI determined the certified status of holiday lets and did not check if a facility had planning permission.

Given the policy restrictions, he indicated that he would be reluctantly proposing the officer's recommendation to refuse planning permission.

Proposed by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor McAlpine, that the officer's recommendation be agreed and planning permission be refused.

Referring members to his earlier comments, Councillor Walker added that the issues and restrictions highlighted by this application needed to be reviewed and considered in the Local Development Plan.

Alderman McIlveen could not support the proposal, arguing that Members should not be slaves to policy and felt that the SPPS had been interpreted very narrowly and to completely eradicate CTY 4 seemed a step too far. There had been issues previously in relation to interpretation of SPPS and these had largely been untested through the court. In this case it was important to look at strategic policy in relation to tourism and the positive approach that was directed. He appreciated the reluctance from Councillor Walker but he could not support his proposal.

On being put to the meeting, with 7 voting FOR, 7 voting AGAINST, 1 ABSTAINING and 1 ABSENT, the Chair used his casting vote against, and the proposal FELL.

The voting was as follows:

<b>FOR (7)</b>	<b>AGAINST (7)</b>	<b>ABSTAINED (1)</b>	<b>ABSENT (1)</b>
<b>Councillors:</b>	<b>Aldermen:</b>	<b>Alderman:</b>	Cooper
Brooks	McIlveen	Gibson	
McAlpine	Keery		
McKee	<b>Councillors:</b>		
McRandal	Adair		
Moore	Cathcart		
Smith P	Kennedy		
Walker	McClellan		
	Thompson		

The Chair advised that he would use his casting vote to vote against the proposal. He felt that it was important to allow the application for the tourism related reasons that had been articulated by his colleagues. It was also an existing building that was successful.



Alderman McIlveen proposed, seconded by Alderman Keery, to grant planning permission with delegated authority for Planning Officers to attach appropriate conditions.

Alderman McIlveen appreciated the discussion and the representation made by officers and felt that there was a keen wish for Council to see its tourism offer develop and in that case, taking in to account the planning policy statement, on balance with the aspects of the policy in regard to conversion of the building, he felt this was a sympathetic conversion. This was a change of use from a striking summer house that was a prominent feature along that particular road and it was not something that would be of harm to the surrounding area. He felt it should be considered under the CTY 4 policy.

Councillor McClean echoed those comments, feeling that the restrictions were not consistent with any of the Borough's tourism objectives. He felt the building stood in marked contrast from other buildings in that area and he had driven past it many times and had been impressed by its appearance. He did not fear precedents, and he would like to see the policy reviewed as this was an extraordinary restrictive position and the policy was not fit for purpose. On balance therefore, he would be supporting the proposal.

Referring to his earlier comments, Councillor Walker was sympathetic to the application but could not support the proposal to approve it. He was aware of other buildings along the same stretch that were not pebble dashed with brown windows, as had been alluded to earlier in the debate, and those buildings were also architecturally impressive, and this particular building in question was not any more significant than those. It was the restrictive policy that the Planning Committee was guided by however that needed to be reviewed.

Councillor P Smith took a similar view, he was torn by the application as Council did want to support its tourist industry and this was a small attempt to do so. Ultimately though, he felt it did not meet the definition of a locally important building and was sympathetic to the application and the policy restrictions, but he could not support it.

On being put to the meeting, with 8 voting FOR, 7 voting AGAINST, 0 ABSTAINING and 1 ABSENT the proposal was declared CARRIED.

<b>FOR (8)</b>	<b>AGAINST (7)</b>	<b>ABSTAINED (0)</b>	<b>ABSENT (1)</b>
<b>Aldermen:</b>	<b>Councillors:</b>		Cooper
Gibson	Brooks		
McIlveen	McAlpine		
Keery	McKee		
<b>Councillors:</b>	McRandal		
Adair	Moore		
Cathcart	Smith P		
Kennedy	Walker		
McClean			
Thompson			

**RESOLVED**, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Keery, to grant planning permission with delegated authority for Planning Officers to attach appropriate conditions.

#### **4.2 LA06/2022/0437/F ACCESS POINT AND DRIVEWAY TO DWELLING, TO INCLUDE PILLARS AND WALLS - 18 MILLBROOKE ROAD, BANGOR**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report outlining the planning application.

**DEA:** Holywood & Clondeboye

**Committee Interest:** A Local development application 'called-in' to Planning Committee from the delegated list w/c 23 January by a member of that Committee

**Proposal:** Access point and driveway to dwelling, to include pillars and walls

**Site Location:** 18 Millbrooke Road, Bangor

**Recommendation:** Refusal

It was noted that item 4.2 had been withdrawn following the withdrawal of the above planning application.

### **5. UPDATE ON PLANNING APPEALS**

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

#### **Appeal Decisions**

1. The following appeal was dismissed on 15 February 2023.

PAC Ref	2022/A0023
Application ref	LA06/2021/0698/LBC
Appellant	Mr James Woods (Castlereagh Ltd.)
Subject of Appeal	Demolition of structurally unsound and dangerous listed building HB24/01/139
Location	2 – 4 Church Street, Portaferry

The Council refused this application on 20 April 2022 for the following reason:

- i. The proposal was contrary to paragraph 6.15 of Strategic Policy Planning Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy BH 10 of PPS 6 in that the development would if permitted result in the loss of a listed building and no exceptional reasons had been provided to outweigh its loss.

The building subject of the appeal was a grade B1 listed building (ref. HB24/01/139).

Policy BH10 of PPS6 states there would be a presumption in favour of retaining listed buildings. It went on that the demolition of a listed building would not be

permitted unless there were exceptional reasons why the building could not be retained in its original or a reasonably modified form.

Where, exceptionally, listed building consent was granted for demolition this would normally be conditional on prior agreement for the redevelopment of the site and appropriate arrangements for recording the building before its demolition. No new scheme for redevelopment of the site was submitted to the Council as a separate but accompanying application.

The Appellant questioned the special architectural and historic interest of the building. He considered that it possessed no special architectural features, nor had any historic interest beyond its age. Consultee HED and in attendance at the appeal described the building as having local historic interest by virtue of its irregular internal plan form, as well as its age.

The Commissioner acknowledged the information submitted in the Appellant's structural report, Risk Assessment and other supporting information however the personnel involved in compiling the reports did not have specialisms in conservation issues pertaining to old buildings. It was therefore accepted that the Council's report was better positioned to assess the matter of retention with regard to such a building given the specific specialism in conservation engineering and greater weight was placed in the overall assessment contained in the Council's report and it was not accepted that the building was beyond saving.

The Commissioner accepted the Council's position that the building could be made whole, with acceptable modifications and while it would be an expensive and laborious process, it remained possible, though challenging.

The building subject of the appeal still possessed historic features, arising from the age and design of the building, worthy of retention. It would not be in the public interest to permit demolition. Consequently, the Commissioner considered the demolition of the building would be contrary to Policy BH10 of PPS6 and the related provisions of the SPPS, the Council had sustained its reason for refusal and the appeal failed.

2. The following appeal was allowed on 16 February 2022.

PAC Ref	2021/E0043
Application ref	LA06/2021/0207/LDP
Appellant	Mr P. Babb
Subject of Appeal	Commencement of development approved under planning application X/2006/0011/RM
Location	32d Quarter Road, Cloughey, Newtownards.

The Council refused the above application on 24 August 2021 as taking account of the evidence provided and the information available to the Council consider that the planning permission X/2006/0011/F was not lawfully implemented prior to its expiry date.

Application X/2006/0011/RM for a replacement dwelling approved the reserved matters associated with X/2002/0974/O on 15 June 2006.

Condition 1 stated that the development shall be begun by whichever was the later of the following dates: - the expiration of a period of 5 years from the grant of outline planning permission; or the expiration of 2 years from the date hereof. In this case, two years from the date of the reserved matters approval was 15 June 2008 and five years from the date of the outline approval was 6 March 2008. Therefore, the critical date for implementing the approval was 15 June 2008.

The onus was therefore on the appellant to demonstrate that any work of construction in the course of the erection of the buildings were carried out at the site prior to 15 June 2008. The Commissioner accepted that the laying of foundations and construction of a brick course upon those foundations amounted to works of construction in the course of the erection of the buildings. The Council was of the opinion that it would be impossible to ascertain when those works were carried out without Building Control records or aerial imagery.

While evidence was submitted from several sources to demonstrate works were ongoing, the works stated on the Building Control records themselves did not amount to works of construction in the course of the erection of the buildings.

Evidence submitted included two letters from contractors who carried out the works to demonstrate that the foundations and block course were laid shortly after the building control inspection of 16 August 2007, but Council suggested that the lack of corroborating information along with these letters, such as receipts or bank statements, should be afforded less weight.

The commissioner did not share the Council's view as the letters from the contractor's indicated that the foundations were constructed as part of the wider works at the site in August 2007 and Council did not provide a sufficiently persuasive argument which would cause the Commissioner to doubt the veracity of the appellants evidence around this matter.

As such the Commissioner was satisfied on the balance of probabilities, that the foundations had been in situ since August 2007 and the construction works undertaken represented an appropriate and timely commencement of the approval.

### 3. The following appeal was dismissed on 22 February 2023

PAC Ref	2021/A0144
Application ref	LA06/2019/0609/O
Appellant	Mr Henry McDowell
Subject of Appeal	2 no. infill dwellings and garages
Location	Land between 10 & 12 Ballycreely Road, Comber

The Council refused this application on 04 November 2021 for the following reasons.

- i. The proposal was contrary to the provisions contained in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy CTY1 of

Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside, in that there were no overriding reasons why this development was essential in this rural location and could not be located within a settlement.

- ii. The proposal was contrary to The Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and Policy CTY8 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside, in that the proposal did not constitute a small gap sufficient only to accommodate up to a maximum of two houses within an otherwise substantial and continuously built-up frontage and would, if permitted, result in the extension of ribbon development along the Ballycreely Road.
- iii. The proposal was contrary to the provisions contained in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and Policy CTY14 of Planning Policy Statement 21, Sustainable Development in the Countryside, in that the proposal would, if permitted, extend the existing ribbon of development along Ballycreely Road and would further erode the rural character of the area due to a build-up of suburban style development when viewed with existing buildings.

The Commissioner was of the opinion that the plot size analysis provided by the Council was reasonably accurate and the average plot size was representative of the existing plots along the frontage which could accommodate more than two dwellings.

While it was argued that the plot sizes of the two proposed dwellings accorded with those of adjacent dwellings when looking at them in isolation, this was not representative of the character of development as a whole along the frontage. Subsequently, the appeal site did not represent a small gap site sufficient only to accommodate up to a maximum of two houses and would fail to respect the existing development pattern along the frontage in terms of size, scale, siting and plot size.

The Commissioner sustained the Council's second reason for refusal as it was considered that the appeal development would add to an existing ribbon of development and was not an exception under the policy and was therefore contrary to Policy CTY8 of PPS21 and the related provisions of the SPPS.

The Commissioner also considered and upheld objector's concerns regarding visual integration and the appeal development would fail to satisfy Policy CTY13 of PPS21 when read as a whole and the related provisions of the SPPS.

The Commissioner considered that the loss of the visual gap of the appeal site and consequent further erosion of rural character would be contrary to Policy CTY14 of PPS21 and the related provisions of the SPPS and therefore Council's third reason for refusal was sustained.

Objectors concerns regarding road safety were not upheld and concerns raised regarding surface water run off following high periods of rainfall were considered to be a civil matter.



All the PAC reports on the cases above were appended to this report.

### New Appeals Lodged

4. The following appeals were lodged on 15 and 17 February respectively.

PAC Ref	2022/A0192
Application ref	LA06/2022/0346/O
Appellant	Richard Topping
Subject of Appeal	Infill site for 2 No. dwellings with domestic garages
Location	Between 32 and 34 Castle Espie Road, Comber

PAC Ref	2022/A0193
Application ref	LA06/2020/1008/O
Appellant	Ashton Fraser Investments
Subject of Appeal	Erection of 9 Dwellings with access off Messines Road (Right turning Lane provided)
Location	Lands immediately North of 10-18 Cambourne View and 17 Cambourne Park Newtownards

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

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

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

### 6. PLANNING SERVICE UNIT PLAN (2023/24) (Appendix IV)

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

Since 2017/18 Service Plans had been produced by each Service in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context;
- Provide focus on direction;
- Facilitate alignment between Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities;
- Motivate and develop staff;
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice;
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes;
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.



A draft plan for 2023-24 was attached, which had been developed to align with objectives of The Big Plan for Ards and North Down 2017-2032; the draft Corporate Plan 2020-24 and the draft Annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The Plan would also support delivery of the Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development 2018 -2030. The agreement of the plan would also aid toward achievement of the Council's performance improvement duties under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

The Service Plan highlighted where the service contributed to the Corporate Plan and, where this was the case, set out the objectives of the service for the 2023-24 year. It further identified the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service would try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The plan had been developed in conjunction with staff, officers and management and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant and took account of budget setting coming out of decisions made in relation to setting of the rate, under works not being commenced and associated risks.

The plan was based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g., due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP) the plan may have needed to be revised.

The Committee would be provided with update reports on performance against the agreed plan.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council agrees the attached Planning Service plan.

Referring to the 15-week processing time target for local development applications, Councillor Cathcart noted that pre-Covid the Planning Service had been extremely close to meeting that target however there had been setbacks post-Pandemic and he asked what action was being taken to address an adverse in processing times. In addition, he asked what progress was being made on meeting the eight-week target to process householder development applications.

The Head of Planning advised that officers were actively working to improve those processing times, in particular the householder applications. She referred to technical issues in relation to the MasterGov system which had caused the recent delays to applications and it was a matter of working through those glitches, as reported at the last Planning Committee meeting. She advised that there had been some recent improvement to processing times following that ongoing work.

The Director of Prosperity referred to staffing pressures and increased demand on the service, post-Pandemic, and that had brought further impacts, particularly in respect of the householder team. While the Planning Service was not hitting the eight-week target, the vast majority of applications were being processed within the previous 15 week target, but efforts were being made to reduce that timescale to eight weeks.

The Director advised that discussions were ongoing with statutory consultees to reduce response times and as part of a wider improvement scheme across Northern Ireland, her department was working to improve the system in terms of introducing statutory validation check lists which would enable officers to refuse an application early in the process if it failed to contain necessary criteria. This would resolve front-loading issues on the service.

Councillor Cathcart appreciated those efforts, adding that a speedy planning system helped to bring economic growth and investment to the area. He asked how other Councils compared to Ards and North Down's reported processing times.

The Director cautioned against comparison due to the variances in staff levels and the number of different types of applications across different Council areas. For example Belfast, Londonderry, Armagh and Banbridge might have had more major applications on the system while other areas had a much smaller number of applications. The figures were available on the quarterly statistics that would be provided in the quarterly updates. The Quarter 3 Performance Report was due to be provided but unfortunately the Department for Infrastructure had been delayed in providing the statistics. The Planning Committee would be provided with those figures once available.

Councillor Cathcart noted the irony that the DfI which set the targets had been delayed in providing the figures, including the delay the around the Queen's Parade development which had greatly affected those figures.

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

## **7. UPDATE ON TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Head of Planning stating that this report represented the quarterly update to Planning Committee regarding detail relating to Tree Preservation Orders served and applications for consent to carry out works to protected trees.

The table attached set out the figures from the date of the last report to Committee.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the content of this report.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Keery, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

**AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor McClean, that the public/press be excluded during the discussion of the undernoted item of confidential business.**

PC.07.03.2023 PM

65

**8. UPDATE ON ENFORCEMENT MATTERS**

(Appendix V)

**\*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\*****\*\*\*NOT FOR PUBLICATION\*\*\***

**SCHEDULE 6 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information)**

**RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Keery, that the public/press be re-admitted to the meeting.**

**TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 8.36pm.

## ITEM 8.2.

66

**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 March 2023 at 7.00 pm.

**PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Alderman McDowell

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

<b>Councillors:</b>	Boyle	Johnson (via Zoom)
	Cathcart (via Zoom)	MacArthur
	Cummings	McAlpine (via Zoom)
	Edmund (via Zoom)	McKee (via Zoom)
	Greer (via Zoom)	Smart (via Zoom, 19:35)
	Irwin (via 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 (S McCrea)

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Alderman Armstrong-Cotter for lateness.

**NOTED.**

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor MacArthur: Item 11: Grant of Pavement Café Licence

**NOTED.**

**3. 2023 – 2024 SERVICE PLANS  
(Appendices I-III)**

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:** Assets and Property Services, Waste and Cleaning Services and Regulatory Services Plans. In an overarching report from the Director of Environment, it was explained that, since 2017/18 Service Plans were produced by each Service in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context
- Provide focus on direction
- Facilitate alignment between Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities
- Motivate and develop staff
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance

Draft Service Plans for 2022/23 year are attached for the following areas:

- Waste and Cleansing Services
- Asset and Property Services
- Regulatory Services

The plans had been developed to align with outcomes of the Big Plan for Ards and North Down and with the PEOPLE priorities of the Corporate Plan Towards 2024.

The Service Plans highlighted where the services contributed to the Council KPIs as set out in the Corporate Plan Towards 2024 and, where this was the case, set out the objectives of the service for the 2023/24 year. It further identified the performance measures used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service were to try and attain along with key actions required to do so.

The Service Plans also identified key risks to the services along with analysis of those and necessary actions to mitigate/manage risks. Key risks impacting the services were mapped to the Corporate Risk Register.

The plans were based on the agreed budget for 2023/24. It should be noted that, should there have been significant changes in-year (e.g., due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the community planning legislation) the plans may have required revision. The Committee was to be provided with quarterly update reports on performance against the agreed plans.

RECOMMENDED that the Council adopts the attached plans.

3.1 Assets and Property Services

3.2 Waste and Cleansing Services

3.3 Regulatory Services

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

Councillor MacArthur asked if quality assurance of jobs done in Assets & Property (3.1) were carried out via spot checks. In addition, she noted the improvement of post-pandemic recycling rates and asked if an update could be provided in textiles recycling within the Waste & Cleansing Services Report (3.2). The Head of Assets and Property Services, in relation to the first question, advised that the asset management system would randomly select 10% of jobs of which supervisors would then carry out quality checks. The Director of Environment agreed with Councillor MacArthur that a modest improvement had occurred in recycling rates but believed, as would perhaps be noted in a later report, that it was important to note significant work was still required on reaching targets. With the textile service he reminded Members that there was a need for a new vehicle type to be used for which a procurement exercise would be required whilst the Head of Waste & Cleansing Services believed the first vehicle would be in service for September 2023 but this was, as of the time of writing, unconfirmed. The Director of Environment hoped to bring a report after the summer break to update Members of the likely rollout of the new service.

Councillor Boyle thanked Officers for the three reports that had been supplied and, in relation to the Regularity Services report, queried if the responsibilities of the three managers within the service were part of their substantive posts and if any progress had been made in recruiting a Head of Regularity Services. The Director of Environment advised that some of the question could not be discussed out of committee, but with regard to the information available publicly in the report, he explained that the functions carried out by the three managers within their respective fields were normative but that some parts of their roles were subject to change dependent on needs of the organisation. As Councillor Boyle wished to discuss the issue further, it was decided to allow for the discussion to take place in-committee later in the meeting.

Councillor Cummings, in regard to Item 3.1 (Assets and Property Services), Point 13.1 of the final page, was curious as to how Officers determined when review targets had not been met and what would require their involvement. The Director of Environment explained that if a target appeared as red, a narrative would routinely be given by the Heads of Service in relation to this. By way of example, if something had deviated from a KPI target, Officers would highlight where the target had not been met especially in the event that it was a repeated issue, and sometimes may involve allocation of extra resources or a statement outlining a plan to improve the KPI performance. This may sometimes have resulted in a recommendation to Members but oftentimes it was a statement of information.

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

#### **4. Q3 SERVICE PLAN REPORTS**

##### **4.1 Assets and Property Services**



**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:** Report from the Director of Environment advising that Members would have been aware that the 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 this requirement, the 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 was to 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 were to 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 3 2022-23 is attached.

### Key points to note:

- Expenditure was over budget largely due to huge increases in utilities and diesel prices that were not foreseen at budget setting last year.
- A number of staff were off on long-term sickness absence, contributing to the below target performance in this KPI.

### Key achievements:

Projects completed at:

- Comber LC, Main Sports Hall Floor.
- Queens Hall boiler conversion.
- Portavogie Promenade for Regeneration
- Castle Park Portaferry Play Area
- Aurora Play Area
- Tower Park Conlig Play area.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

#### **4.2 Waste and Cleansing Services**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment explaining that Members would have been aware that the 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 this requirement, the 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
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The Council's 18 Service Plans outlined how each respective Service was to 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 were to 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 3 2022-23 was attached.

#### **Key points to note:**

- Overall waste arisings continue to fall in comparison to the previous year.
- Recycling rates have increased compared to last year but continue to lag below pre-covid levels.
- The street washing target was missed due to technical problems with the equipment.

#### **Key achievements:**

- LEAMS Pollution Cleanliness target had been met.
- All British Toilet Association Cleanliness awards had been retained.

**Emerging issues:**

- None

**Action to be taken:**

- None

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

#### 4.3 Regulatory Services

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment explaining that Members would have been aware that the 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 this requirement, the 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
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- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2022)

The Council's 18 Service Plans outlined how each respective Service was to 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 were to 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 1 2022-23 is attached.

#### **Key points to note:**

- Several KPIs are assessed on an annual basis rather than quarterly and would be reported upon in the Q4/year end report in due course.

**Key achievements:**

- Despite ongoing challenges during the period, including depleted staffing resources in the NET, most KPIs were met.
- Lobbying of the Department in respect of enforcement powers for illicit waste disposal and littering/dog fouling fixed penalty limits showed success, with recently reported legislation changes.

**Emerging issues:**

- New increased building control fees would come into force in April, following a long overdue review of statutory charges – and this along with continued impact of Brexit and inflationary price pressures on building materials was leading some level of uncertainty and unpredictability in relation to the building industry (and in turn upon the level of building activity in the Borough, with associated uncertainty around income for this service).
- Actions were ongoing to promote better and more widespread use of the online building control application portal, with a recent spike in paper applications.
- Proposals for a new contract for car parking enforcement delivery by the Autumn, managed in-house by Council officers rather than via Dfl, were anticipated to have an impact upon outcomes for this area of service activity. A new in-house managed contract should facilitate more direct flexibility and control over car parks enforcement.
- The development of a new environmental education programme delivered by the NET to local schools and community groups was currently being finalised, in preparation for a planned launch in June.

**Action to be taken:**

- Finalise preparations for new car parks enforcement contract award, scheduled for June.
- Prepare for implement new statutory building control fees in the new financial year.
- Implement and publicise new legislative fly tipping, littering and dog fouling sanctions.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

**5. NORTHERN IRELAND LOCAL AUTHORITY MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STATISTICS, JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2022**

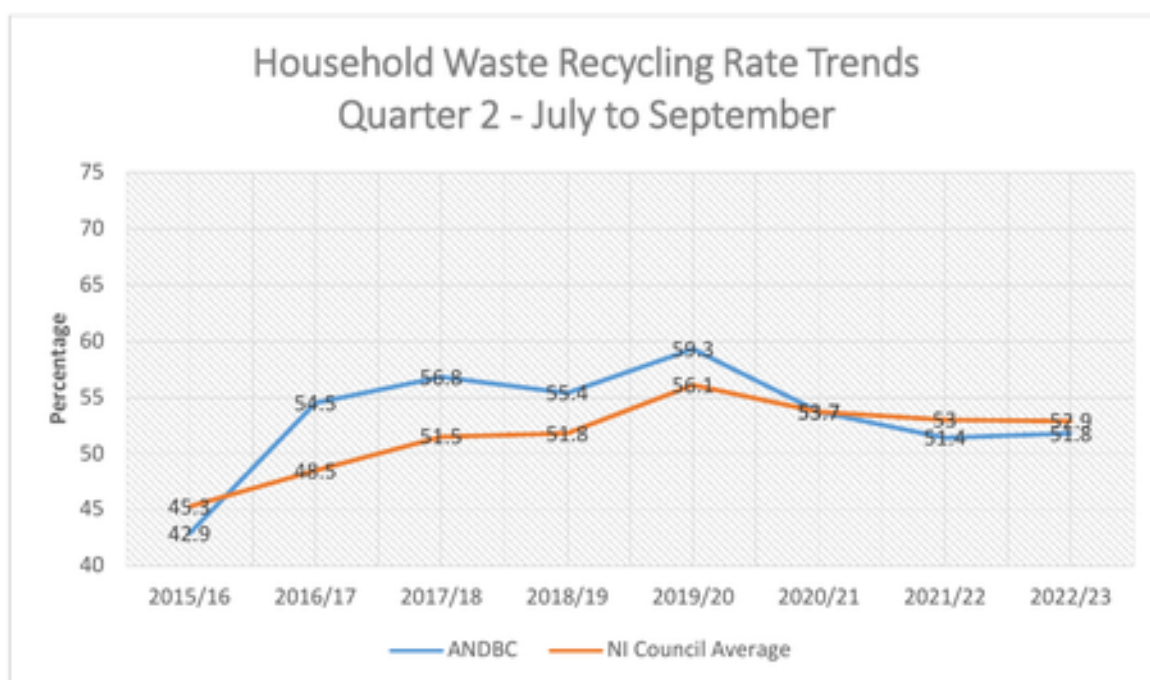
(File ref: 53042)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment outlining that the official waste management statistics for the second quarter of 2022/2023 (July to September 2022) had been released by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.



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

- i. Our household waste recycling increased very marginally by 0.4% compared to Q2 last year, from 51.4% to 51.8%.



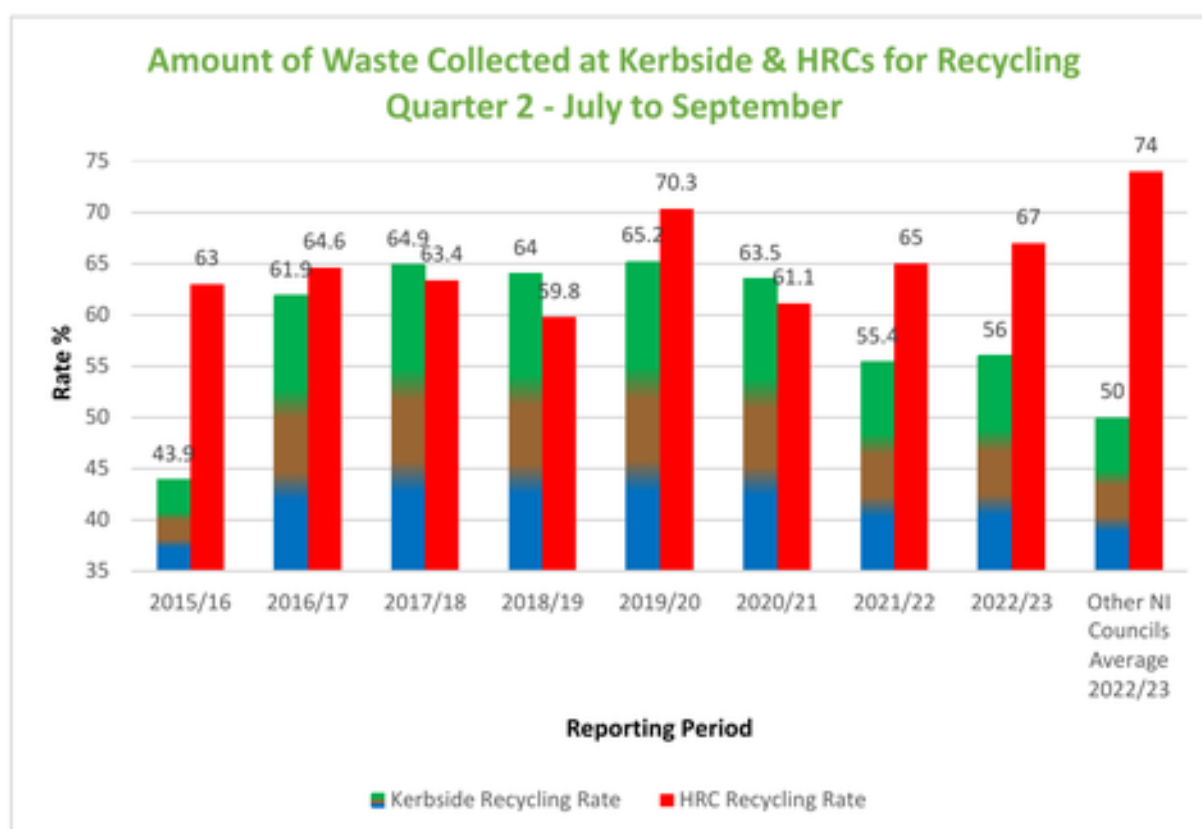
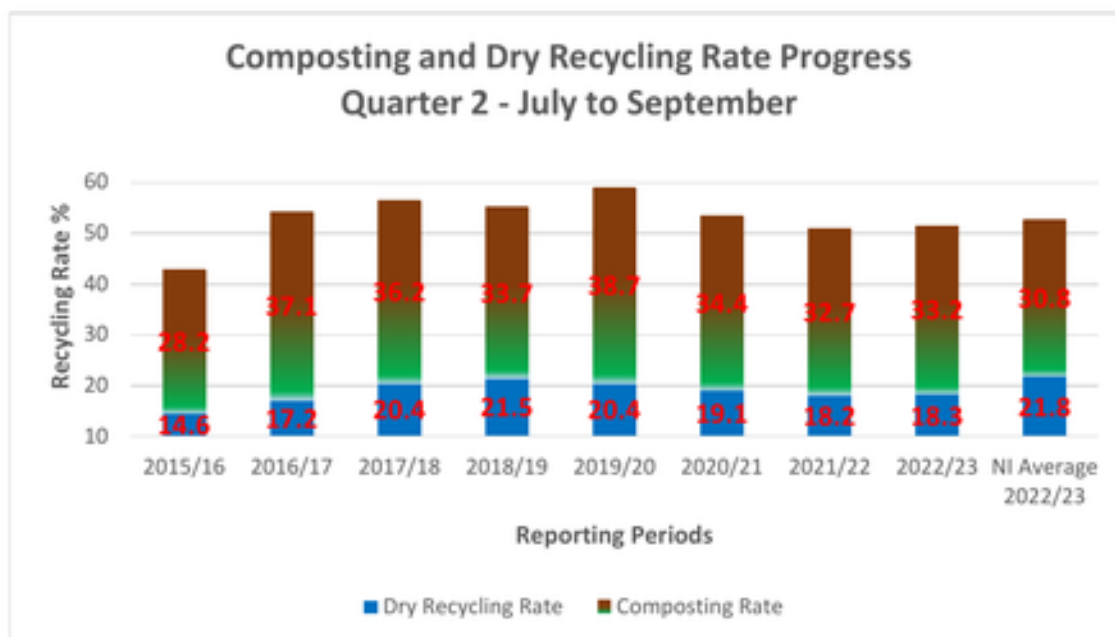
- ii. Our household waste recycling rate of 51.8%, was 1.1% lower than the NI average of 52.9%.
- iii. We were ranked eighth out of the eleven NI Councils for our household waste recycling rate.
- iv. Our household waste composting rate rose marginally by 0.5% - from 32.7% to 33.2%. Our household waste dry recycling rate rose very marginally by 0.1% - from 18.2% to 18.3%.
- v. Our household waste composting rate of 33.2% was 2.4% higher than the NI average of 30.8%.
- vi. Our household waste dry recycling rate (i.e. recycling of items other than organic food and garden waste) of 18.3% was 3.5% lower than the N.I. average of 21.8%.
- vii. Our kerbside recycling capture rate of 75% for household compostable waste materials compared to a NI Council average of 71%.

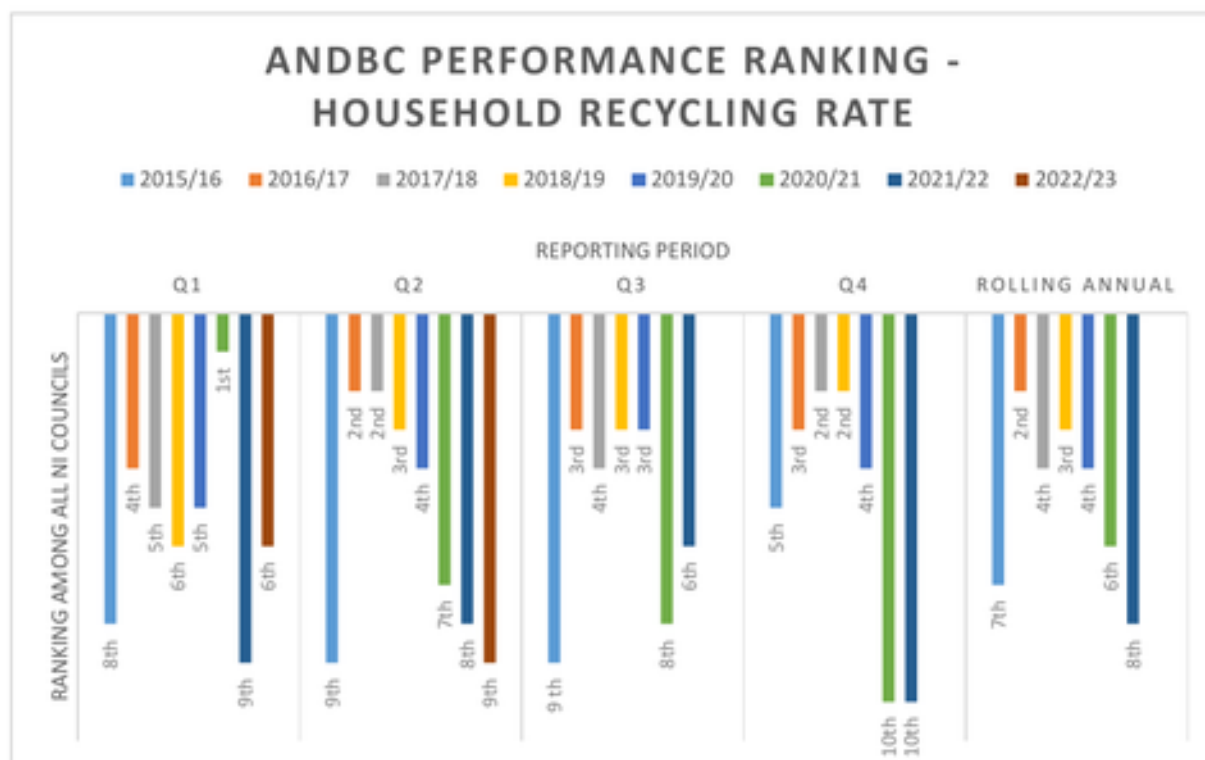
- viii. Our lowest kerbside capture rate for recyclable materials was for mixed plastics, at just 18%.

<b>Kerbside Capture Rate for Recyclable Waste Types - July to September</b>		
<b>Recyclable Material</b>	<b>Kerbside Capture Rate for Recycling %</b>	<b>NI Average Kerbside Capture Rate for Recycling %</b>
Glass	60.2	52
Paper & Card	55.2	52.8
Mixed Metals	29.9	30.4
Mixed Plastics	18.2	20.7
Organic/Compostables	75	71
Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE)	8	1.8

- ix. We were at the bottom end of the performance table for 'dry' recycling rate, ranking ninth out of eleven Councils.
- x. We received 38% more waste per capita at our HRCs compared to the average for other NI Councils.
- xi. The amount of waste collected at our HRC sites for recycling was less than the average for other Councils – 67%, compared to an average rate of 74% for other Councils.
- xii. We collected 10% more waste per capita from homes through our kerbside bin collection services compared to the average for other Councils.
- xiii. The amount of waste collected for recycling through our kerbside bin collection system was higher than the average for other Councils – 55.4%, compared to an average of 50% for other Councils.







This latest official Municipal Waste Management Statistics report presented further clear evidence that Council performance in relation to waste resource management was at the time still experiencing a significant sustained deterioration, both in absolute and relative terms.

**The rolling 12-month average recycling rate of 49.9% had fallen back and remained below the statutory minimum of 50% that existed prior to the enactment of the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022, which introduced a new statutory NI recycling target of 70% by 2030.**

Clearly, very significant progress was still required in our recycling performance, and the scale of improvement necessary called for a step change in the level of engagement by householders in our recycling services - which was likely to only be possible through agreement upon service design changes. In striking a rate for 2023-24, the Council had agreed to the implementation of new HRC access management arrangements designed to facilitate better customer recycling behaviours. The Council had also committed to "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".

A summary progress report on the agreed Recycling Engagement Programme at the time of writing, for the period December 2022 to March 2023, would be brought to the June meeting of the Environment Committee.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

Councillor MacArthur acknowledged figures supplied in the report were from July-September 2022 and was disappointed to see that household waste recycling was 1.1% below the average of Northern Ireland Councils though it was noted that Ards and North Down Borough Council collected 10% more waste kerbside by comparison. With the addition of mixed metals and plastic being lower than other Councils, she queried if any media had occurred to promote issues.

The Head of Waste & Cleansing Services advised that a booklet had been sent to residents across the borough that provided details of what plastics could be recycled. He understood there may have been some confusion with issues such as plastic film not being blue-bin material. Whilst glass was higher than other Councils, he reminded Members that trends had to be identified over a number of cycles.

The Director of Environment explained that the main category of plastics accepted through kerbside collections historically were plastic milk cartons and drinks bottles. Several years ago, a wide range of other plastics including plastic pots, tubs and trays of all shapes sizes and colours were brought into the mix of acceptable blue bin materials, and it was possible that some residents still believed the original much more restricted range of plastics were the only ones accepted. However, this specific issue was being addressed through our recent renewed Recycling Engagement Campaign.

Councillor MacArthur noted that other figures in the report were better and asked if any feedback existed as to social media/leaflet effects on recycling. The Head of Waste & Cleansing explained that it had been reflected in the report that some increase had occurred, meaning residents were engaging more. There had been 3000 tonnes less landfill compared to the previous year whilst total waste had fallen, though this could potentially have been due to the prevailing cost of living crisis. He noted that in the recycling hierarchy, reducing was top of the list before recycling. The Director of Environment added that the campaign referenced in the last page of the report had been launched in December and that a periodic progress report with detailed performance information would be brought to Members.

Councillor Boyle thanked Officers for the report and looked forward to a recommendation of actioning a report as opposed to just noting one. He welcomed the implementation of new HRC management arrangements but believed Members would have to do better in regard to making hard decisions where necessary on waste management systems, after the election.

Councillor Edmund related an incident he had been made aware of whereby a resident(s) had visited an HRC in a campervan to dispose of a mattress only to be turned away at the gate. He asked if any flexibility existed in relation to transport

access to HRCs. The Head of Waste & Cleansing explained that the resident could get a permit for access in a motorhome and that residents would be advised of such upon attempt to enter an HRC. A permit itself was used to identify individuals as being residents of the HRC's Borough and track potential abuse of sites for disposal of excess and potentially commercial waste using larger utility vehicles.

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

## **6. REMOVED**

NOTED.

## **7. NOM REPORT – LOW TRAFFIC NEIGHBOURHOODS (Appendix IV-V)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment outlining that, in November 2022, the Council had agreed the following Notice of Motion:

**“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, 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.”**

Given that the Department for Infrastructure as the lead department in relation to changes to road traffic restrictions, and that NI Councils did not have the vires for such measures, the starting point in terms of responding to the Notice of Motion was to write to the Department. The Council's letter in this regard was attached at Appendix 1.

The DfI Permanent Secretary had since responded to Council's letter, attached at Appendix 2. In this letter, the Permanent Secretary had confirmed that Low Traffic Neighbourhood schemes were consistent with the Department's commitments to making Northern Ireland a better place for people to work, live and visit. In that context and in the context of a new suite of proposed Transport Plans, which would set out the framework for transport policy and investment decisions up until 2035, the Permanent Secretary indicated a willingness to work with Ards and North Down Borough Council on the subject of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in the future.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the response from the Permanent Secretary of DfI, with a view to collaborating with the Department on the subject in due course.

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

Councillor Boyle thanked the Council and DfI for their recent communication efforts and that it would be wise to continue such channels in the future in the hope of progress.

Councillor Cathcart referred to the last point of the report as well as the original Notice of Motion and asked Officers if they were going to ensure consultation was carried out. The Director of Environment explained that a lot of work could go into canvassing detailed views of stakeholders but due to DfI having total authority over the designation of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, it was deemed prudent to contact the Department in the first instance with a view to potentially facilitating a partnership approach to consultations where the Department is minded to proceed on the subject of LTNs.

Councillor Greer asked that her thanks be recorded for the DfI's response to Council. She queried if it would be worthwhile for the Council to respond back, welcoming comments and inform of their keenness to be part of future plans. She proposed an amendment to the recommendation, seconded by Councillor Boyle;

*"That Council write to DfI to thank them for their response and highlight that Ards and North Down council are keen to work with DfI to pilot a low traffic neighbourhood scheme in Bangor City Centre or one of our town centres once the department are in a position to do so."*

(Councillor Smart joined the meeting via Zoom at 19:35.)

Councillor MacArthur agreed that the response from the DfI was welcome but believed that the proposal was unwise, citing how many businesses were already concerned with footfall at the time of writing and if traffic was to be reduced in a town or city centre, it could make matters much worse.

Councillor Edmund thought it would be wise to discuss such matters with respective Chambers of Commerce first before any action would be taken. Councillor Cummings concurred, explaining that the proposal bypassed the retailers and that if town or city centres were to be enhanced, retailers would have to be involved.

Councillor Boyle reiterated the need for the DfI to keep communications with the Council open as consultations would be required by both Council and other interested parties.

Alderman McDowell, based on the above discussion, suggested that the amendment may be reworded with the pilot scheme portion being removed as to ensure the Council was not tying itself into a specific future action.

Councillor Greer asked if her amendment could go forward as proposed.

A recorded vote was called on the matter.

On being put to the meeting, with voting 6 FOR, voting 7 AGAINST, 1 ABSTAINING and 1 ABSENT, the amendment FELL.

The voting was as follows:

<b>FOR (6)</b>	<b>AGAINST (7)</b>	<b>ABSTAINED (1)</b>	<b>ABSENT (2)</b>
<b>Aldermen:</b> McDowell	<b>Aldermen:</b> Carson Marion-Smith	<b>Aldermen:</b>	<b>Aldermen:</b> Armstrong- Cotter
<b>Councillors</b> Boyle Irwin Greer McAlpine McKee	<b>Councillors:</b> Cathcart Johnson Cummings Edmund MacArthur	<b>Councillors</b> Smart	<b>Councillors</b> Woods

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

**8. STREET NAMING REPORT – FRANCES MEWS, NEWTOWNARDS**  
(File ref: FP/2022/0079/MAST/91200))

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment advising that a development comprising of 14 apartments and a retail unit was, at the time of writing, under construction on lands at 31 Frances Street, Newtownards. These apartments were being constructed as two separate blocks, with the first block retaining their existing addresses of 31, 31a and 31b Frances Street, Newtownards for the ground floor retail unit and two first floor apartments above.

The second apartment block had foot access only to its principal entrance, which served 12 apartments. The developer suggested the name Frances Mews, Newtownards which was in keeping with the general neighbourhood.

RECOMMENDED that the Council:

- (a) adopts the street name Frances Mews; and
- (b) accepts the general name and delegates acceptance of suffixes to the Building Control department.

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



Councillor Smart believed the naming to be very appropriate given its origins rooted with Frances Ann who had married into the Stewart family.

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

#### **9. GRANT OF OUTDOOR ENTERTAINMENT LICENCE**

(File ref: LR100/90101)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment explaining that an application had been received for the grant of entertainment licence as follows:

##### **Dumigans Bar, 9-11 Ferry Street, Portaferry**

**Applicant:** Mrs Mary Arthurs, 37 Ballyeasborough Road, Kircubbin

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

**Type of entertainment:** Indoor dancing, singing and music or any other entertainment of a like kind; any entertainment which consists of or includes a public contest match, exhibition or display of billiards, pool, snooker, or any similar game; darts; machines for entertainment and amusement equipment for playing snooker or similar games.

The PSNI and NIFRS had been consulted and there were no objections.

RECOMMENDED that the Council grants the application.

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

#### **10. GRANT OF OUTDOOR ENTERTAINMENT LICENCE**

(File ref: LR100/90101)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing an application for an outdoor entertainment licence that had been received from:

##### **North Down Cricket Club, The Green, 19 Castle Lane, Comber**

**Applicant:** Ian Carser, 67 Old Ballygowan Road, Comber

The events proposed were 31/04/23, 12/07/23, 06/08/23

The proposal was for an audience of less than 500.

No objections had been received to this application from local residents.

RECOMMENDED that this licence is granted with the condition that it will not be issued until the licensee provides and implements an Event Management plan to the satisfaction of the PSNI, NIFRS and Council Officers.

(Councillor MacArthur left the meeting temporarily due to a Declaration of Interest at 19:50.)

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

(Councillor MacArthur returned to the meeting at 19:51.)

## **11. GRANT OF PAVEMENT CAFÉ LICENCE** (File ref: LR PCL47/90101)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment explaining that the following application had been received for the grant of a Pavement Café Licence:

**Hollywood Fryer, 32 High Street, Hollywood**

**Applicant:** Mr Stuart Quinn, 22a Lisbane Road, Comber

**Day and hours of use:**

Monday - Sunday 12.00 – 20.00

### **Comment**

The application had been publicly displayed on the relevant premises for 28 days as required in the legislation. No objections had been received.

DFI Roads and the Planning Service were consulted and where necessary the PSNI. No objections had been raised to this application.

Under the agreed conditions of licence, the pavement cafe would be required to:

- only use the agreed area to be outlined in the licence,
- provide only the approved furniture,
- completely remove any furniture from the pavement at the end of each day's trading
- keep the area used for the café to be kept clean of litter and liquid spillages.

RECOMMENDED that the Council grants the above licence.

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

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

**12. GRANT OF STREET TRADING LICENCE**  
(File ref: LR100/ 90101)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing that An application had been received for the grant of a Stationary Street Trading Licence to trade at designated sites within the Borough:

**Applicant:** Mr David Mills

**Address:** 14 Hawthorn Crescent, Ballyhalbert

**Goods to be supplied:** Ice Cream and Confectionary

There were no objections to this application.

RECOMMENDED that the Council grants the Street Trading Licence.

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

**13. RCIF FUND ALLOCATION 2023 – 2024**  
(File ref: 92017)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment explaining that, further to the estimates process for 2023-24, the Council had agreed to retain a Recycling Community Investment Fund, with a reduced overall budget of £35K. Members may have recalled that the key aim of the RCIF was to promote awareness of a link between household recycling efforts and the enhancement of the local environment and wellbeing of communities around the Borough, by diverting some of the financial savings accrued from recycling back into those communities through the RCIF.

It had since been recommended that this more modest RCIF budget be allocated in two main ways:

1. £25k to support the Live Here Love Here Campaign, which was co-ordinated across the province and within the Borough by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful in collaboration with the Council's Neighbourhood Environment Team. £12.5k of this would be directed to support the province wide education and promotion campaign which focused primarily upon an anti-litter message, while £12.5k would support the allocation of Small Grants to local groups within the Borough who wished to undertake projects that met the agreed environmental improvement criteria of the programme.

This programme had proven to be highly successful over a number of years, and greatly valued by a wide range of voluntary and community groups from across the entire Borough, including schools' communities. The Council's partnership with KNIB in the assessment of applications and allocation of funding, as well as the supporting of local groups in the delivery of their projects, had been a key success.

2. £10k to support the development and implementation of a newly revamped environmental education programme across the Borough, since branded as Project ELLA (Environmental, Learning, Lifestyle and Action). This would have allowed the Council's Neighbourhood Environment Team to engage directly with local schools and community groups to deliver a structured and innovative programme of environmental education, which would then lead to improved understanding of and care for the local and global environment.

As the development of Project ELLA was finalised, it had been proposed that a report on the subject would be brought to the Committee to give more information of the key aims and objectives, and periodic update reports would subsequently be brought on the implementation of this environmental education programme.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council allocate the agreed RCIF budget for 2023-24 as outlined in this report.

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

Councillor Boyle was pleased to see that funding had been included for the recycling investment fund which had been on a reduced balance for some time; something he believed was important not to lose, as it had allowed communities and particular areas the opportunity to be rewarded for their recycling efforts.

Councillor MacArthur spoke of dealing with complaints of littering and fly-tipping over the past few weeks and welcomed the £10,000 revamped education program by the Neighbourhood Environment Team.

Councillor Smart agreed that it would be good if the fund had been higher but was thankful that it still existed. He asked if any rough numbers existed as to participants for the education program and if it covered all schools or if, given the low funded figure, it could not be so widely covered.

The Director of Environment advised that Officers were planning to bring a detailed report with more detail, and it was hoped that a launch event could be held just before the summer break. The team had close links to the schools and feedback from teachers on this type of environmental education initiative in the past had been very positive.

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

## 14. NOTICES OF MOTION

### 14.1 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."*

(Alderman McIlveen was brought into the meeting via Zoom at 20:00 to talk on the Notice of Motion).

Proposed by Alderman Irvine, and as Alderman Armstrong-Cotter was not present, Councillor Cummings offered to second the Notice of Motion.

Alderman McIlveen explained that the Notice of Motion had originated through discussions of a blue plaque that had been scheduled for April marking the Viscount Castlereagh's charge. The discussion group and Chief Executive both seemed open to the idea with New Road being identified as a road that's name could change without having a large effect on local house addresses. Councillor Cummings explained the importance of the Viscount Castlereagh and the aptness of New Road being renamed, given its proximity to what used to be the Viscount's home.

Both Councillors' Edmund and Smart spoke of the Viscount's accolades and believed the recognition in this regard was worthy. Alderman Carson also confirmed the location of New Road to Members and gave his full support. Alderman McDowell also voiced his support for the Notice of Motion.

(Alderman Armstrong-Cotter enters the meeting at 20:05.)

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter spoke of the rich history of Newtownards with many streets named after historical figures. She was pleased to see self-guided walking-tours enabled via mobile phones.

Alderman McIlveen thanked the Committee and Council in general who had been supportive in marking the historical figure. He highlighted that the land East of New Road had been reclaimed land to help feed troops as they fought Napoleon Bonaparte.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND on the proposal of Alderman Irvine, seconded by Alderman Armstrong Cotter, that Council, subject to consultations, works toward renaming New Road, Newtownards to Viscount Castlereagh Avenue.**

## **15. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

There were no other items of notified business.

## **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 at 20:15.

## **16. AMENDED WASTE COLLECTION CHARGES IN LINE WITH OUTCOMES OF RATES SETTING PROCESS** (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)

## **3.3 – REGULATORY SERVICES: FURTHER DISCUSSION**

**\*\*\*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.

The meeting ended with Councillors thanking the Chair, Alderman McDowell for his efforts over the year.

## **TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 20:40.



## 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 March 2023 at 7.00pm.

### PRESENT:

**In the Chair:** Councillor Walker

**Aldermen:** Armstrong-Cotter 7.24pm (Zoom)  
McDowell  
Smith (Zoom)  
Wilson (Zoom)

**Councillors:**

Adair (Zoom)	Irvine
Blaney (Zoom)	Kennedy 7.04pm
Brooks (Zoom)	McClellan 7.12pm (Zoom)
Dunlop (Zoom)	McKimm (Zoom)
Gilmour (Zoom)	Morgan 7.11pm (Zoom)

**In Attendance:** Director of Place (S McCullough), Director of Prosperity (A McCullough), Head of Regeneration (B Dorrian), Head of Tourism (S Mahaffy – Zoom), Head of Economic Development (C McGill), Head of Strategic Capital Development (A Dadley), Head of Community and Culture (J Nixey – Zoom), and Democratic Services Officer (P Foster)

### CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman, Councillor Walker, commented as the Place and Prosperity Committee, (previously the Regeneration and Development Committee) reached the end of its term, he thought as Chairman it would be a good point to reflect on the achievements over the last four years.

As members would be aware the primary focus of the Committee had been on supporting the economic wellbeing of the Borough, its businesses, city, towns and villages, in line with the vision and objectives within the Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Development Strategy – Blue Green Creatively Connected.

The past four years had been extremely challenging for the businesses and sectors within the Borough. Indeed, those challenges had also been experienced by the Council. For example Signal Business Centre closed for two years due to Covid resulting in staff working remotely from home or redeployed into other positions to assist critical services such as food box delivery, waste and registration. Business Support and Tourism events and experiences had been cancelled and/or significantly adapted to comply with Covid-19 regulations. New and existing

programmes had been undertaken to support businesses through Covid and additional budget and responsibilities were also given to the Directorate, including over £3m in Covid Recovery Support funding. However the Council and staff adapted very well to those changes, resulting in a significant number of successful projects including:

- £590,000 secured for direct delivery of tourism experiences from Tourism NI, DAERA, Keep NI Beautiful and the Shared Island Fund.
- The Blue Green AND Tourism Experience Development Programme, that started off as a pilot initiative in 2019, had grown from strength to strength. 53 experiences had been delivered with 60% of visitors coming from out of the Borough, and Tourism NI highlighting the initiative as an exemplar.
- Working with HED, thanks to successful DAERA funding, Ballycopeland Windmill was successfully opened as a unique visitor attraction in May last year.
- Over 400 appointments had been undertaken in the last four years promoting the Borough to tour operators.
- Over 100 food and drink businesses were active members of the TASTE AND, attending trade shows, developing food tours and experiences and over 170 awards had been secured by 25 of local food and drink businesses.
- Over 100,000 visitor enquiries had been serviced by the VIC teams, which was extremely impressive considering the VICs were closed for a significant period during Covid.
- Council developed and approved a new Borough Events Strategy which established the future direction of events, including supporting the sector and the transformation of the Council's own events resulting in £300,000 efficiency savings.
- The Tourism Events Team had delivered 22 events attracting circa 238,000 attendees, as well as supporting Open House Festival which delivered an economic impact of nearly half a million pounds into the Borough last year.
- The Council launched a new visit Ards and North Down website last year and in 2022 the two seasonal visit campaigns achieved a very strong social media reach of 163k with 1.8m impressions.
- The Economic Development team gave business advice and research to 462 businesses last year and 128 jobs were created last year through the AND Go for It Programme.
- The SHINE programme created 156 jobs in its first two years and was anticipated to deliver close to 300 new jobs by the end of 2023. That was just a small example of the various business support programmes, which also saw

hundreds of businesses also go through the Social Enterprise Programme, special sector support programmes and the Women in Business Programme, to name a few more.

(Councillor Kennedy entered the meeting at this stage – 7.04pm)

- Working with partner councils, ultrafast gigabit capable fibre broadband was successfully installed in 53 Council sites, bringing the next generation connectivity technology across the Borough. 104 businesses participated in the Digital Growth Programme, helping businesses innovate and grow.
- Over 1,000 direct business enquiries were delivered as part of the Business Covid Recovery support programme, with just under £1m given to approximately 600 businesses within the Borough to help them recover post Covid.
- Over £4m in Rural Grant funding was awarded to 78 projects across the Borough, creating 45 new full time equivalent jobs, as well as improvements within villages and communities including play parks, recreational opportunities and environmental schemes. 84 rural businesses had been directly supported over the last four years through the Rural Business Development Scheme.
- Over £670,000 was secured through Seaflag and Coastal Communities to refurbish the Ballywalter Lime Kilns, Portavogie Promenade and Portavogie Harbour regeneration schemes. £1.67m was awarded to the Council via the Small Settlements funding, which would deliver a range of projects including the Portaferry Public Realm regeneration scheme.
- Over £3m was invested in the Donaghadee Townscape Heritage Initiative, including £1.6m from the private sector, which also saw the completion of the Moat, which housed Ireland's only camera obscura.
- Establishment of new City and Town Advisory Groups and support for the five Chambers of Commerce which had grown from strength to strength and had ambitious vision for their city and towns.
- The Council signed the Development Agreement for Queen's Parade with DfC and Bangor Marine and Queen's Parade achieved Planning Approval, with phase 1 due to start later this year.
- The Council agreed the Outline Business Case for the Bangor Waterfront Scheme securing £40m funding from DfC through Belfast Region City Deal for this exciting Regeneration project which would see c£72m of investment supporting new jobs and increased visitor numbers and footfall into the City and the Borough.

That was only a small flavour of some of the outcomes achieved over the last four years. Councillor Walker stated that he would like to thank members of the

Committee for their support and dedication and to officers for their hard work. As well as thanking all of funding partners, key stakeholders and businesses and wished them all well for the future which he believed was extremely positive and exciting. With the Borough well placed to deliver the vision and outcomes within the Integrated Tourism Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy to grow the number of jobs, productivity, visitor numbers and visitor spend.

**NOTED.**

### **1. APOLOGIES**

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

Apologies had been received from Councillor Cummings.

**NOTED.**

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

The Chairman sought Declarations of Interest at this stage.

Councillor Dunlop declared an interest in Item 24 - AND Events and Festivals Fund 23/24 – Tranche One.

**NOTED.**

### **3. DEPUTATION – NORTH CHANNEL WIND PROJECT (Appendix I)**

The Chairman invited Andy McCrae, NCW Project Developer and Fiona Stevens, NCW Stakeholder Communications Manager from North Channel Wind Project to make their presentation to the Committee.

(Councillor McClean joined the meeting at this stage – 7.08pm)

Mr McCrae thanked members for the opportunity to attend the meeting and proceeded to guide them through a PowerPoint presentation. He informed them that he was the Project Developer for North Channel Wind (NCW) and had over 40 years' experience in the energy industry. He introduced the team behind North Channel Wind adding that it was currently being progressed under a co-development agreement between SBM Offshore and Ireland-based developer NMK Renewables.

(Councillor Morgan joined the meeting at this stage – 7.10pm)

Mr McCrae provided members with an overview of SBM Offshore and its work and then provided some information on the two sites which had emerged, those being NCW1 and NCW 2, both of which were based in the Irish Sea.

At this stage Ms Stevens presented NCW's plans for engagement and consultation on those two sites. It was noted consultation was planned and had already taken

place with those within the local fishing industry, political representatives and councils and the local community. By way of summing up Ms Stevens briefly outlined the benefits and opportunities which the project would provide including those which would benefit the local economy.

The Chairman thanked Mr McCrea and Ms Stevens for their presentation and reminded members that a copy of the presentation had already been circulated to them.

At this stage members were invited to raise any questions they may have at this stage and the following comments were made.

- In response to a query from Councillor Brooks about funding, Mr McCrea confirmed that SBM would be providing funding support throughout the development phase.
- Referring to consultation with those in the local fishing industry, Councillor Adair asked if it would be possible for future consultation events to take place either on a Friday night or Saturday. Ms Stevens confirmed that would be taken into consideration adding that a recent event held in Portavogie had been very well attended. Councillor Adair welcomed that adding that it would be important to ensure the historic fishing rights in the area were protected.
- In response to a query from Councillor Dunlop about the amount of energy which could be generated by the proposals, Mr McCrea indicated that it was almost the equivalent of a power station in the sea which could generate electricity for homes in the Greater Belfast, Bangor and Carrickfergus areas.

The Chairman thanked the delegation from North Channel Wind for their interesting and informative presentation and wished them well with their exciting project in the future.

(Mr McCrea and Ms Stevens left the Chamber at this stage – 7.24pm)

(Alderman Armstrong-Cotter joined the meeting at this stage – 7.24pm)

**NOTED.**

#### **4. REGENERATION SERVICE UNIT PLAN (FILE 160127)**

(Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place stating that since 2017/18 Service Plans had been produced by each Service in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context;
- Provide focus on direction;
- Facilitate alignment between Community, Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities;

- Motivate and develop staff;
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice;
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes;
- Better enable the Council to recognise success and address underperformance.

A draft plan for 2023/24 was attached. This plan had been developed to align with objectives of The Big Plan for Ards and North Down 2017-2032; the Corporate Plan 2020-24 and the Annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) 2023/24. The Plan would also support delivery of the ITRDS. The agreement of the plan would also aid toward achievement of the Council's performance improvement duties under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

The Service Plan highlighted where the service contributed to the Corporate Plan and, where this was the case, set out the objectives of the service for the 2023/24 year. It further identified the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service would try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The plan had been developed in conjunction with staff, officers, and management and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant, including consultation for ITRDS.

The plan was based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (for example due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP) the plan may need to be revised.

Members would be aware that as part of the rate setting process a number of savings were made from existing budgets. In setting the rate for the next financial year the Council took out the budget to maintain and deliver the Wi-Fi in Bangor and the four towns. In light of this, as from April 2023, the free Wi-Fi in Bangor and the four towns would be decommissioned.

The Committee would be provided with update reports on performance against the agreed plan.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council adopts the attached plan and agrees that Council will decommission the free Wi-Fi in Bangor and the four towns in light of the budget savings outlined as part of the rate setting process.

Councillor Dunlop proposed, seconded by Councillor McKimm, that the recommendation be adopted.

In response to a query from Councillor Dunlop about the inclusion of performance reports for how the activities linked into the Council's Climate Action Plan within this plan the Head of Regeneration indicated that was something which could be looked at in the future.



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

**5. REGENERATION Q3 PERFORMANCE REPORT (FILE 160127)**  
(Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place stating 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 this 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 3 2022-23 was attached.

**Key points to note:**

- The review of the five City/town Masterplans was ongoing.
- The review of the village plans had commenced and progressing well.
- Portavogie Harbour Environmental Improvement Scheme had commenced and was online to be completed by February 2023.

**Key achievements:**

- The regeneration project at Portavogie promenade had been completed.
- Some parklets had now been installed.
- The first season for the Motte to be open to the public had now closed with approximately 2,500 people visiting the facility.

**Emerging issues:**

- It was now believed that funding under the Peace Plus programme would not be available in the next financial year as there were still legislative and operational issues to be resolved by SEUPB. However, the Council would continue to work with EBR to develop projects which may be suitable for funding once it was announced.
- As yet the Council had still received no information from DAERA about a replacement scheme for the Rural Development Programme. This was most concerning.

**Action to be taken:**

- The targets associated with developing a joint Masterplan and undertaking an Outline Business Case for the Kinnegar Logistic Base project were now not applicable. The MOD was developing the Masterplan solely and the Council funding to deliver both a Masterplan and a Business Case had been removed from 23/24 budget. In line with procedures those two targets should now be removed.
- The target to develop projects in partnership with EBR for Peace Plus funding was also not achievable for reasons outlined above. This target should also be removed.

RECOMMENDED that Council note this report.

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

The proposer, Councillor Adair commended the Council's Regeneration Team on the report and noted the recent completion of the Public Realm works in Portavogie. Referring to the Small Settlements scheme he sought an update on School Lane, Ballywalter.

The Head of Regeneration advised that Council officers had been liaising with the Education Authority (EA) to seek approval for that and at this stage he also advised that in respect of Kircubbin Promenade it was hoped plans would be submitted within the next few weeks.

Commenting as seconder, Councillor Dunlop offered his congratulations to the Regeneration Team.

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

**6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICE UNIT PLAN (FILE 160127) (Appendix IV)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity stating that since 2017/18 Service Plans had been produced by each Service in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context;
- Provide focus on direction;
- Facilitate alignment between Community, Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities;
- Motivate and develop staff;
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice;
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes;
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

A draft plan for 2023/24 was attached which had been developed to align with objectives of The Big Plan for Ards and North Down 2017-2032; the draft Corporate Plan 2020-24 and the Annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) 2023/24. The Plan would also support delivery of the ITRDS. The agreement of the Service Plan would also contribute toward achievement of the Council's performance improvement duties under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

The Service Plan highlighted where the service contributed to the Corporate Plan and, where this was the case, set out the objectives of the service for the 2023/24 year. It further identified the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service would try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The Plan had been developed in conjunction with staff, officers, and management and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.

The Plan was based on the agreed budget stemming from the rate as struck for 2023/24 – this figure would be updated within the Service Plan once detail received from Finance. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (for example due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP) the Plan may need to be revised.

The Committee would be provided with update reports on performance against the agreed plan.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council agrees the attached Service Plan.

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

The proposer, Councillor McKimm, thanked officers for the report and continuing he sought clarification on EU funding going forwards and its impact upon the Borough.

In response the Head of Economic Development advised that there was concern that that funding was potentially coming to an end given the huge part it played on many aspects throughout the Borough. As such she advised that officers were working at

pace across all council areas to avail of funding under SPF. She added that funding was also currently available under SEUPB and that was another option for consideration, particularly as everyone appeared to be 'tightening their belts'. Continuing she sought to reassure members that Council services and programmes should continue as officers were able to avail of that SEUPB funding.

At this stage Councillor Dunlop referred to page 13 of the report which mentioned the Northern Ireland Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2006 something which he stated he was not familiar with. He noted that it appeared to suggest the Council was free to do as it wished and as such, he asked what was meant by that particular paragraph.

The Head of Economic Development advised that as far as she was aware that piece of legislation applied to each of the Council's Service Units and enabled officers to put processes into place which aligned with both Council and Government Guidelines.

At this stage the Director of Prosperity read out Section 25 of the Act referred to for members' information.

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

## **7. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT Q3 (FILE 160167) (Appendix V)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Directors of Place and Prosperity stating that 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 this 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 3, 2022-23 was attached.

#### Key points to note:

- Performance in certain areas of the Service had been affected as difficulties in recruiting staff to fill posts had continued into this year, as had some instances of staff illness. Workstreams had to be prioritised in line with the resources available and therefore some targets in this quarter had been not met and budgets underspent.
- Following a joint meeting with DfE and the NI Audit Office (NIAO) it had been agreed that Councils should reference both the statutory targets and the *Go for It* programme targets. The Council was therefore reporting on the two sets of targets for Business Start-up activity: the original target set as part of transferring functions under RPA (referred to as NIBSUP2) and the revised target issued last year by DfE for *Go For It*. The new target would not be formally agreed to replace the original until the Executive was in place. The revised target was significantly higher and due to the challenging economic climate, the number of enquiries about starting a business had slowed and those progressing to setting up in business had therefore been limited. Council delivery agents were taking measures to continue to promote and encourage interest and marketing activity had increased so figures were expected to increase again in the next quarter.

#### Key achievements:

- The Digital Surge Programme had picked up and, although the figure fell just behind the target for this quarter, the team along with the delivery agent had worked hard and been successful in working to identify opportunities with businesses on how digital transformation could have a real impact on their operations to create higher economic growth.
- Operator contracts continued to be managed and perform well as the Council prepared for the next phase of the Bangor Waterfront development.

#### Emerging issues:

- Timelines were tight but officers continued to work with all other Councils, and through Belfast City Council, with DLUHC, to prepare plans to ensure it had continuity of support for a new business start-up and the creation of a new support service.
- With the Letter of Offer only being confirmed in November 2022 it had been challenging to implement all the projects identified in the Labour Market Partnership work plan for the current year. Work with the Partnership was currently underway to agree for submission of a new Action Plan for 2023-24. It was unclear however, what the budget allocation might be or when it could be approved which, once again, could impact delivery of the plan in the coming year.

#### Action to be taken:

- Officers would continue to work with HR to address staffing issues.

- Officers would continue to work in collaboration with other Councils and government departments to progress funding confirmations for the required work streams.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

Alderman Smith proposed, seconded by Councillor Dunlop, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer, Alderman Smith, noted that the report mentioned HR was currently addressing staffing issues and she sought further clarity on that.

The Head of Economic Development informed members of ongoing recruitment issues being faced by the Council and in an attempt to address that HR officers were considering how Job Descriptions were set out and jobs subsequently advertised. She added that this was a Council-wide issue. In respect of staff illness, the Head of Economic Development advised that Council's Health and Wellbeing Service was considered by HR officers with the assistance of Occupational Health specialists. All measures were taken under consideration to enable staff to return to work.

Councillor McClean acknowledged that the Council appeared to be doing all that it could to enable staff to return to work but asked if consideration had been given mental health assessments.

The Head of Economic Development indicated that she was unable to clarify that however she stated that any recommendations brought by Occupational Health specialists were taken forward. It was noted that a counselling service was also available through the Westfield Health Scheme which was available to all Council employees.

Councillor McClean emphasised the importance of getting people the help which they needed and as such in his opinion, Mental Health Assessments were important.

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

## **8. LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP UPDATE (FILE ED123)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity stating that the Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership (LMP) was established on 17th August 2021. The LMP was currently working on its 2021-23 Action Plan which had been approved by Council and the Department for Communities (DfC). Council provides the secretariat to the LMP.

A Letter of Offer Acceptance Form for the Operational Budget was signed by the Council's Chief Executive and was returned following the Regeneration & Development Committee approval on 30 June 2022. It must be noted that a Letter of Offer in relation to the Administration Costs (staff and administration resources) was received to allow for the set-up and running of the LMP on 15 April 2022. This



funding was guaranteed by the DfC. However, the Letter of Offer relating to the Operational Costs was indicative and subject to an internal business case being agreed by DfC. Although it was stated in that Letter of Offer that the business case would be agreed by the end of June 2022, the letter of offer was not received until 4 November 2022.

Once the letter of offer was received the LMP staff began to procure delivery partners to deliver the projects detailed in the 2021-23 Action Plan.

Three projects within the 2021-23 Action Plan required a tender to procure an appropriate delivery partner as agreed by Council at its December 2022 meeting. All other projects required quotations.

All tenders and quotes had been awarded and were progressing at pace in order to complete by 31 March 2023.

## **LMP Projects Update**

### ***Structure: LMP Members and Sub-committees***

Membership of the LMP consisted of approximately 30 members from sectoral bodies, voluntary and community organisations and Council representatives.

The three subcommittees established as working groups relate to the themes within the 2022-23 Action Plan. Their role was to assist in the strategic development of the agreed projects.

The three themes were as follows:

- **Theme 1** – Supporting people into employment and employment enhancement
- **Theme 2** – Young People with employment challenges
- **Theme 3** – Covid-19 related labour market disruption

The subcommittees report back to the full LMP.

### ***Update on current projects (2022-23)***

#### **Thematic Group 1 - Supporting people into employment and employment enhancement**

1. *Upskill unemployed people with disabilities and help them gain employment through Job Focused Academies.*

A delivery Partner had been appointed via a tendering process to deliver four Academies for up to 40 participants to receive training in: Customer Services, Health and Social Care, Business Administration and Progression into Employment. The Academies were fully recruited for delivery by 31 March 2023.

*2. Upskill unemployed people and help them gain employment through Job Focused Academies.*

A procurement process took place for this project, however the LMP was unable to secure a delivery partner to deliver within this financial year. The feedback obtained from Procurement indicated that potential bidders felt they would not have the time to implement this programme.

*3. Job Fairs*

The Labour Market Partnership hosted four Employability Roadshows that took place in January 2023 in locations in Comber, Bangor, Kircubbin and Donaghadee. Across the four events of 47 people that attended, eight then went on to attend the Ards and North Down Jobs Fair on 24 January 2023.

*4. Third level education student enterprise academy focusing on business start*

Quotations for the delivery of the Third Level Education Student Enterprise were sought and the contract awarded on 23 January 2023. The programme was currently recruiting and due to start in February to be completed by 31 March 2023.

**Thematic Group 2 - Young People with Employment Challenges**

*5. 10 School Videos produced*

10 videos were being produced featuring different sectors and employers across the Borough to highlight routes to employment and opportunities that were available within various sectors.

Five videos had been completed with the remaining five to be completed by 31 March. Those videos would then be distributed to the 13 post primary schools/education providers across the Borough.

*6. Enterprise Skills Programme for 16-24-year-olds through Regional Colleges to support self-employment*

This Enterprise Skills Academy was being delivered through SERC, the only regional college in our Borough. The Academy was designed to encourage young people to consider self-employment and potentially setting up their own business. The Academy had started with an introductory session and was aimed to be completed by 31 March 2023.

**Thematic Group 3 - Covid 19-related Labour Market Disruption**

*7. Reskilling for Job Vacancies – Health and Social Care Academy*

A delivery agent had been appointed for the delivery of three Health and Social Care Academies for 50 participants. The Academies were:

- Health and Social Care – Entry Level
- Health and Social Care – Upskilling
- Childcare – Entry Level and Upskilling Combined

Those academies would conclude with a guaranteed job interview with a local employer and would be completed by 31 March 2023.

#### *8. Reskilling for Job Vacancies – HGV Training and Employment Academy*

An e-tender was prepared and advertised with a closing date of 23 March 2022. Tenders were assessed on 25 March 2022 in line with Council procurement processes and DFPF (People 1<sup>st</sup> and Henderson Wholesale Ltd) were appointed as the delivery agents.

The Academy was promoted via an e-flyer across Council Social Media channels and via ANDBusiness e-zine and was also featured on ANDBusiness as a News Story.

A brief overview was as follows:

- Joint marketing between Council, People 1<sup>st</sup> and partners – achieving 149 applicants.
- Following short assessment 122 candidates invited to interview.
- 30 candidates selected with five candidates on reserve awaiting drop out/failure to attend.
- Medicals complete for all eligible candidates with 16 licenses sent for upgrade.
- Seven Zoom workshops complete for those awaiting theory – further two workshops booked in for each eligible candidate.
- Two candidates awaiting license.
- Seven candidates at theory stage.
- 12 candidates at Practical Stage.
- Nine candidates were currently completing their training for a new license.
- Eight candidates had now moved into employment following completion.

The Labour Market Partnership was currently planning a Submission of a One-year Action Plan for 2023-24 to DfC. The Action Plan was being drafted in full consultation with the Partnership and would inform the Operational Budget and all related activities for 2023-24.

The 2023-24 Action Plan would be submitted to DfC on 24 February for consideration, once approved by the Partnership. It was expected that, following DfC approval, a Letter of Offer would be issued to Council by 7 April 2023. The Chief Executive would be required to sign this letter of offer to allow for a prompt implementation of the new action plan.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council:

1. Notes the content of this report; and

2. Agrees that, upon receipt, the Chief Executive signs the Acceptance Form of the DfC Letter of Offer for the Administration and Operational Budgets relating to this 2023-24 Labour Market Partnership Action Plan.

Councillor McKimm proposed, seconded by Councillor Kennedy, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer, Councillor McKimm referred to page 3 of the report which considered young people with employment challenges and he asked who currently sat on the LMP and if outside stakeholders participated on it.

The Head of Economic Development indicated that a list could be drawn up detailing all current members of the LMP and circulated to members in due course.

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

## **9. ATTENDANCE AT UKREIFF 2023 (FILE RDP196)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place stating that Council agreed to be a member of the Renewed Ambition Programme (RAP) in January 2022. RAP was a joint public and private sector-led initiative and aimed to work collaboratively to showcase investment and development opportunities across the Belfast City Region as the Council sought to deliver on its shared ambitions for the region as an exciting place to work, live, visit, and invest. It was a five pillared programme focused on activities to ensure that Belfast and the wider city region was well positioned to continue to attract investment and to deliver on inclusive growth.

The 5 pillars:

- 1) Programme of Content aimed at the local and international real estate audience which aimed to showcase the Belfast City Region for future real estate investment through participation at virtual and in-person conferences and showcase events.
- 2) Programme of Engagement and Advocacy to facilitate two-way conversations with policy makers and to showcase real estate opportunities to the investor community. This aimed to position the Belfast City Region positively and sought to identify and try to address barriers that investors, developers, and occupiers may face when they consider Belfast as a destination.
- 3) Media and Stakeholder Engagement, reinforcing positive messaging around Belfast's investment proposition through international marketing and communication campaigns, targeting the national and international real estate investment and development community.
- 4) A shared access Repository on the investinbelfast.com website which facilitates sharing of data, marketing collateral and intel to help ensure consistent messaging and shared narrative was used by all partners when promoting the city region.
- 5) Research aligned to the impact of real estate investment to inform the city proposition and narrative.

**UKREiif 2023**

The full programme of activity for 2023-24 was still being developed, however, it had been agreed that the RAP partners, led by Belfast City Council, would participate in UKREiif, the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum which was a three-day event taking place in Leeds on 16-18 May 2023.

This event brought together the public sector with UK city and regions involved alongside Government, investors, funders, developers, and housebuilders.

**Participation in the event would offer:**

- 6,000+ Event Attendees
- 500+ Speakers Across 14 Stages
- 150+ Exhibitors
- 75+ Fringe Events

**The event was focused on:**

Connecting people, places, and businesses to accelerate the Levelling Up Agenda, whilst unlocking sustainable, inclusive, and transformational investment across the UK. The event was supported by a high number of regional combined authorities, local councils and Government departments – as well as the largest developers and investors from across the UK and internationally.

Members would be aware that the Chief Executive and Director of Place attended UKREiif last year and as reported to Council found it to be a very good platform to present the regeneration and development offerings within the Borough to potential developers and investors.

**UKREiif 2023 Proposed RAP activities include:**

- Belfast Region branded exhibition stand (4x2m) in the exhibition hall to act as a meeting point for partners and showcase investment opportunities.
- Investment showcase and networking events

The £15k RAP sponsorship package, which was approved by Council in January 2022, would be extended to include attendance at UKREiif 2023 led by Belfast City Council. Council officer attendees were expected to cover delegate passes at a discounted cost of approximately £650/per participant (compared to the current online price approximately £800 - £900). Participants were also required to cover their own travel and accommodation costs which were estimated to be approximately £600 per participant, depending on time of booking. There may also be an opportunity to host a dinner at the event for key potential investor partners. This was currently estimated at £400 per Council partner.

Attracting investment into the Borough was an integral part of the Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy (ITRDS) and collaborating with the Renewed Ambition Programme to attend UKREiif would help to raise the profile of AND, as well as the opportunity to talk to potential developers, investors and end users, as well as reaching into wider markets.

RECOMMENDED that that Council approves the attendance of up to two Council officers at UKREiiF 2023, as part of the Renewed Ambition Programme at an estimated total cost of £2900 which will be met from existing budgets.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter proposed, seconded by Councillor Kennedy, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer Alderman Armstrong-Cotter welcomed the report noting the opportunities it would provide to make connections and further promote the Borough of Ards and North Down.

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

## **10. TOURISM SERVICE UNIT PLAN (FILE 160127) (Appendix VI)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity stating that since 2017/18 Service Plans had been produced by each Service in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context;
- Provide focus on direction;
- Facilitate alignment between Community, Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities;
- Motivate and develop staff;
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice;
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes;
- Better enable the Council to recognise success and address underperformance.

A draft plan for 2023/24 was attached. This plan had been developed to align with objectives of The Big Plan for Ards and North Down 2017-2032; the Corporate Plan 2020-24 and the Annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) 2023/24. The Plan would also support delivery of the ITRDS. The agreement of the plan would also contribute toward achievement of the Council's performance improvement duties under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

The Service Plan highlighted where the service contributed to the Corporate Plan and, where that was the case, set out the objectives of the service for the 2023/24 year. It further identified the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service would try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The plan had been developed in conjunction with staff, officers, and management and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.



The plan was based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (for example due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP) the plan may need to be revised.

The Committee would be provided with update reports on performance against the agreed plan.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees the attached Service Plan.

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

## **11. TOURISM PERFORMANCE REPORT Q3 (FILE TO/MAR4/160167) (Appendix VII)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity stating 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 this 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 3 2022-23 was attached.

### **Key points to note:**

- Food seminars delivered with Economic Development were due to complete in Q4

- Strategic partnerships with Visit Belfast and Tourism Northern Ireland help extend the reach of our promotion of the Borough to a wider audience.
- Event visitor spend had not met its target, possibly suggesting a reduction due to the cost-of-living crisis

#### **Key achievements:**

- Tourism staff attended World Travel Market, Flavours of Ireland, London, and Irish Tour Operators' event in Enniskillen. Evaluation report to Committee in February 2023.
- Awards season for Food and Drink sector complete with 89 awards secured by 19 companies.
- Digital marketing channels continue to strengthen for Visit Ards and North Down. The social media audience growth was very strong, driven by an 'always on' stream of inspiring visual content.
- Q3 included marketing campaigns focussed on autumn offers, and a Borough-wide Christmas programme campaign which successfully promoted Switch Ons, markets and other seasonal events.
- Delivery of weather-proof solutions for Bangor and Ards Christmas Switch Ons.
- Formation of Festivals Forum to better assist collaborative activity.

#### **Emerging issues:**

- Increase in costs for events infrastructure, first aid provision, programming and weather 'proofing' events would be very challenging for the events 2023/24 season.
- VIC staffing requirement with regard to one full time post and seasonal staffing.
- The budget for the 'bid for' strategy would no longer be available in 2023/24 due to the cost efficiencies savings process.

#### **Action to be taken:**

- Vacancy control process to be completed for visitor servicing roles for 23/24 operations.
- Events planning budget to be closely monitored.
- Activity relating to the Bid for Strategy cannot progress at this time. It was therefore recommended that the 'Develop a Bid For Strategy' KPI was removed from the end of year Service Plan. Officers would continue to work, resources permitting, with colleagues and partners on scoping next stage plans, with the intent to submit a business case in the Rates Process in the following year/s.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report and further approves the removal of the 'Develop Events Bid for Strategy' KPI from the Tourism Service Plan.

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

The proposer, Councillor Adair, commended the team on the report acknowledging the hard work undertaken throughout the year.

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

**12. CAPITAL PROJECTS SERVICE UNIT PLAN (FILE 160127)**  
(Appendix VIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place stating that Since 2017/18 Service Plans had been produced by each Service in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context;
- Provide focus on direction;
- Facilitate alignment between Community, Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities;
- Motivate and develop staff;
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice;
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes;
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

A draft plan for 2023/24 was attached. This plan had been developed to align with objectives of The Big Plan for Ards and North Down 2017-2032; the Corporate Plan 2020-24 and the Annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) 2023/24. The Plan would also support delivery of the ITRDS. The agreement of the plan would also contribute toward achievement of the Council's performance improvement duties under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

The Service Plan highlighted where the service contributed to the Corporate Plan and, where this was the case, set out the objectives of the service for the 2023/24 year. It further identified the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service would try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The plan had been developed in conjunction with staff, officers, and management and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.

The plan was based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (for example due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP) the plan may need to be revised.

The Committee would be provided with update reports on performance against the agreed plan.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council agrees the attached Capital Projects Service Plan.

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

### **13. CAPITAL PROJECTS Q3 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

(Appendix IX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place stating 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 this 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
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- 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 3 2022-23 was attached.

#### **Key points to note:**

- Attendance levels were 99.38% despite the resurgence of covid infections exceeding the 95% Target.
- There continued to be good investment in staff briefings with regular fortnightly team meetings, alternating between Teams and in person.
- Professional development was also continuing as the unit continued to deliver a capital portfolio in excess of £170m over the next 10 years.
- There continued to be a good level of consultation with other Councils and Government departments through BRCD, Community Estates, the Greenways projects, Councils Estates Forum and individual meetings.



**Key achievements:**

- Continued to share capital knowledge and allow a holistic approach to all large, small and maintenance capital projects undertaken by a wide range of directorates through CPAG
- Working with CPD to produce tender documents which took account of social value on all funded project as Council policy developed.

**Emerging issues:**

- Delays in statutory responses to planning creating knock-on delays in programming projects.
- Council resources to deliver ambitious capital delivery
- High construction inflation.

**Action to be taken:**

- Continue to review capital cost estimates
- Assist in the Estate Strategy development
- Assist in capital transformation project

RECOMMENDED that the Council note this report.

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

The proposer, Councillor Adair, recalled how funding for the public realm works had almost been lost due to untimely days in responses from statutory consultees. As such he suggested that time limits were implemented upon those consultees to ensure responses were received in a timelier manner.

Commenting as seconder, Councillor Gilmour thanked officers for the report and concurred with the comments made by the previous speaker in respect of the delays due to the Planning process and the detrimental impact that had upon many projects.

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

**14. ITEM WITHDRAWN**

NOTED.

**15. COMBER BRENT GOOSE SCULPTURE (FILE RDP 236)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place stating that the Council was awarded £1.75M Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation funding to support the four town centres and city of the Borough to recover following the impact of Covid-19.

In 2020, a proposal was presented to the Advisory Groups to install a bespoke floral sculpture within each town/city with the main benefit of the project being the

capacity to attract visitors over an extended period. This was agreed and a budget of approximately £10,000 was allocated per sculpture. It was agreed that a Brent Goose structure would be developed for Comber. This represented the wildlife spectacle that took place annually on the shores of Strangford Lough.

The sculptures were installed in Spring 2021 and remained in place for a number of months.

It was agreed that upon completion of the project, the Council would explore options for the relocation of the floral sculptures and to work with others to have them maintained and displayed as the Council did not have a budget for this.

### **Request from Castle Espie Wetland Centre**

At a recent meeting of the Comber Town Advisory Group, 21 February 2023, a request was received on behalf of Castle Espie Wetland Centre, for the Brent Goose Floral Sculpture to be relocated in its current state to Castle Espie Wetland Centre. The Wetland Centre would then install the Sculpture in a prominent position at the facility.

The Town Advisory Group was content to support the request as it would ensure the Sculpture would be on display to the public and be maintained in a safe and useful way.

RECOMMENDED that Council:

1. enters into a loan agreement for the transfer of the Brent Goose Structure to Castle Espie Wetland Centre, on the conditions that Castle Espie Wetland Centre engage a structural engineer to carry out the necessary inspections and repair works, undertake a risk assessment, submits a planning application (if necessary), arranges public liability insurance and undertakes the maintenance of the structure and
2. arranges transport of the Brent Goose structure to the facility.

Councillor McKimm proposed, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the recommendation be adopted.

Commenting as proposer Councillor McKimm expressed disappointment as a member of Bangor City Advisory Group about the decisions made in respect of the sculptures which the Council had invested in using the Covid Recovery Funding but now regrettably the majority were in Council storage.

The Head of Regeneration commented that the Council had secured some funding through the Covid-19 Recovery Fund and that had been used to purchase the sculptures for the four town centres and City of the Borough. At the time he reminded members that some of those sculptures had been better received than others however he indicated that it was the intention of officers to continue to work with local community groups on the matter.



Councillor McKimm stated that he had been advised that they would be replanted and used again in those town centres and the City.

Welcoming the report, Alderman Armstrong-Cotter commented that Castle Espie would make a beautiful setting for this sculpture and as such she would look forward to visiting it with her family once it was in situ.

At this stage Councillor Adair expressed concern that the remaining sculptures would remain in a Council storage facility and as such he suggested that the Spitfire which had been situated in Newtownards could be relocated to Ballyhalbert given its connections with the Polish airmen and the RAF airfield at the village.

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

## **16. 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 Councillor Irvine, seconded by Councillor Adair, that the public/press be excluded during the discussion of the undernoted items of confidential business.**

## **17. BOATFOLK QUARTERLY REPORT (Q3) (FILE 141671)** (Appendix X)

**\*\*\*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)**

## **18. PICKIE QUARTERLY REPORT (Q3) (FILE 171006)**

**\*\*\*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)**

**19. EXPLORIS QUARTERLY REPORT (Q3) (FILE DEVP3C)**

**\*\*\*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. BUSINESS START – NI ENTERPRISE SUPPORT SERVICE (FILE ED43)**

**\*\*\*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)

**21. ARTEMIS UPDATE (FILE RDP132)**

**\*\*\*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)

**22. SHARED ISLAND LOCAL AUTHORITY DEVELOPMENT FUNDING, FOUR POINTS OF THE ISLAND - MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH CORK, DONEGAL AND KERRY COUNTY COUNCILS (FILE TO/TD/66) (Appendix XI)**

**\*\*\*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)

**23. PSP (FILE RDP209) (Appendix XII)**

**\*\*\*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 Dunlop having declared an interest in the next item left the meeting at this stage – 8.24pm)

**24. AND EVENTS AND FESTIVALS FUND 23/24 – TRANCHE ONE (FILE TO/EV105) (Appendix XIII)**

**\*\*\*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 Dunlop re-joined the meeting at this stage – 8.48pm)

**25. CAPITAL PROJECTS UNIT RESOURCING - LEVELLING UP FUNDING (Appendix XIV)**

**\*\*\*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 Irvine, that the public/press be re-admitted to the meeting.**

**TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 9.00 pm.



## ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Corporate Services Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards and via Zoom, on Tuesday 14 March 2023 at 7.00pm.

### PRESENT:

**In the Chair:** Councillor P Smith

**Aldermen:** Irvine McDowell  
Keery McIlveen  
Gibson

**Councillors:** Blaney (Zoom) Gilmour  
Chambers (Zoom) Greer (Zoom)  
Cooper Irwin (Zoom)  
Dunlop (Zoom) T Smith

**Officers:** Director of Corporate Services (M Steele), Head of Administration (A Curtis) and Democratic Services Officer (R King)

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from The Mayor (Councillor Douglas) and Councillor McKimm.

NOTED.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman sought any Declarations of Interest and none were made.

NOTED.

### 3. PERFORMANCE REPORTS Q3 2022-23:

#### A) COMMUNITY PLANNING (Appendix I)

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

#### Context

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 3 2022-23 was attached.

### Key points to note:

- November meeting of AND Strategic Community Planning Partnership reviewed the latest Performance Update Report. This provided detailed information on progress made against the community planning priority issues including mental health; age friendly; land and estates; participation and poverty. Detailed presentations were provided on the Labour Market Partnership and the newly established Social Supermarket.

### Key achievements:

- Official launch of the Social Supermarket.
- First results from Social Supermarket gathered and an initiative started to gather more Ards and North Down specific data on poverty.
- First meeting of Ards and North Down's Over 50s Council
- Warm spaces initiative developed and rolled out.
- Marketing plan developed for Here2Help app including signs on benches, shops and GPs. Launch of app pre-Christmas and further activities with CP Partners to increase awareness of app to all residents.
- Workshop with stakeholders on the potential to develop a borough wide Big Conversation on Climate Change and Biodiversity.



**Emerging issues:**

- Whole Systems Approach to Obesity workstream. AND has been selected by PHA as the first early adopter site to start this initiative.
- Poverty and cost of living. South Eastern Protect Live Implementation Group set up a Task & Finish group to consider appropriate support.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Community Planning Forum meetings have not taken place due to other work pressures.
- Engage Newsletter has not been developed due to other work pressures.

**Action to be taken:**

- Review most appropriate method to engage with residents on Big Plan Priority issues.
- Review method to re-engage 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector CP Partners and understand their priorities for 2023/24.

**B) CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS (CMR Q22223)  
(Appendix II)**

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

**Context**

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:

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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 3 2022-23 was attached.

#### Key points to note:

- This reports on progress against the Service Plan KPIs. It should be noted that some KPIs are reported on a half-yearly or annual basis and may therefore not be reported against in every quarter. All KPIs will be reported against during the course of the reporting year.
- We continue to be unable to recruit to the post of Multi-Media Technician – a key role in the delivery of the service's technical support duties. Alternative options e.g., recruitment of a student/apprentice are being considered.

#### Key achievements:

- Delivery of the 'Love Christmas in AND' Campaign to inform and engage residents with Council run Christmas events and switch on activities across the Borough. Given the cost-of-living crisis a strong focus was put on 'free to consume' activities and opportunities for people to both support and use the critical services provided by local food banks (Mayor's Charities). Positive feedback received from partners.
- Launch of the 'Recycle today, recycle every day' campaign to support Council's efforts to reach a 70% recycling rate. This featured press/ OOH and digital advertising over a four-week period; the distribution of an information guide to every household; and will continue via social media posts over the coming months. Positive outcomes are already being seen with 1,150 wheelie bins full of blue bin recyclable waste materials being retrieved from black bags intended for the landfill skips at our HRCs in December.
- A significant number of annual internal events for staff were delivered during the quarter including the Business Conference (CLT/HOST/SUMs with a focus on agile working); Long Service Awards and Directorate Christmas Celebration events. High levels of attendance and engagement at each.
- Successful reaccreditation as an Investors in People Organisation (Silver).
- Ongoing programme of communications (PR/ graphic design/ technical event support/ social media content) work to promote a range of Council initiatives including the Here 2 Help App/ Age Directory/ Puppet Festival/ Sports Awards/ In Bloom Programme/ Food Programme.
- Successful integration of a new marketing student into the team (1 year placement via the University of Ulster). With a focus on supporting digital activity, the student has been creating inspirational blogs on the visit AND website and ezines for both trade and visitor audiences.

- Belfast Region brochure being developed via the Renewed Ambition Programme. Sector-specific business case studies have been developed for publication in Q4.

#### Emerging issues:

- Following a successful tender process, hybrid Council and Committee meetings have been delivered since the end of November. Each meeting requires a significant level of technical support. A review will be undertaken after 3 months to identify any learning points/ improvements.
- The Communications and Engagement Plan for Bangor Waterfront was delayed in line with ongoing work to agree the Contract for Funding (CFF) for the Waterfront Scheme. The CFF was secured in January and work to finalise this plan is now progressing apace.
- Based on feedback from the Investors in People report, staff satisfaction with the Council as a 'great place to work' is currently lower than KPI targets. This has been discussed with the IIP Assessor and is typical of responses across the sector following on from the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and challenges to the way in which we have been working. The development and implementation of a new 'Agile Working Policy' (Q4) will help to address this.

#### Action to be taken:

- A very successful Civic Event and PR campaign was delivered in December for the receipt of the Letters Patent for Bangor's City Status from HRH The Princess Royal. A programme of communication and marketing opportunities is being drawn up to further capitalise on this good news.
- Based on feedback from the Investors in People report, staff satisfaction with engagement opportunities is currently lower than KPI targets. Efforts to address and improve this will be made in Q4 with the delivery of a series of Chief Executive led roadshows offering all staff the opportunity to provide feedback on a range of topical issues.

#### C) FINANCE (FIN76) (Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Report from the Director of Corporate Services detailing the undernoted:

#### Context

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:

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- 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 3 2022-23 was attached.

### Key points to note:

- Attendance for quarter 3 has improved from the previous quarter and is now above the 95% target but is still below the target of 95%. This has had an adverse effect on performance in most other areas, particularly around statutory deadlines and completion of improvement initiatives.
- Reactive workload pressures continue to dominate staff time constraining the time available to value added activities.

### Key achievements:

- Core transactional targets continued to be met.
- The audited financial statements were published on time having received a clean audit report, despite resource constraints.

### Action to be taken:

- Team days and manager proactive work days had been introduced to improve workload management, however, further work required to gain more control in order to complete an increased number of service improvement tasks.

## D) STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION AND PERFORMANCE (Appendix IV)



PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Report from the Director of Corporate Services detailing the undernoted:

### Context

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:

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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 3 2022-23 was attached.

### Key points to note:

- This reports on progress against the Service Plan KPIs. It should be noted that some KPIs are reported on a half-yearly or annual basis and may therefore not be reported against in every quarter. All KPIs will be reported against during the course of the reporting year.
- The Procurement Manager post has been filled on a temporary basis and the Procurement Assistant post has been filled on a permanent basis.
- The Procurement Service Unit continues to be under-resourced following unsuccessful attempts to recruit a Procurement Officer on a temporary basis.

- Procurement savings are behind target as some contract awards were delayed until approval was received during the rate setting process. The savings will be made in Quarter 4 (expecting to be circa £150k).
- The Business Technology Manager left the Council in December. The role is being overseen by the Performance Improvement Manager, on an interim basis until a permanent replacement is recruited.

### Key achievements:

- Spend against budget is slightly lower than expected due to the ongoing vacant Procurement Officer post. It should be noted that the PSU continue to deliver compliant procurement processes across Council with reduced resourcing and with zero challenges.
- Attendance is well above the Council average at 97.93%.
- % time invested in staff development is slightly lower than expected, and this can be attributed to the pause in the 'Pride in Performance' conversations.
- Staff from the Performance Improvement Unit supported on a range of projects including: the transformation of Council grant processes; a new Council website; workforce planning strategy; events strategy; leisure service delivery model; and the office rationalisation/ citizens hub project.
- 'New Ways of Working' Working Group formed to guide the organisation in transitioning to more digital and commercial agendas.
- Transformation fund criteria established to enable efficiency projects to be progressed.
- The Digital Strategy project, a key strand of the Strategic Transformation and Efficiency Programme commenced in November 2022. Engagement with an external specialist is underway.
- Further roll-out of additional hardware to support hybrid-working arrangements and the launch of hot-desking within City Hall.

### E) ADMINISTRATION (Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Report from the Director of Corporate Services detailing the undernoted:

#### Context

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:

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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 3 2022-23 was attached.

### Key points to note:

The majority of targets in the Administration Service Plan are measured annually.

**Table 1: Q3 performance update - Business as Usual activities**

Business as Usual activities we will deliver in 2022/2023 (actions)	Q2 update
Monitor the implementation of the action plan in the Roadmap to Sustainability	Meeting target. 6 monthly updates are provided to Council.
Catalogue and digitise all PROWs (alleged and asserted) and investigate any encroachments where required	Met target. Digitisation project is almost complete, and Officer is working their way through the queries on current database. Status update report will be presented in near future.
EMS – Retain accreditation and use framework in all Council buildings to ensure best practice	Meeting target – The Council have retained accreditation.
Confer 2 Freedom of the Boroughs	Met target – Conferred the Freedom of the Borough on the Irish Guards in June 2022 and Gary Lightbody in August 2022.
All agendas circulated within 5-day notice period	Meeting target - 100% of Agendas went out 5 days in advance of all Committee and Council meetings.

Business as Usual activities we will deliver in 2022/2023 (actions)	Q2 update															
Hold 4 Corporate Health and Safety meetings – with input from directorate Health and Safety meetings	Meeting target. Group met on the 6 <sup>th</sup> May and 15 <sup>th</sup> August 2022 and 5 <sup>th</sup> December 2022 and meeting scheduled on a quarterly basis.															
Deliver 'It Takes Allsorts' programme to address current identified issues of minority populations annually	Meeting target, programme has concluded and was well received as always.															
FOI/EIR Information response times in compliance with legislation	<p>Missed Target – 93% This is an improvement from 91% for same period last year and given the increased number and complex nature of many FOI requests this is an excellent compliance rate.</p> <p>A summary of this quarter compared with the same quarter last year is as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>FOI/EIR requests</th> <th>1 Oct 2022 – 31 Dec 2022 (Q3 2022/23)</th> <th>1 Oct 2021 – 31 Dec 2021 (Q3 2021/22)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Number received</td> <td>153</td> <td>218</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number responded to within 20 working days</td> <td>142</td> <td>199</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Responses issued within 20 working days – compliance rate (%)</td> <td>93%</td> <td>91%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Average time for a response to be issued</td> <td>11 working days</td> <td>12 working days</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	FOI/EIR requests	1 Oct 2022 – 31 Dec 2022 (Q3 2022/23)	1 Oct 2021 – 31 Dec 2021 (Q3 2021/22)	Number received	153	218	Number responded to within 20 working days	142	199	Responses issued within 20 working days – compliance rate (%)	93%	91%	Average time for a response to be issued	11 working days	12 working days
FOI/EIR requests	1 Oct 2022 – 31 Dec 2022 (Q3 2022/23)	1 Oct 2021 – 31 Dec 2021 (Q3 2021/22)														
Number received	153	218														
Number responded to within 20 working days	142	199														
Responses issued within 20 working days – compliance rate (%)	93%	91%														
Average time for a response to be issued	11 working days	12 working days														
Train all CLT/HOST in emergency planning response protocol	Met target, new members of HOST were trained in Autumn.															
Have 2 emergency planning test activations	Met target.															
Hold 2 Emergency Planning Implementation Group meetings	Met target: Meeting held on 20 October 2022.															
Continue review of the use of resources (paper, postage, stationary) to	Meeting target. Review underway. Customer Services Manager reviewing use of paper, postage and stationery and working with services to reduce use where appropriate.															

<b>Business as Usual activities we will deliver in 2022/2023 (actions)</b>	<b>Q2 update</b>
ensure sustainability is paramount.	
DSAR response times in compliance with legislation	16 DSARs were processed in this period and all in compliance with legislative timeframes.

**Table 2: Q2 performance update - Service development/improvement activities**

What service development/improvement will we undertake in 2022/2023?	Q3 update
Pilot paperless filing for new files in 1 Directorate or Service Unit	This is now included in the larger digital transformation project. Of the 313 files created 23% were digital only.
Monitor complaints consistently via Tascomi across Council	Meeting target – Tascomi roll-out to all services still ongoing. In the meantime, the Customer Services Manager now has oversight of other databases for customer complaints.
75% rate for resolution of issues or enquiries at first point of contact in Customer Service. Trend analysis to be carried out as part of this.	Of the management information that we hold on Te-care (Tascomi) and Enquiries database, the resolution of issues at first point of contact is 72%.
E Learning module to be created for complaint handling/customer service and will form part of induction process for all new starts and mandatory training for all staff who deal with the public.	E-learning module has been developed and will be rolled out once new complaints handling process is in place.
Implement Screening App	Met target. This is now completed and is working well.
Screening 100% of all new and revised policies to ensure compliance with disability duties and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1988, Rural and Sustainability.	Complete. All existing policies were checked to ensure that they were screened and if not, screening was completed. All new policies are screened as they are being developed.
Review participation and recruit members in/to the Consultancy panel	On target: Ongoing, the group has met and a gap analysis was carried out of Section 75 categories that may not be represented. Engagement to recruit is underway and further update can be found in Quarterly update.
Develop Claims Management Policy	On target: Development underway.
Increase Participation and recruit members in the Council Disability Forum by 50%	Met target: This has being carried out and 1 new member has been recruited.



What service development/improvement will we undertake in 2022/2023?	Q3 update
Complete Climate Adaptation and Action Plans	On target: This is progressing – 3 workshops have taken place and officers have reviewed risk register with individual service units and identifying actions. This has been summarised into themes of functional and operational actions.

**Table 3: Q3 performance update – Corporate wide improvement activities**

Performance Measures	Q3 update
% Staff Attendance (95%)	Missed target – 91.89%
% Spend against budget (+/-5% of budget)	Missed target – 107.25%
% Staff reporting regular receipt of team briefings	100% - Teams meet at least once a month

**Key achievements:**

The Conferment of the City of Bangor by the Princess Royal was a highlight in the civic calendar. The events were very well received, and thanks is extended to officers for all the hard work that went into this.

Freedom of Information requests have continued to be high in number and complexity. To see that the response rate has increased and the days for response turnaround decrease is a positive step.

The Roadmap to Sustainability is continuing to serve as a great document to ensure that actions are continuing and constantly improving. The Council-wide awareness of their service's impact on all elements of sustainability has dramatically increased and projects now consider sustainability as a matter of course as opposed to an afterthought. In order to ensure that this is meaningful an Advisory Audit was commissioned, and Officers will work through the recommendations in the coming year.

**Emerging issues:**

The effect of the pandemic remains evident in the workload of this service. There are many issues that have been noted due to the fact that this/other service(s) have historically been paper-based. The pandemic has demonstrated the need for systems to be digitised going forward so that information can be accessed in a timely manner as well as to ensure security of data. This requires investment and will fall into the transformation programme that the Council has agreed.

**Action to be taken:**

We continue to work towards all of the KPIs.

**F) HUMAN RESOURCES**  
(Appendix VI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Report from the Director of Corporate Services detailing the undernoted:

**Context**

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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 3 2022-23 was attached.

**Key points to note:**

- This report gives updates on performance against the 19 Service Plan KPIs. Good progress is being made against the KPIs with 16 currently being on target.
- 3 targets have not been achieved

**HR successes:**

HR and OD have been successful in ensuring that there has been good communication with trade unions during quarter 3. Resourcing staff are extremely efficient in informing candidates for employment of the outcome of recruitment exercises with 100% of candidates being informed of the outcome within 2 weeks of



a shortlisting meeting or from attendance at interview. Excellent process has been made on the People Plan with 75% of the actions being achieved at the end of the third quarter and the Council continuing to hold Silver IIP accreditation following its 3-year assessment. The HR and OD service has remained within budget for the third quarter of the year. There have also been several team meetings with all HR staff to discuss issues. Whistle blowing training has taken place via the E learning system.

### Ongoing targets

- The service is on target for the end of the year to have the following in place:
  - Formal Agile working policy incorporating the former flexible working policy
  - Development of a draft Workforce Planning Strategy for first review by Senior Management/

### Targets not achieved

- Council wide absence remains challenging with a YTD figure of 7.26% against a target of 5% and an average of 14 days lost per employees with absence against a target of 10. APSE have been commissioned to carry out a review which will provide recommendations in due course.
- Only 61% of recruitment exercises being completed from date of advertisement to offer of employment within 6 weeks, however, this has been due to circumstances outside of the HR Service's control such as external testing and panel members not being available.

Councillor Cooper proposed, seconded by Alderman Keery, that items 3(a) to 3(f) be noted.

Councillor Dunlop asked if there were any plans to include Sustainability Road Map related targets within the performance reports and the Head of Administration advised that officers were planning to include sustainability matters going forward and discussions were ongoing in relation to how that approach would be taken.

In relation to the Finance report, at 3(c), Alderman McIlveen asked for reasons behind a series of missed targets that had been listed and the Director of Corporate Services explained that absenteeism in that reporting quarter had been a factor but the section was now operating with a full complement of staff and he expected those particular KPIs to see improvement.

Responding to a further query on the Finance report from Alderman McIlveen in relation to the 'not applicable or N/A' items listed that had not contained any data, the Director advised that having recently taken up post, he would be reviewing the reporting process to ensure there were no 'N/As' going forward.

Referring to the Community Planning report, at 3(a), Alderman Irvine asked for further details on the cost-of-living support but as the relevant officer was not in attendance the Director would ask her to respond directly to the Member.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Cooper, seconded by Alderman Keery, that items 3(a) to 3(f) be noted.**

#### **4. SERVICE PLANS 2023/24**

(Appendix VII – XII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- the undernoted service plans:

- (a.)Corporate Communications
- (b.)Community Planning
- (c.)Finance
- (d.)Strategic Transformation and Performance
- (e.)Administration
- (f.) Human Resources

RECOMMENDED that the Council adopts the attached plans.

Alderman Irvine proposed, seconded by Alderman Gibson, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor T Smith referred to the service development / improvement category called 'scope alternative delivery and operating models', which was listed in the Strategic Transformation and Performance Service Plan. Having previously called for this approach, he hoped the exercise would be taken forward as soon as possible and asked if the process would be conducted Council wide.

The Director of Corporate Services advised that officers were looking to produce a commercial strategy to consider both insourcing and outsourcing opportunities and the aim would be to bring back a series of options and the exercise would be kept as broad as possible.

Welcoming the response, Councillor T Smith pointed to the outsourcing of Pickie Fun Park and Exploris and wondered what other services would benefit from that delivery model.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Irvine, seconded by Alderman Gibson, that the recommendation be adopted.**

#### **5. ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY (FILE FIN58)**

(Appendix XIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services detailing the undernoted:

##### Background

The above legislation required that Council "shall make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs." In addition, there were a number of outstanding internal audit recommendations in connection with Finance policies.

The Asset Management Policy was the first in suite of policies that the Finance Service intended to develop over the coming year. This policy would address directly or indirectly six outstanding recommendations.

### Policy and Procedures

This policy and procedures had been developed following the Council's Policy Development Process, which involved consultation with stakeholders, Heads of Service and the Corporate Leadership Team.

There were two sections to the document (see Appendix), follows:

#### Policy Statement

##### Chapter 1 - Policy Statement

#### Procedures

##### Chapter 2 Acquisition of New Assets

##### Chapter 3 Maintenance

##### Chapter 4 Replacement

##### Chapter 5 Records

##### Chapter 6 Security

##### Chapter 7 Disposal

##### Chapter 8 Right of Use Assets i.e.. leased assets

Chapter 1 contained was the formal policy and requires Council approval, whereas chapters 2 – 8 set out the framework for operational management arrangements to give effect to the policy and will be kept up to date by the policy owner.

Following approval by Council the Finance Service would run a number of briefing events for Heads of Service and Service Unit Managers to allow each to understand the principles involved and resultant actions that needed to be taken to imbed the policy in operational processes.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council approves the Asset Management Policy as set out in Chapter 1 of the appendix.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND**, on the proposal of Alderman Irvine, seconded by Alderman Keery, that the recommendation be adopted.

## 6. MODEL COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

(Appendix XIV – XVI)

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:-** Report from the Director of Corporate Services detailing the following:

### Background

In order for the Council to effectively and consistently handle complaints and enquiries, it was essential that it had a corporate complaints procedure in place and that this was communicated across all the Council's departments and be made

available to the public. The Council's adherence to a formal procedure would protect it in the event of any challenge made by a customer or resident to the Northern Ireland Ombudsman's Office (NIPSO) on how a complaint had been handled.

NIPSO had now issued a final draft of the Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) for the Local Government sector (Appendices 1 -3).

The document was to assist public sector organisations implement a standardised and streamlined approach to managing and learning from complaints.

Part 3 of the Public Services Ombudsman Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (the legislation) provided the legislative basis for NIPSO to publish MCHPs for public bodies within its jurisdiction. The Local Government MCHP was developed by NIPSO in partnership with an operational network of Local Government staff.

NIPSO's MCHP Parts 1-3 took account of NIPSO's research report on Complaints Handling in the public sector in Northern Ireland (NI) published in June 2021. The aim of the research was to gain greater understanding of the complaints processes, procedures and practices of a range of public bodies within NIPSO's jurisdiction. Parts 1-3 also reflect NIPSO's Complaints Handling Statement of Principles approved by the NI Assembly on 19 January 2022. These documents took account of stakeholder views expressed through NIPSO's public consultation from June - September 2021.

The purpose of the MCHP was to provide a standardised approach to dealing with customer complaints across the public sector in NI. In particular, the aim was to implement a standardised and consistent process for customers to follow which made it simpler to complain, ensured staff and customer confidence in complaints handling and encourages public bodies to make best use of lessons learned from complaints.

### **About the MCHP**

The MCHP applied to all public bodies within NIPSO's jurisdiction as listed in Schedule 3 of the NIPSO Act 2016. This includes your organisation. Once fully implemented all organisations delivering public services in NI would be required to have in place a complaint handling procedure which met the requirements of the MCHP relevant to that public sector. NIPSO would publish a MCHP for public sectors which complied with its complaints handling Statement of Principles.

Part 2, the Organisational Guide, was intended to be adopted as an internal procedural document. It provided staff with clear operational guidance on how to implement the MCHP.

### **Adopting NIPSO's MCHP**

It was important that the information contained in NIPSO's MCHP Parts 1-3 was adopted in full by the Council to ensure it met NIPSO's MCHP test of compliance.

NIPSO recognised the importance of providing scope to adapt the MCHP to reflect, for example, the organisation's structure, operational processes and corporate style.

Therefore, further in this Organisational Guide, areas/text were highlighted in yellow italics to provide such scope. These areas would be adapted by the Council to provide additional guidance or reference to local processes.

**RECOMMENDED** that the attached Model Complaints Handling Procedure is personalised to the Council and adopted.

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

Alderman McIlveen was surprised that there had not been any standard procedure in place already and asked how the Council had been managing to date. The Head of Administration explained that guidance around complaints had been taken from the Ombudsman but this was a recommendation to formalise the procedure and move forward in a united approach.

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

**7. QUARTERLY REPORT ON EQUALITY AND GOOD RELATIONS (SECTION 75 OF THE N.I. ACT 1998) 1 JANUARY 2023- 31 MARCH 2023 (FILE EQ33)**  
(Appendix XVII)

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:-** Report from the Director of Corporate Services advising that in accordance with the Council's Equality Scheme, a progress report was required to be submitted on a quarterly basis to the Council's Corporate Services Committee. This ensured the Council complied with its obligations to meet its equality and good relations duties and responsibilities, as identified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

This report listed the actions of Council officers to meet the statutory duties since 1 January 2023.

**Consultative Panel**

A meeting of the Consultative panel was held on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023 in Green Road Community Centre. At the meeting the panel proposed a draft constitution, see appendix A. It was agreed that the Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding) would chair the meeting. Where requested by the panel, an external facilitator with first-hand experience of dealing with Section 75 matters, and with a working knowledge of local government, will facilitate the meeting. It was agreed that Elected Members would be invited annually to meet with the panel members.

A monitoring form on information of the nine Section 75 dimensions was completed by each member. It was identified that Age (under 30) and Ethnic group was low on representation. Officers would contact organisations that worked with young people and ethnic minority groups, including refugees, to see if they would have any willing individuals or representatives attend the next meeting.

The next meeting of the Panel would be Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023 in Aurora Leisure Centre. Elected Members would be contacted nearer the time via email and invited to attend and meet with the Panel.

## **EQIA**

Following a Council Meeting held on 26 January 2023 it was agreed, "That this Council: (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."

Members would be aware that an admissible Call-In of the decision was subsequently received by the Chief Executive, meaning the decision was suspended until it had been reconsidered by the Council. The Call-In cited grounds under section 41(1)(a) of the Local Government Act (NI) 2014 - that a decision was not arrived at after a proper consideration of the relevant facts and issues, and section 41(1)(b) - that the decision would disproportionately affect adversely any section of the inhabitants of the district. A legal opinion must be sought where grounds under section 41(1)(b) were cited, and this would be presented in a report back to Council on the Call-In once received.

## **Screening of Council policies**

The Internal Screening Panel met in February 2023. Officers from across the Council directorates screened 5 Council policies. This enabled comments to be received, considered, and addressed. All policy screening was being completed using Council's online Jot Form format, which had been a great success in reducing the amount of paperwork for those Officers screening policies and in creating a more efficient system. All Heads of Service and Service Unit Managers had been issued with a reminder as to the Council's screening obligations and with instructions on completing the Jot Form.

## **Quarterly Consultations**

The Council had a requirement within the Equality Scheme to publish the outcome of screened policies quarterly. A quarterly report was uploaded onto the Council's website on 31 December 2022. The next agreed table and forms would be uploaded to the Council's website and circulated to all consultees on 31 March 2023. At the time of writing this report there would be 5 completed screening forms to be made available on the Council website.

## **Equality Action Plan**

The Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding) continued to review and ensure that items outlined in the plan were in place and on track, and Officers were reminded of their responsibilities during the quarterly Screening Panel meetings.



The Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding) had configured the e-learning training module on Equality and Diversity for Council employees, and this would be rolled out shortly.

### **Disability Forum**

The Disability Forum had not met within this period of reporting. The next meeting was scheduled to take place in April 2023.

### **AccessAble**

AccessAble were in the process of auditing Council facilities and outdoor spaces to update the key access guides, the results would be published online through the AccessAble Website in April 2023.

### **Disability Action Plan**

The Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding) continued to work to deliver the Disability Action Plan. This was reported through the Internal Screening Group and the Disability Forum. At these meetings, any identified concerns may be added to the Plan to ensure appropriate actions were identified and undertaken in a timely manner to enable the Council to remain compliant with the relevant legislation.

### **Complaints**

During this period no Section 75 complaints had been received.

### **Safeguarding**

The Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding) continued to raise the profile of safeguarding which was the responsibility of everyone within the Council. Three Safeguarding referrals had been made in this reporting period. The Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding) attended a Dissemination of Learning from Recent Case Management Reviews (CMRs) Seminar in February 2023. The purpose of CMRs was to review and reflect on current practices, identify learning and then disseminate the learning to improve practice and enhance safeguarding outcomes for adults at risk, children and young people in the future.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report and agrees the Constitution of the Consultative Panel.

Alderman Irvine proposed, seconded by Alderman Gibson, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Cooper referred to a section on the draft constitution stating that 'comments will be recorded in confidence and the outcome of all meetings will be reported anonymously as reflecting on the deliberations of the Panel in general, and not the views/opinions of any individual member.'

He felt that for the sake of openness and transparency, panel members should not be given anonymity and where there was disagreement or decisions made that were not unanimous, those deliberations should be recorded for elected members to see.

The Head of Administration responded that the policy to allow anonymity was to allow for frank and open discussion. Those discussions were reported between the external and internal panels and the opinions were summarised.

In response Councillor Cooper felt that it was important for elected members to see any disparity in order to enable informed and educated decisions.

Councillor Cooper proposed an amendment, seconded by Alderman Keery, that comments would be recorded in confidence and the outcome of all meetings would be reported as reflecting on the deliberations of the panel in general and the views/opinions of any individual member of a unanimous decision.

Alderman McIlveen believed it was important for panel members to sign up to the Nolan Principles. He did not feel it necessary to waive anonymity of panel members given the identity of members had already been made available to elected members, but he felt it would be beneficial to know where there was disagreement. He therefore would have been supportive of the proposed amendment if Councillor Cooper was willing to re-insert the anonymity aspect.

Clarifying to the Head of Administration, Councillor Cooper confirmed his proposed amendment was not asking for another layer of screening, just for transparency and a record of who said what and what issues were discussed.

Councillor Irwin felt it was fair to ask that panel members signed up to the Nolan Principles, as alluded to by Alderman McIlveen. While she agreed it would be useful to know the issues raised, there was no need to identify individuals who probably wanted to give their views in a safe place and she felt naming those members would also inhibit honest and open conversation.

Alderman McDowell expressed strong views against the amendment, recognising that the panel members were volunteers giving up their time to help the Council achieve its statutory objectives. He described the amendment as a witch-hunt and felt it instilled fear by saying to members 'if you don't agree with us, then we know who you are'. He wondered also if the proposed change would fall foul of Section 75 legislation.

Uncomfortable by the proposal to remove anonymity, Councillor Blaney suspected that the group was formed on the basis that its members' identities would be protected and the proposed amendment would then move the goal posts in that respect. He felt that names were also irrelevant, it was more about what was being said rather than who said it.

Supportive of the amendment, Councillor T Smith felt it was important to include names and the views which would be presented to the Council in cases of disagreement. It was about openness and transparency, and not a witch-hunt, he added in response to the earlier claim from Alderman McDowell.

Summing up, Councillor Cooper felt that the remarks by Alderman McDowell had been tedious and preposterous, and it was wrong to assume he would disagree with members of the panel. In the interests of democracy, it was important to have the names and the issues raised whether he agreed or not. Members already knew the composition of the panel and therefore he could see no reason why it would inhibit free flowing speech. It would merely educate and inform Council members to help them make better decisions. In closing, he said it was important to get the policy right and called for a recorded vote.

On being put to the meeting with 7 voting FOR, 7 voting AGASINT, 0 ABSTAINING and 2 ABSENT, the Chair used his casting vote and voted against, and the amendment FELL.

<b>FOR (7)</b>	<b>AGAINST (7)</b>	<b>ABSTAINED (0)</b>	<b>ABESENT (2)</b>
<b>Aldermen:</b>	<b>Alderman:</b>		<b>Councillors:</b>
Gibson	McDowell		Douglas
Keery	<b>Councillors:</b>		McKimm
Irvine	Blaney		
McIlveen	Chambers		
<b>Councillors:</b>	Dunlop		
Cooper	Greer		
Gilmour	Irwin		
Smith, T	Smith, P		

Alderman McIlveen queried if the Nolan Principles could be considered with panel members required to sign a declaration. The Director advised that legal advice had been sought in anticipation of that question arising and officers were awaiting a response.

Alderman McDowell proposed, seconded by Councillor Irwin, that the recommendation be adopted.

On being put to the meeting, with 7 voting FOR, 7 voting AGAINST, 0 ABSTAINING and 2 ABSENT, the Chair used his casting vote and voted FOR the proposal, and it was declared CARRIED.

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

**8. RURAL NEEDS ACT (NI) 2016 - MONITORING RETURN FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2022 - 31 MARCH 2023 (FILE RA2)**  
(Appendix XVIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services advising that as Members would be aware, section 1 of the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 placed a duty on public authorities, including Councils, to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services. In carrying out this duty and in line with guidance issued by the Department of

Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), the Council carries out rural screening exercises on its policies. These screening exercises were carried out simultaneously by officers when completing section 75 screening of policies.

The 2016 Act places a further obligation on public authorities to compile information on the exercise of its functions under section 1 of the Act (i.e., information on completed screening exercises), and to report this annually to DAERA.

DAERA had produced a template for public authorities to complete when compiling the information for their annual return. DAERA then collated all the returns it received and produced an annual Rural Needs Monitoring Report.

The Council's draft return for 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023 was attached to this report at Appendix 1 and provided detail on the rural screening exercises completed during this period.

As there would be no Committee meetings in April or May due to the Local Government elections, the return had been completed and was being reported to Council before year end in order that it may have been submitted to meet the deadline of 30 April 2023 set down by DAERA. It was anticipated that two additional entries relating to policies on Grant Funding would be added to the template before it was submitted. It was not anticipated that these would have any adverse impacts on rural areas.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees to submit to DAERA the Rural Needs monitoring return for 2022/23 attached to this report at Appendix 1, with any additional rural screenings completed before year end to be added to the return by officers.

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

## **9. NOTICES OF MOTION**

### **(a) 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.

The Vice Chair, Alderman McIlveen, took over from the Chair for the above Notice of Motion in order to allow him to propose.

Councillor P Smith proposed, seconded by Councillor Blaney, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Proposing, Councillor P Smith felt members would be united by the issue of potholes and referred to an article in the Newsletter which stated that there had been 11,000 road defects reported to the Department for Infrastructure. Ards and North Down had

topped a league table of reports across all Council areas with this Borough accounting for 1,731 of those and that number represented 15.5% of reports made across the 11 Council areas.

Ards and North Down was also ahead in the number of potholes reported per 100km of road length – the article reporting that there were 148.6 potholes per 100km. Only Antrim and Newtownabbey were the only other Council area to break the 100 mark. Londonderry/Derry area had the fewest with 21.8 per 100km.

It had been argued by the Department that there had been many instances of multiple reports of the same potholes and the figures were not an accurate reflection. However, Councillor P Smith had felt that while some may have been reported multiple times, the people of Ards and North Down were no more eagle-eyed than any other Council areas and on the basis of assumed multiple reports in other districts, the figures still represented an extremely higher number of road defects in this Borough and there was an issue to be addressed.

He recalled that DfI had accepted there were issues across the Borough with resurfacing – he referred Members to the A22 (Comber to Dundonald) and A23 (Belfast to Ballygowan). Those roads were particularly dangerous at night when potholes were not as visible and motorists were forced to keep an eye on traffic and the condition of the road at the same time.

He was now calling on the DfI to produce an action plan as stated in his Notice of Motion, which could provide short term solutions. It also called for significant capital investment in a public transport system, given the sort of traffic congestion that the Newtownards carriageway often led to in Dundonald.

In terms of public transport, he welcomed the park and ride facility that was planned for Newtownards and hoped another would follow for Comber, and he felt generally a greater interest from DfI in the public transport system would help.

In closing, he called for both long and short-term action from DfI and hoped for a reasonable response with proposals for significant improvements.

Seconding, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Blaney, added his support, believing that Bangor had its fair share of potholes leading to vehicle damage and road safety issues with motorists all too often having to swerve and veer to the other side of the road to avoid them. The problem was so vast it was now time to put pressure on the DfI and take the approach of other Councils by shouting louder in the hope that Ards and North Down would be prioritised.

Members of the Committee rose in turn to support the proposal, highlighting many road defects and pothole issues within their own DEAs. Alderman Gibson felt the Notice of Motion was timely, believing that the recent snowfall had only made the surface problems in Ballygowan even worse.

Councillor Gilmour noted that DfI had still failed to appoint a road surfacing contractor despite intending to have one in place by mid-January 2023. She called for a systematic review by the DfI and raised frustrations about the reporting system



for road defects, likening it to a black hole, where nobody ever responded. Adding support for the Motion, Councillor T Smith said potholes, along with dog fouling, was the most raised issue in the Borough. He felt that patching roads did not work and many were so bad they needed to be completely dug up and resurfaced.

Describing the problem as colossal, Alderman Keery said that a road close to his home, Glenarrif Road in Bangor, was patched up four times a year and had never been resurfaced in its 60-year existence. He described the workmanship as very poor and even roads around the town centre, leading to Bangor Castle were in extremely poor condition.

Echoing those comments Alderman Irvine explained he had been contacted by a lady looking for a compensation claim for damage caused to her car as a result of a road defect. He wondered what the cost of claims were compared to the cost of actually resurfacing. Expanding on that concern Councillor Chambers recalled a colleague having to replace a burst tyre and have her car's wheels realigned following damage caused by a pothole in Carrowdore. He also felt that continuous digging and removal of speed bumps hadn't helped, only adding to a patchwork quilt effect on the roads and pavements.

Councillor Irwin advised that she had to regularly avoid certain roads after defects had led to damaged springs on her car. She too agreed that many roads were in such a poor state of repair the only solution was to resurface.

Councillor Cooper said that potholes and road defects were issues that he received calls about every day and in relation to the standard of repairs, there needed to be better quality control with contractors held liable for any damage to vehicles.

Voicing further support, Alderman McIlveen said budget delays and lack of a resurfacing contractor for a significant period was unacceptable. He believed many roads were in a criminal condition. In Rose Park for example a contractor had come out to survey the condition of the road ahead of repairs and the surface was so contaminated that contractors were warned they would need to wear protective clothing to undertake the repairs.

Summing up Councillor P Smith said it was clear that Members were on the same page over the issue and he pointed to the absence of a DfI road surfacing contractor. It had left a situation where nothing could be done but to continue patching up roads every time the filling crumbled away. He hoped that DfI could respond with constructive and thoughtful proposals.

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor P Smith, seconded by Councillor Blaney, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.**

(Councillor P Smith resumed the Chair – 8.11 pm)

- (b) 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.

(Councillor Kennedy and Councillor Boyle joined the meeting – 8.12pm)

Councillor T Smith proposed, seconded by Councillor Kennedy, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Outlining the above Notice of Motion Councillor T Smith said there was a clear palpable anger at the proposal from the South Eastern Trust to close the Minor Injuries Units in Ards and Bangor. Across the Borough people were outraged at this further proposed reduction in local health services.

Continuing, he believed that the proposals contained within the consultation document were nothing short of scandalous and were nothing to do with providing better Minor Injury Care to the people across Ards and North Down.

He therefore urged everyone to read and to respond to the consultation. It was clear from that document that the closure of the Minor Injuries Units was surrounded and camouflaged in talk about the creation of a new Urgent Care Centre.

However, when that was examined further the Urgent Care Centre was nothing more than a vision at this point and was subject to funding being made available and something that may have taken many years to materialise.

The real reason the Minor Injury Units were closing was not to provide an Urgent Care Centre but rather because the Trust needed the staff to address the crisis at the Ulster's Emergency Department.

It was known that the Emergency Department at the Ulster was crying out for help but sacrificing the Minor Injury Units was not the way to provide that help.

The Trust had consistently failed to recruit the necessary staff to meet the ever-increasing demands in the A&E and, if their plans went ahead, it would be the local community across North Down and Ards that would pay the price for the Trust's ongoing failure.

The proposals for an Urgent Care Centre were nothing more than that, they were just proposals with no funding at this stage to back them up.

If the Minor Injuries Units did close then the staff would be transferred to the Ulster. There they would not serve as part of a dedicated Minor Injury Unit – because there was none.

Again, according to the Consultation the purpose of closing the MIUs was to reduce the burden on the Emergency Department. Anyone attending for Minor Injury Treatment would then be directed to a minor injury stream.

Once the staff from the Ards MIU were transferred to the Ulster Hospital they would be expected to treat "a greater range of patients" as outlined in the consultation. So, of course, those who required emergency or urgent care would take priority and would be treated before those with minor injuries.

The Borough had gone from having two dedicated Minor Injuries Units – one in Bangor and one in Ards – to the current situation of only the Ards MIU in operation.

If the Trust had its way, that would be scrapped and patients would be forced into a minor injury stream at the Ulster. Bit by bit there would be a constant erosion of local health services in the Borough.

And that Minor Injury stream at the Ulster would not just serve the Ards/North Down area but would have a greater Belfast catchment.

He felt that the message would be that the Minor Injury Units needed to close because there were so many people who turned up who needed additional treatment and that it was better to do that under one site.

According to the consultation that was not the case. The document stated that nearly 12,000 would use Minor Injuries in a year and of that, 21 per month or 252 a year, would be referred to the Ulster because they required extra treatment.

That was around 2% - so the MIUs with their dedicated staff of Emergency Nurse Practitioners could treat nearly 98% of those who sought help. That was a hugely successful treatment rate.

He firmly believed that the reason the Trust wanted to close the MIUs was to plug a hole in the service provision in the Emergency Department and nothing else. This was a hole created by the Trust after years of failure to recruit and keep the staff that the Ulster desperately needed.

Closing the MIUs did nothing to address that failure and he could not see their proposals as progress in terms of providing better Minor Injury Care.

He believed it was the opposite and urged people not to be fooled by the talk in the document about providing extra local services in Bangor and Ards because – as the Consultation stated – they were subject to funding being made available and of being commissioned by the Department of Health which was more wishful thinking than anything else.

It was right that the Council stood with the public who were crying out and demanding the retention of those valuable local services.

The Council needed to lend its voice and leave the Trust in no doubt as to what people in the Borough wanted - which was not only the retention of the Ards Minor Injuries Unit but the re-opening of the Bangor Unit as well.

The seconder, Councillor Kennedy, thanked the proposer for bringing the Notice of Motion. Having attended the consultation in Ards Leisure Centre he felt the Trust's interest in the concerns about the closure of the MIU was fabrication. He recalled that a representative of the Trust had told that meeting that it was taking place because it was statutorily obliged to do so. The presentations were saturated with management speak and included vague terms with plans aiming to remove services from the people of Ards and North Down.

He had been told it would be great but the Trust had failed to provide a single piece of data to support that claim or show any evidence it would not have a detrimental effect on health services for the people of the Borough. They had been unable to tell those in attendance when any of the proposed plans were going to happen and when they intended to close the MIUs before the opening of an all singing and dancing Urgent Care Centre at the Ulster Hospital.

The questions that had been accepted at the consultation were only those that had been written down and provided in advance and even then they had been vetted for suitability and nobody was given the opportunity to respond to the answers provided. There was therefore no shock that there were no difficult questions asked and he recalled frustration when the panel refused to give complete answers.

The panel had claimed that the new facility at the Ulster would be better because it would be located right next to the A&E unit and the hospital so there would be better access to a range of medical and healthcare staff. They refused to answer Councillor Kennedy's question on the numbers that had attended the Ards MIU over the last year that had been referred to the Ulster Hospital and subsequently died on route to the facility. They did not provide that answer but he was well aware it was zero. He therefore wondered how the Trust was planning to improve on 100%.

At the same time it had been claimed that the Ulster Hospital A&E facility was at breaking point and that relocation of the MUI staff would relieve the problems there but if the 11,000 face to face visits to the Ards MIU last year, 7% were referred to the Ulster Hospital which represented two to three extra patients per day. Of that 11,000, 10,000 were treated at the MIU and sent on their way.

In short, the MIU facility worked remarkably well in Newtownards and was depended on by so many people and without it people would be forced to spend money on a taxi. One member of the panel had suggested the Glider but that only started in Dundonald and the bus from Newtownards didn't come into the hospital grounds and therefore patients would have to make their way to the door. In reality those patients could not spend money they did not have and would phone for an ambulance and that would heap further pressure on an already broken service.

The trust had failed at the Ulster both in the service and staffing of the facility and was now faced with the only option of closing the MIU to move the staff from there

and now had the sheer arrogance to claim this would be an improvement of the service and would be for the greater good.

In closing, he said there were those people who would support the closure who did not know the difference between Bengoa and Ben Affleck and he would not be supporting the closure.

Alderman McIlveen recalled at the consultation meeting he had made the point that the Trust's proposal was purely for the benefit of people in East Belfast and Dundonald and that the Borough would suffer as a result. He complained about how the questions to the consultation panel had been managed at that meeting and it had been clear that Trust officials had not wanted Alex Easton MLA to speak however six members of the Alliance Party, which was supporting the proposal, had been given the opportunity. He added that people had left the consultation meeting feeling very frustrated that their questions had not been answered.

He referred to Trust figures that had been provided to show that 11,500 people had attended the Ards MIU last year but the panel said that number would have been more than 17,000 had there not been a 'phone first' policy in place with those people just turning up. It would therefore be that higher number of patients that would turn up at the Ulster Hospital if the decision was taken.

In terms of the impact, he felt it would lead to further pressures on the Ambulance service with people unable to afford taxis to the Ulster Hospital, this would have even greater impacts in rural, more remote areas, of the Borough and it was accepted in the consultation paper there would be impacts on people with disabilities with no mitigation being proposed.

He added that there would be only one drop off space for disabled people and the approach to those people with mobility issues beggared belief.

He believed that the proposed decision was purely for financial reasons and not about delivering a better service to patients.

Further details of the proposal at the Ulster Hospital included assessment in one place before patients were then sent to one of the relevant floors depending on the level of care required and he felt that process would lead to chronic waiting times.

He could not believe how anyone who represented people in this Borough could unquestionably support the proposals to close the MIU and believe it was an enhancement to services when it clearly was not.

Councillor Irwin pointed to the reference in the proposed Motion that referred to having a detrimental impact on patient care at the overstretched Ulster Hospital, but she felt it failed to recognise the difference between urgent care and emergency care. The planned urgent care facility would be entirely separate to the A&E facility in the Ulster Hospital and would have more accessible opening times with the facility open seven days per week. She argued that minor injuries just did not happen between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday when the Ards MIU currently opened its doors. While she appreciated there could be difficulties for people to travel the extra

four miles, outside of those hours any minor injury would need attention at the Ulster Hospital under the current system. An Urgent Care Centre she felt would lessen the pressure on the A&E unit with a third of patients cared for in the Urgent Care Centre, according to the Trust.

The Motion called for Ards MIU to remain open and Bangor MIU to reopen. This had been one of nine options considered by the Trust and it was felt that those options would not deliver any improvement in patient outcomes or the vision of services required to ensure the vision of the health service.

She could understand why people were putting forward the public's concern but she felt the decision should be led by the Health Service and the clinicians. She added that there were further public consultations taking place in March and April and she encouraged anyone with concerns to go ahead and attend. There were some very valid concerns being flagged up around travel and car parking but the decision needed to be informed by the people working in the health system day in, day out.

It had been clear for far too long that the system needed to be reformed. She believed that the panel at the recent consultation meeting had provided a strong argument as to why the proposals had been put forward and she wanted to thank the clinicians who had given their input, having worked on the front line of the health service. She reminded members that five of the main political parties in Northern Ireland had signed up to the implementation of Bengoa and for the NHS to deliver a more regionalised approach with a focus on primary and community care and that was exactly what this move represented. She concluded by paying tribute to the staff that had worked in the Bangor and Newtownards MIUs as the need for the new facility was no reflection on the valuable service that they had been providing.

Alderman McDowell referred to Einstein and Churchill, believing that doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results was a sign of madness. Given news about the frightening conditions endured by staff and patients in the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast, this was a reflection of most hospitals and therefore a different result and improved service was needed for A&E services.

He had attended the Newtownards consultation meeting where health professionals had explained clearly how the new UUC would provide better services and make space in A&E where the most serious patients could be treated quickly.

Many would have seen the new A&E facilities at the Ulster Hospital having gone for the Covid-19 vaccinations and it was a shame that the new facility was not yet able to open to the public by what he understood to be mainly staffing issues. A member of the consultation panel had advised that it was to be open shortly and the old A&E building would become the new Urgent Care Centre.

The consultants also believed that patients would receive better outcomes and better access to facilities in the Ulster under the proposed system.

It was widely agreed that services needed to be improved and concentrated on one area and now this was being proposed, he was disappointed to see some Members leading the charge against it and possibly even instilling fear into the community. It



was also very strange that Councillors had made up their minds before even listening to the consultation. He felt that Councillors should provide leadership and not fear.

Alderman Irvine supported the Motion. There was no doubt there was deep concern about the Trust's preferred option and many had signed an online petition which he encouraged people to do if they had not already. Bangor MIU had closed under the guise of Covid without any consultation whatsoever. There were also travel concerns to the proposed new facility and the type of injuries that people had may not have bothered going to the new facility and may end up with complications.

He felt that the MIUs had been good enough for many years and he called for them to be reopened again for people to access the services.

Alderman Keery had attended the consultation meeting and had been amazed at the management of the questions and there was just one hour allowed for the questions to be answered and he did not believe even 20% of the questions were answered. The Ulster Hospital was a replacement hospital for Templemore and it was to serve East Belfast and he could see why people in East Belfast thought it was their hospital. He spoke of the issues in trying to park at the hospital and the road blocks caused by ambulances waiting outside. He felt that the Trust was trying to put a pint in to a half pint glass through these proposals and it was impossible.

Councillor Cooper despaired at the situation and the wider health care issues. The proposed closure was disgraceful and cynically he felt it was a financial decision that had already been made, promoted and abetted by people who he felt did not understand the problem that existed and would get even worse in the Borough's demographic. There was no logic in making an even bigger cluster at the Ulster Hospital. There was no capacity for car parking and staffing for the amount of people using the hospital. If the 11,000 or 17,000 turned up to the Ulster Hospital it would be utter insanity and made no sense and would only compound the existing misery of waiting times and staff pressures.

Councillor Gilmour supported the Motion, noting that for years residents in Ards and North Down had been told not to go the Ulster Hospital if their injury or condition was not urgent. That move, she felt, would put people off seeking treatment for minor injuries whereas normally they would have attended the MIUs for treatment.

She believed that this move was to plug a gap in staffing provision and pointed to other issues, recalling it taking an hour to park her car at the hospital during a recent visit with her child. Those who did not have transport, she felt would call for an ambulance and add further pressure on that service, or simply not attend at all. She was also concerned that there was no timeframe to the plans, referring to a line in the consultation document that stated 'as soon as investment becomes available'.

The Alliance Party had said we should accept the views of the clinicians, so therefore Councillor Gilmour wondered what the point was in having a public consultation, arguing that Stephen Farry MLA had immediately given his support for the move before it had even gone to public consultation. She had found it to be hypocritical therefore for Alliance Party members to accuse the DUP of leading the



charge to oppose the move without listening to the reasoning at the public consultation meeting. It was very frustrating that those who were speaking out against the move were being made out as fools.

The consultation panel had been asked if the plans would be cancelled if there was overwhelming public opposition but she noted that question had not been answered at the meeting.

Councillor Chambers was supportive of the concept of urgent care centres but only as an addition to the MIUs, and significantly in the Urgent Care Policy published the previous year, it stated that urgent care centres did not replace MIUs. He therefore made no apology for challenging the proposed closures and supporting the Motion. He looked forward to the upcoming deputation that had been scheduled and the opportunity to ask questions.

Councillor Greer would not be supporting the Motion and in response to comments from Councillor Gilmour, felt that it was hypocritical of politicians to believe they knew better than clinicians who were working in the health service every day and understood the issues. Elected representatives had been posting an image of Ards MIU online and she felt it embarrassing as the building was not fit for purpose in terms of providing modern healthcare services. She agreed that there were a number of issues such as parking, that needed to be thought through but she felt the consultation would provide an opportunity to look at those and for the Trust to bring forward suggestions in dealing with those issues.

Summing up, Councillor T Smith argued that this was not Bengoa. The Trust wanted to take pressure off A&E and it was doing that by taking staff from MIUs to fill a gap and he could only assume that those staff would be treating the most critical patients in the Ulster Hospital A&E given that the Urgent Care facility was still only a vision. The first stage would be to close Ards MIU and the Urgent Care Centre would only open once investment became available. Until that happened minor injuries cases would be incorporated in the current A&E unit.

Arguing that clinicians did often get it wrong, he believed that so many patients were getting the wrong care packages in the community for example. He felt it was simply a matter of taking staff away from Ards and North Down to provide for the greater Belfast catchment area.

He took issue with the Alliance Party's approach of supporting clinicians and refused to roll over and just accept their proposals. The Borough had already lost many local health services and he wondered how those professionals were going to solve the staff shortages as there was no mention of that in the document. There were a lot of questions to ask the experts and he had asked many of them at the online consultation meeting and none had been answered.

In closing, he added that the Borough's population was growing and there seemed to be fewer services, therefore enough was enough. He called for a recorded vote.

On being put to the meeting, with 10 voting FOR, 3 voting AGAINST, 0 ABSTAINED and 3 ABSENT, the proposal was declared CARRIED.

<b>FOR (10)</b>	<b>AGAINST (3)</b>	<b>ABSTAINED (0)</b>	<b>ABSENT (3)</b>
<b>Aldermen:</b>	<b>Alderman:</b>		<b>Councillors:</b>
Gibson	McDowell		Douglas
Keery	<b>Councillors:</b>		Dunlop
Irvine	Greer		McKimm
Mcllveen	Irwin		
<b>Councillors:</b>			
Blaney			
Chambers			
Cooper			
Gilmour			
Smith, P			
Smith, T			

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor T Smith, seconded by Councillor Kennedy, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.**

(The meeting went in to recess at 9.10pm and resumed at 9.22pm)

**(c) 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.

(Councillor Adair and Councillor Edmund joined the meeting – 9.22pm)

Councillor Adair proposed, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Outlining his proposal, Councillor Adair began by reflecting on the loss of Queen Elizabeth II last September 2022 and the esteem and affection in which she was held across the Borough. The Queen was a steadfast in so many lives and life would never be the same again following Her Majesty's passing. A few days after her passing, in Portavogie in the area around the War Memorial, the community had gathered to pay their respects to the late Sovereign. Those in attendance had included members of all the churches, the community groups and the loyal orders. One of the most elderly residents of the village had told Councillor Adair that this was the first time she had seen the entire community come together in the village. Paying tribute to the Queen's dedication and her long reign, he added that she had used her life in a positive way for the nation and the Commonwealth.

He was aware that following the Queen's passing, the Council was waiting to hear guidance from the Cabinet Office in the naming of buildings in memory of her. Since that gathering in Portavogie, Councillor Adair had been contacted, along with Michelle Mcllveen MLA, by many people who wanted to see the site named as Queen Elizabeth Square in memory of the late sovereign. It had been widely supported by the community.

Therefore, as an elected representative and a resident of Portavogie, Councillor Adair was bringing the Motion to the Committee for support and asked them to pass it unanimously so the people of Portavogie could have their wish granted and for the Queen to have a lasting legacy in the village.

The proposal had the support of local community groups and churches and he hoped that Members would give their support.

The seconder, Councillor Edmund, said that the people of Portavogie would see this as a great honour to have the area named after the longest serving monarch and pointed to the Queen's connection to the sea and having visited 117 different countries throughout her reign. Her connections to the sea were through her late husband the Duke of Edinburgh and his service in the Royal Navy along with the Royal Yacht Britannia which had covered 238,850 miles. In Portavogie there was a deep sense of Her Majesty's connection to the sea so he felt it would be fitting for Portavogie to have this area named in her memory.

The Chair noted that there were no requests to speak from Members and invited the proposer to sum up.

Councillor Adair recognised the silence as an indication of support and thanked Members. This would be a great honour. Subject to new guidance which was still awaited and approval from the Cabinet Office he hoped this could go ahead and he hoped the community could come together again and dedicate that area of Portavogie to the late Queen. That would mean a lot to the people of Portavogie.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.**

(Councillor Adair and Councillor Edmund left the meeting – 9.32pm)

## **10. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

There were no items of any other notified business.

**NOTED.**

## **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

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

## **11. BANGOR AMATEURS – REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL LAND**

(Appendix XIX - XX)

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

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

**12. REQUEST FOR AN EASEMENT OVER LAND ADJACENT TO 1 MAIN STREET, KIRCUBBIN**

(Appendix XXI)

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

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

**13. REQUEST FROM HOLYWOOD SHARED TOWNS - LICENCE TO USE LAND ADJACENT TO REDBURN CEMETERY**

(Appendix XXII – XXIV)

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

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

**14. ENFORCEMENT OF PARKING AT CONWAY SQUARE, NEWTOWNARDS** (Appendix XXV - XXVIII)

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

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

**15. REQUEST FROM HOLYWOOD CRICKET CLUB TO PLACE A STORAGE CONTAINER AT SEAPARK**

(Appendix XXIX)

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

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 AGENCY WORKERS CONTRACT (FILE HR)**

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

**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.

**CHAIR'S REMARKS**

The Chair recognised that this would be Alderman Gibson's last Corporate Services Committee meeting and wished him all the best in his retirement.

**TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 9.43pm.



## ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A virtual meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee was held via Zoom on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 7:00 pm.

### PRESENT:

**In the Chair:** Councillor Edmund

**Alderman:** Carson (Zoom)  
W Irvine  
Wilson (Zoom, left at 20:30)

**Councillors:**

Adair	McRandal (Zoom)
Boyle	Moore (Zoom)
Chambers (Zoom)	Smart (Zoom)
S Irvine	T Smith
McArthur	Thompson
	Woods (Zoom, arrived 20:53, left at 21:44)

**Officers:** Head of Community & Culture (J Nixey), Head of Leisure Services (I O'Neill), Head of Parks & Cemeteries (S Daye), Head of Environmental Health, Protection & Development (A Faulkner) and Democratic Services Officer (S McCrea)

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for non-attendance had been received from the Director of Community and Wellbeing, Councillor Douglas and Councillor Woods.

**NOTED.**

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

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

Alderman Irvine and Councillor Chambers - Item 32: Northern Community Leisure Trust Quarter 3 2022/23

**NOTED.**

CW 15.03.2023

153

Proposed by Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that Item 35 be discussed out of committee and heard in the open Council in the interest of transparency and public interest.

Councillor Adair, prior to the first item being discussed, requested that Item 35 be brought out of committee though the following statements:

- *That item 35 Portavogie 3G Pitch Project Update be taken out of Committee and heard in the open Council in the interest of transparency and public interest.*

He reiterated that it had been a longstanding issue and had wide public interest. He noted that any contractual or legal matters would not be discussed in open Committee but if such matters required discussion, that discussion could take place in-committee.

Councillor Thompson agreed with his colleague, as did Councillor T Smith who also believed the item could be discussed without referencing specific confidential figures.

Councillor Boyle was concerned, not due to transparency but as figures were in the report and as such, wished to know how the report could be discussed given those figures made up a large part of the report.

The Head of Community & Culture explained the item was in-committee as contractual issues and costs were detailed in the report for consideration. She strongly recommended the item remain in-committee.

Councillor Adair again reiterated that parts of the discussion could take place in open committee and any issues requiring privacy could be left until later in the meeting as he also wanted the vote to be recorded in public.

Councillor Boyle expressed concern that the discussion could mean jumping in and out of committee which was an impossible feat. He felt full discussion would not be possible given the in-committee issues. Councillor Adair asked for a recorded vote.

Alderman Wilson agreed with the Head of Community & Culture who had strongly recommended that it should be heard in-committee.

On being put to the meeting, with 7 voting FOR, 6 voting AGAINST, 0 ABSTAINING and 2 ABSENT, the proposal carried.

The voting was as follows:

<b>FOR (7)</b>	<b>AGAINST (6)</b>	<b>ABSTAINED (0)</b>	<b>ABSENT (2)</b>
<b>Aldermen:</b>	<b>Aldermen:</b>	<b>Aldermen:</b>	<b>Aldermen:</b>
Irvine	Carson		
	Wilson		
<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Councillors:</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Councillors</b>
S Irvine	Boyle		Douglas
Adair	Chambers		Woods
MacArthur	McRandal		
Smart	Moore		
T Smith			
Thompson			

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor Thompson and by vote with 7 voting FOR, 6 AGAINST, 0 ABSTAINING and 2 ABSENT that Item 35 be discussed out of committee.**

### **3. UPDATE ON PLAY AREA REFURBISHMENTS 2023-24**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing explaining that Ards and North Down Borough Council had produced a Play Strategy for the period 2021 to 2023 and within it, a recommendation that the Play Park refurbishment budget be increased to enable more Play Parks to be updated each year. Those Play Parks which scored the lowest within the Annual Independent Inspectors Report would be prioritised for refurbishment. Also, within the Play Strategy it was recommended that budget be made available for the delivery of older children provision (Skate Parks, Pumps Tracks, Parkour, Multi Use Games Areas) based on a settlement hierarchy approach.

As previously reported, Council had since procured 'Play & Leisure Services' to design and build those Play Parks in the south of the Borough and 'Garden Escapes' to deliver those in the north of the Borough. All of the designs complied with standards outlined in our tender document ensuring minimum levels of equipment for each Tier of Play Park, appropriate age specific equipment ratios, a minimum of 30% inclusive equipment etc, this was also consistent with the design guidance as outlined in the Play Strategy.

A new Independent Inspector had also been appointed this year called: 'Gordon Playground Inspections Ltd'.

In 2022/2023 the following four Play Parks had been completed: Castle Park (Portaferry), Cloughey, Aurora (Bangor) and Tower Park (Conlig). The Play Park at DeWind Drive (Comber) was scheduled to be completed by the end of March 2023. The Splash Pad/Padding pool at Groomsport would not be completed by the end of

March due to a long lead-in time for the equipment manufacture/delivery, but it was to be completed as soon as possible in advance of the summer season. On top of the normal Annual Playground Refurbishment budget (£500k) an additional £376,425 was received from external funding. This included £262,500 from the DAERA Leader Fund which assisted towards the refurbishment of Castle Park and Cloughey & £113,925 from UKSPF Green Spaces Fund which contributed towards the cost of the Play Park at DeWind Drive, Comber. It should be noted that due to the UKSPF award of £113,925, this amount was to be rolled over in the 2023/2024 Financial Year and would aid the refurbishment of an additional Play Park.

Below is a list of playgrounds/areas scheduled for refurbishment this financial year 2023/2024.

#### **Dickson Park, Ballygowan**

In the Play Strategy, it was put forward that if a potential project at Moss Road did not proceed, that either the Play Park at Belfast Road or Dickson Park be upgraded. As Dickson Park had been identified as being in poor condition in the Inspectors Report it was considered timely to refurbish and upgrade this playground. It was proposed to upgrade it from a Tier 3 Play Park to a Tier 2 Play Park, which would provide a wider catchment area and provide cover for those areas which fell outside the catchment of the Tier 1 at Belfast Road, especially to the south and east of Ballygowan. Play and Leisure Services are already working up designs for this refurbishment with the view to commencing work after the Easter holidays.

#### **Fort Road, Helens Bay**

The Play Park at Helen's Bay was considered to be reaching the end of the life of the equipment. As an older Tier 2 and the only Play Park serving the settlement, it required updating to what would be a more modern Tier 2 to increase its play value. Garden Escapes are already working up designs for this refurbishment with the view to commencing work after the Easter holidays.

#### **The Glen, Newtownards**

The Glen was identified by the Inspector as being generally in poor condition both in terms of the equipment and the surfacing. At the time of writing, it was a Tier 2 Play Park and would be refurbished as such.

#### **Kilcooley Square, Bangor**

This was an older Play Park with low play value and was identified as being in need of refurbishment. It is a Tier 2 and will be refurbished as such.

#### **Parsonage Road, Kircubbin**

Parsonage Road was identified as having older type equipment with rubber tiles and in poor condition. Following the adoption of the Play Strategy, where additional consultation was requested in certain settlements where a change to the provision was proposed, Kircubbin was not identified as one of those. However, given that a

change to provision had been proposed, it would be prudent to conduct a Public Consultation exercise here also to be consistent.

The Play Strategy proposed closing the Play Park at Parsonage Road (Tier 2) and upgrading the playground at The Green from a Tier 2 to a Tier 1. It was also proposed to upgrade the partial MUGA at Parsonage Road or potentially relocate it to The Green (upgrading it at Parsonage Road would only be possible if that Play Park were to close in terms of the space required for such an upgrade). It was proposed to consult on the following options and to ask which would be the preferred option:

### **Option 1**

Close Parsonage Road (Tier 2) and upgrade The Green (Tier 2) to a Tier 1.

### **Option 2**

Keep Parsonage Road and refurbish as a Tier 2

(It should be noted that if this was to be the preferred option The Green would get refurbished when it was identified for refurbishment in the future and it would remain a Tier 2).

While undertaking this public consultation, it posed an opportunity to also ask the question regarding older children provision in Kircubbin. Kircubbin was identified as one of the locations for older children provision in the Play Strategy. It was suggested that a site at The Green would be a better location for this type of facility. Therefore, the following question would also be asked:

**What type of older children provision would you prefer to be delivered at The Green?**

- 1. Multiuse Games Area**
- 2. Skate Park**
- 3. Pump Track**
- 4. Parkour**

It should be noted that the older children provision would not be delivered until the next Financial Year or beyond as it may have required planning approval etc and that would need to be investigated once the outcome of the public consultation had been concluded.

Whichever Option was preferred would be delivered and whichever type of older children provision as identified would also be delivered.

### **Millisle Outdoor Gym**

The Inspector also identified that the outdoor gym at Ballywalter Road, Millisle was approaching the end of the equipment life and had been particularly affected by corrosion by the seaside environment. It was proposed to replace this gym equipment with timber calisthenics equipment which provides a similar range of motions/exercises but would be more durable in this location.

### **Hollywood (Older children Provision)**

As previously reported, the Play Strategy highlighted Hollywood, the second biggest town in the Borough, as having the highest concentration of young people in the 13- to 17-year-old demographic. It had no older children provision. To date, consultation had taken place with the Hollywood Children and Youth Network and the Hollywood Family Trust. Feedback was provided on where and what type of facility the young people preferred. Further consultation was required with residents' groups and then an online survey was proposed. This had not occurred to date due to other priorities and lack of resources i.e. a Play Development Officer was required to properly implement the Council's Play Strategy, but was deferred by Elected Members in the July Council meeting. It should be noted that depending on the outcome of the consultation in terms of a preferred location and facility type, planning permission may be required etc.

### **Ashbury Playground**

Members would have been aware that the decision was made in August 2020 to progress the delivery of the playground at the site to the front of the Ashbury Shops. This land was not owned by Council and following negotiations with the landowner, they agreed to transfer the land but only after they had submitted a planning application for an extension to their units and car park. The playground was included in this application also.

The planning application **LA06/2022/0750/F** was submitted on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022. As previously reported, NI Water requested an assessment of the network capacity in the area because of the extension to the units. To date, this had not been resolved in that the assessment had not been submitted by the Agent. There was also an issue raised by the planners in relation to the loss of exiting open space which the planners indicated to the Agent on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2022. They suggested that no justification for the loss of open space had been provided. The Agent replied to this on 15<sup>th</sup> December via email and had since submitted a Supporting Statement to the planners on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2023. The application therefore was still under consideration.

For this opportunity and all other proposals in this report and as for previous schemes, any funding opportunities that presented would be pursued if they were applicable for delivery of these play facilities.



CW 15.03.2023

158

The provision of alternative play opportunities as outlined in the Play Strategy (Section 5) could not be progressed at the time of writing due to lack of a Play Development Officer. The alternative play provision would include Street Play Events, developing Nature Play opportunities, Play Trails, Play Events, Play Pods (to be used by Community and Nursery Groups etc) and developing Play Partnerships with for example the Education Authority.

RECOMMENDED that the Council note the updates in relation to the planned refurbishments and older children provision for 2023/2024. Also, that it is noted that the delivery of the Play Park at Ashbury cannot be delivered until the planning application has been determined.

Proposed by Councillor T Smith, seconded by Councillor MacArthur, that an amendment to the proposal be made.

"It is recommended that the Council note the updates in relation to the planned refurbishments and older children provision for 2023/2024.

Regarding the proposed play park at Ashbury, given the issues around planning, officers are asked to bring back a further report by August to provide an update on the planning application. If there is no significant progress by that time, officers should also examine other options to deliver this facility with a view to delivering the play park for Summer 2024.

In the interim, while we wait for this report, Council sets up a meeting between DEA members and NI water to discuss how their actions are impacting the delivery of community based projects such as play parks."

Councillor T Smith explained that the Ashbury play park issue had existed for over ten years. With two consultations, the original proposal was brought forth when North Down Borough Council existed. Money was in the budget, but the issue had been the planning application, with NI Water objecting. The Council had been working with the owner of the land, but there was no timeline on a determination from Planning.

He advised Members had an obligation to provide a play park in the area. He believed that a further report in August to update on the planning application for providing potential options, as well as setting a date in the future were sound decisions.

Councillor MacArthur explained that the Ashbury area was the only one without provision for young people in the local area and that several primary schools in the

CW 15.03.2023

159

area existed. She supported the proposal as it had been in place for too long and a timeframe was needed. She understood the developer had done all he could whilst NI Water had objected due to sewage provision. She stated a need existed for DEA Councillors to meet with NI Water and added that there was an issue with the space and that planning should address the issue as soon as possible where they declared it was open space whilst the BMAP had stated otherwise. A report in August and a meeting with NI Water was a matter of urgency. Though Ashbury was being discussed, within the report overall, she recalled a proposal with Groomsport playpark and queried its completion by the summer of 2023 as she had recalled an issue was raised of some equipment sourcing.

Councillor Chambers was concerned about the direction the issue of Ashbury play park had gone, having warned that residents of Ashbury were becoming sceptical of the delivery of a park in the area. He understood circumstances were out of the Council's control but believed a contingency plan was required in the case that the proposal at the time of writing did not work, advising that the parents and children of Ashbury deserved better. In relation to splashpads at Groomsport, he recalled it was subject to funding and wanted to know if the splashpads had to be in place by the end of March or would funding be lost. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries explained that Groomsport did not require the equipment to be in place, as there were alternatives. The equipment had not yet been delivered but it was believed the improvements would be place by the summer of 2023.

Councillor Chambers recalled a Notice of Motion in 2018 for a skatepark in Bangor and how the Head of Leisure Services had been keen on and championed it. However, the status of the Notice of Motion at the time of writing was unknown and with Thunderpark closing in Bangor, it was noted that there was no provision for skaters in the city. He wondered if a skatepark plan existed for the future. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries advised that no plans existed for one in Bangor but a strategy for play provision was being followed. He was unaware of the Notice of Motion that Councillor Chambers mentioned but would investigate and respond to the Member.

Councillor Boyle was content with the discussion thus far and he understood Councillor T Smith's point of view if he had been in a similar situation in his constituency. Councillor Boyle did however welcome the report and progress that had been made with some playgrounds and thanked officers. There had been an issue of equipment being delayed and he believed officers would be doing their best. With regard to Kircubbin, he asked from a consultation point of view, how would one be carried out and would young people be involved. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries explained that parents and young people had been engaged in other areas to inform the design of playparks and it was important to get it right in terms of local need.

Councillor Boyle asked how the consultation would occur; if it would be a public meeting, an advertised consultation, or discussions would be involved. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries explained that the department would advise members of the consultation plans in each area so Members consultation would be a mix of online, public and group meetings with stakeholders around the area. It would not be the same everywhere, but the Department would cast as widely as possible to get an overall view. Councillor Boyle asked if elected representatives could give help to let them know, to which the Head of Parks & Cemeteries agreed.

Councillor Adair supported the amendment but in regard to the original report, he welcomed it and was happy to see Kircubbin was receiving investment. He welcomed consultations with children and young people as areas known as Parsonage Road and the Green could be worked on or a bigger site on the Green dependent on needs of locals. He explained that consultation had worked well at Portaferry and that children and parents would help decide on the location of the playpark. He was also delighted to hear the outdoor gym in Millisle would be renewed but was disappointed that Ballyhalbert had missed out. Broken equipment had not been replaced for over a year and no other play park in his constituency was in such poor order. It was installed in 2004 and had come to the end of its life. He referred to finances that had that allowed for Comber to have a play park and queried if such could also be used for Ballyhalbert. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries explained that Ballyhalbert needed to be refurbished and it had unfortunately missed out this year. He explained that additional external funding may be accessed. He hoped it would be a play area to look at in the future. As with regard to broken equipment, it would be reviewed again.

Councillor Adair asked if additional funding was available if Ballyhalbert would be top of the list. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries could not confirm but advised the play area was on his department's radar as well as other parks. There was only limited money and the Council was working within budgets.

Councillor Irvine asked if a timeframe existed for Glen Estate. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries advised that the list in the report was being worked on at the moment. Council had a tender in place, and they would be instructing the company to commence once the report was agreed but it was difficult to guarantee an exact date as sometimes some equipment and consultation could affect timeframes.

Alderman Irvine supported the amended report and shared the frustrations of colleagues. He hoped issues with NI Water may be resolved. With the skatepark, he explained the Thunderpark facility would be closing and that there has been difficulty relocating them given their equipment needs and access for suitable storage areas given the size of their equipment. With BMX being an Olympic sport, he thought it was important to facilitate it. Lastly, he queried where Skipperstone ranked given it had little equipment. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries advised that some equipment

was coming to the end of its life and there may be very little between scores, but they had to go along with the external contractor's report which was independent and took a scientific approach. The more money that could be gained, the more play parks would be refurbished. There were four to five play parks in the Council budget and then external funds would be applied for. He reminded Members of how in 2022, extra money had been acquired and they would pursue it rigorously.

Councillor Thompson agreed the report covered a lot of play parks across the Borough and welcomed Kircubbin and Millisle. He asked if Millisle was going to be replaced by the company cited in the report as he was unaware of what their proposal was, and before it was replaced, wanted to see what designs were. He agreed with Councillor Boyle in that any help with consultations, Councillors would help. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries explained that local people were contacted to discover what was suitable to them and that this had been a suggestion on how to progress it. Consultation would occur with feedback to Members, with consultation occurring in all locations.

Councillor T Smith summed up, thanking Members and understood everyone wanted the best play areas in their area and why Members advocated for their areas although with a tight budget. With regard to Groomsport, he hoped there was no delay with the project and that it would be completed by Summer 2023 and that all facilities could be addressed as soon as possible.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor T Smith, seconded by Councillor MacArthur, that the recommendation be amended to, that the Council note the updates in relation to the planned refurbishments and older children provision for 2023/2024. Regarding the proposed play park at Ashbury, given the issues around planning, officers are asked to bring back a further report by August to provide an update on the planning application. If there is no significant progress by that time, officers should also examine other options to deliver this facility with a view to delivering the play park for Summer 2024. In the interim, while we wait for this report, Council sets up a meeting between DEA members and NI water to discuss how their actions are impacting the delivery of community based projects such as play parks.**

#### **4. IN-BLOOM ACTIVITIES WITH ARDS AND NORTH DOWN**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing an update on 'In Bloom' community activities within the Ards and North Down Borough.

Ards and North Down Borough had a reputation for leading the way in floral displays that were both attractive and environmentally sustainable. The Borough had won

regional and national competitions in recent years and the common theme throughout all successes, was the incredible hard work and enthusiasm shown by our staff and the local communities they work with. The Ards and North Down in Bloom initiative had been developed with three overlapping objectives which were: horticultural excellence, community participation and environmentally sustainable practices. These were in line with the objectives of national award schemes such as Britain in Bloom and regional awards such as 'Translink' Ulster in Bloom.

By actively supporting this competition, applicants not only made their communities more attractive, but also contributed to the Borough's entry to the Translink 'Ulster in Bloom' Competition and other regional awards. In recent years, this had proved to be a great success, particularly in the towns of Comber (runner-up through 2021 and 2022) and Donaghadee (winner 2021 and 2022). Carnalea Rail Station was placed third in the Floral Stations category in 2021.

While this success was welcomed, the Parks Service recognised the opportunities for growth through further community engagement and participation. In order to support communities with their In Bloom entries, the Park Service invite annual applications from village groups, community associations etc, within the Ards and North Down Borough, for funding to enable the purchase of bedding plants, shrub and tree material, for planting within local villages or towns. The allocation of funding was subject to council budget approval and capped at £1000 per application. Since 2019, the 'In Bloom' Funding Scheme had awarded more than £54,000, supporting 64 projects. The scheme is projected to support a further 21 groups through 2023.

The benefits of the wider 'In Bloom' initiative included increased numbers of visitors who travelled around the towns and villages to see the floral displays. Shops and businesses in the respective communities reported considerable increase in their business for weeks afterwards. In addition, people perceived these floral places as attractive areas to live resulting in demand for properties, thus increasing property value. The success at Translink 'Ulster in Bloom' and entry to RHS 'Britain in Bloom' enhanced the attractiveness of the borough across the UK.

### **Community Competitions**

To further promote and support the 'In Bloom' initiative, Parks Service launched the Ards and North Down in Bloom Community Competitions in 2020. The competitions were coordinated by Ards and North Down Borough Council. This community competition encouraged everyone who lived in or worked in the Borough to think about their local environment and how attractive flowers, plants, trees and gardens could enhance it. By supporting this competition, residents not only made their garden or business more attractive, but also contributed to the Borough's entry to the Translink 'Ulster in Bloom' Competition and other regional awards.



The competitions were designed to attract a wide demographic to become involved in activities that promote horticultural excellence, increase environmental responsibility and encourage community participation. In their inaugural year, the competitions attracted approx. 300 entries, rising to more than 1000 in 2021 and remained increasingly popular to date. The general categories for the Community Competition categories were:

- Best Kept Front Garden
- Gardening for Wildlife Award
- Volunteer of The Year
- Best Kept Commercial Premises
- Best Kept Community Planting Scheme.

The structure of the competitions recognised the importance of educating young people on environmental responsibility, benefiting the Borough now and for future generations. The competitions included categories specifically aimed at entrants aged under 16. The Young People's Categories for the Community Competitions were:

- Best School Gardening Project
- Painting Competition
- Tallest Sunflower Competition
- Young Volunteer of The Year

The most popular Young Peoples category was the Tallest Sunflower Competition. The category was designed to engage young people in a fun horticulture activity, while learning about how to grow and care for plants. Parks Service had found many stories of children working with friends, neighbours and relatives to grow their sunflower as tall as possible. To support the scheme, free packets of sunflower seeds were distributed to schools across the borough. In 2022, the scheme saw the delivery of 6,000 packets of seeds (approx. 60,000 seeds) and we are continuing this initiative in 2023.

In October 2022, the first Ards and North Down 'In Bloom' Awards ceremony was held at Clandeboye Estate, Bangor, to celebrate the winners within each category. More than 60 residents and special guests were in attendance. The event proved a huge success with participants and further strengthened Parks Service commitment to community engagement and support.

### **Royal Horticultural Society Britain in Bloom**

Following the success of Donaghadee at Ulster in Bloom in 2022, the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) Britain in Bloom organising committee had nominated



CW 15.03.2023

164

Donaghadee, as category winner, to be entered into the Coastal Town classification of the national campaign. This was a prestigious opportunity for the town where it would be showcased on a UK wide platform highlighting its horticultural, environmental and community initiatives.

In readiness for the campaign, Officers had started discussions with the local community group to set out plans for the campaign. These were to include working collaboratively across several Council departments and included the business and community sectors in the town. Council, at the time of writing, funded a floral display programme in the town. In addition, it had supported the community sector through the 'In Bloom' funding program. The local community in Donaghadee had also been advised to apply for other external funding streams to assist in the 2023 campaign. A number of issues had been raised including the issue of rotting seaweed on the beach over which officers would be engaging with NIEA.

Unlike Ulster in Bloom, the judging for RHS Britain in Bloom was announced and the judges would be escorted around the key features throughout the town with the ability to meet the staff and volunteers responsible for carrying out the work. This provided a huge benefit to highlight the cross-sector engagement and input to enhance the appearance of the town.

Upon the completion of the judging, as a finalist, a representation from both Council and the Community would be invited to the awards ceremony in autumn. At the time of writing, the date and location of the awards had not been published but it is likely to be in Great Britain.

**RECOMMENDED** that council:

1. Continue to support the 'In Bloom' initiatives across the Borough and note the nomination of Donaghadee being entered into the RHS Britain In Bloom campaign.
2. Approve in principle the attendance of the 2023/24 Mayor, one officer and one community representative at the RHS Britain In Bloom awards ceremony as detailed above, subject to further approval of budgetary requirements when further details are known.

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

Councillor Adair commended the volunteers involved within In-Bloom and mentioned Ellie Dempster of Portaferry who he explained had started In-Bloom before almost anyone else. She had retired but starting it was her legacy. He was happy to see so many participating.

CW 15.03.2023

165

Councillor MacArthur referred to Donaghadee being entered and hoped would be successful. She referenced £1k per application which did not go so far in today's money. Whilst a lot of planting was seasonal bedding, she wanted to know what Donaghadee could do to assist with nursery provision with acquiring a piece of land. She also asked for an update on Donaghadee coastal locations suffered from the stench of rotting seaweed and pests associated with it which NIEA would be contacted for removal. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries advised £1k had been selected to allow for maximising the number of applications with 21 this year. This was not the only application for funders but allowed for a group to do things in their borough that were impactful and many groups received external funding as well.

With nurseries, they had not been asked but welcomed a group approaching the Council. He suggested groups approach Parks if they were interested in applying. It was not just bedding plants but also trees and engagement with Queens University students. One student was looking at provision of community nurseries for growing trees – something to be brought in a report in the future. The same principle applied for bedding plants. In regard to seaweed, applications were required for NIEA which were complicated. The biodiversity officer and Parks & Cemeteries Officers had applications ready to go which would be sent tomorrow, 16<sup>th</sup> March.

Councillor Boyle believed it was an important initiative especially in the summer where the product of the work could be seen. He too referenced In-Bloom being effectively started by Ellie Dempster and believed it was the best £1,000 allocated by Council when considering the number of volunteers involved in projects. Portaferry volunteers had qualified for Live Here, Love Here grants and secured seeding plants and a polytunnel where plants could be transplanted around the town. He asked if the Council would undertake insurance of those containers and street furniture as he believed used to be the case. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries explained that insurance was an eligible cost if it was included in the application. Groups had different needs, some would require funding to cover insurance costs and others would not.

Councillor Thompson agreed with his colleagues and that the Council benefitted from community volunteers. Millisle had also secured a polytunnel and sold plants to residents of the village and borough. He welcomed its continuance and was happy to see the results of their good work.

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

**5. ARDS AND NORTH DOWN IN-BLOOM ANNUAL GRANTS**  
(Appendix I)

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:** - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing the consideration of 21 applications from local community groups for the annual Ards and North Down in Bloom funding grants.

Ards and North Down Borough had a reputation for leading the way with floral displays. The Borough had won regional and national competitions in recent years and the common theme throughout all the success was the incredible hard work and enthusiasm shown by our staff and the local communities they worked with.

The grant scheme assisted the Ards and North Down in Bloom initiative which had been developed with three overlapping objectives: horticultural excellence, community participation and environmentally sustainable practices. These were in line with objectives of Translink's Ulster in Bloom and other regional awards schemes.

By actively supporting this competition, applicants not only made their communities more attractive, but also contributed to the Borough's entry to the Translink Ulster in Bloom Competition and other regional awards. In recent years this had proved to be a great success, particularly in the towns of Comber (runner-up through 2021 and 2022) and Donaghadee (Winner 2021 and 2022). Donaghadee had also been nominated for the prestigious Britain in Bloom Competition 2023, a fantastic advertisement for the borough.

Ards and North Down Borough Council, at the time of writing, made budget provision for the allocation of funding to community groups in order to assist with floral displays in the towns and villages throughout the borough, to assist with the council's commitment to the Translink Ulster in Bloom competition.

The allocation for funding was intended to supplement floral display and amenity area maintenance that was at the time of writing carried out by the councils Parks and Cemeteries Service. This may have been in the form of hanging baskets, planters, flower beds, sustainable wildflower displays etc. either on council or other statutory bodies land or privately owned non-domestic areas in public view.

The maximum limit for floral funding was £1000 per annum per group. A further grant may have been provided for funding, in whole or in part, appropriate liability insurance covering the floral display work over and above the group's normal insured activities. Funding was to be allocated with 80% advance payment, with the further 20% paid upon the receipt of invoices.

Council wished to encourage a collaborative approach by groups, where there were more than one group applying in a town or village, consideration would only be given to one project.

The 21 applications were assessed against the following criteria:

- Meet the core objectives of Ards and North Down in Bloom
- Provide a vision as to how the funding will enhance the particular areas and how this will be sustained in subsequent years.
- Evidence of approval from relevant landowner where works are to be carried out.
- Where appropriate insurance liability cover is in place, copy of certificate and schedule to be submitted.
- How the works are to be carried out, and by whom.
- Detailed breakdown of how funding will be utilised, and receipts submitted accordingly.

The appendix clearly demonstrated how each application met each of the criteria. In the assessment, all 21 applications were considered to have met the criteria.

At the time of writing, there was a budget allocation of £18,500 for the In Bloom programme. The 21 applications amount to £18, 488 in total.

RECOMMENDED that Council awards all 21 applications for funding.

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

Both Councillors Adair and Thompson congratulated all those who had been successful.

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

## **6. CEMETERY PRICING** (Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing explaining that Ards and North Down Borough Council was responsible for the management and maintenance of twelve active cemeteries, two closed cemeteries and seven historical cemeteries. At the recent estimates process, a percentage increase was agreed to offset the Cemetery Service deficit. The attached Appendix reflected this increase that was to be implemented on 1 April 2023.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council note the attached pricing update for cemeteries that will be published on 1 April 2023, reflecting the agreement reached through the rates setting process.

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

Councillor Thompson noted he was not wholly content but understood that the pricing update was due to the rate increase that he and other Councillors had agreed upon. It was for a modest amount and kept cemeteries in good stead.

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

## **7. DISPLAY BED APPLICATION** (Appendix III)

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:** - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing advising of how Members would have been aware that on the 27 February 2019 Council agreed a policy for the use of Display Beds in the Borough. This policy required Officers to report to Council any applications received by external organisations. The Council had received one application for use of the display beds and Officers had assessed applications and had determined that all requests met the criteria in the policy and were recommended for approval. The applications were deemed by Officers to not require equality screening.

The application was as follows and the proposed design of the display as included in the attached Appendix. The Parks team would endeavour to replicate the design as far as possible, however detail design might have been altered in order to facilitate installation. If necessary, the Officer would liaise with the applicant if the installation was to be significantly different from that proposed

<b>Name of Group / Organisation</b>	<b>Display Bed applied for</b>	<b>Proposed dates of display</b>	<b>Reason for the display</b>
North Down Parkinson Support Group	Adjacent to Bangor Post and Sorting Office	01/04/2023 – 13/05/2023	To celebrate World Parkinson's Day on 11 <sup>th</sup> April 2023

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approves the above application for the display bed.

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

## **8. PARKS AND CEMETERIES SERVICE PLAN 2023-24**

(Appendix IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing advising of the Service Plan for Parks & Cemeteries that was in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context.
- Provide focus on direction.
- Facilitate alignment between Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities.
- Motivate and develop staff.
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice.
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes.
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

The plan for 2023-2024 had been attached. This plan had been developed to align with objectives of the Big Plan, the draft Corporate Plan 2020/24 and associated Annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The agreement of the plan would also assist toward achievement of the Council's performance improvement duties under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

The Service Plan highlighted where the service contributes to the Corporate Plan and, where this was the case, set out the objectives of the service for the 2023-2024 year. It further identified the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service would try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The Service Plan also identified key risks to the service along with analysis of these and necessary actions to mitigate/manage risks. Key risks impacting services were incorporated into the Corporate Risk Register. The plan had been developed in conjunction with staff, officers and management and consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.



The plan was based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there have been significant changes in-year (e.g. due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP) the plan may have required revision.

The Community & Wellbeing Committee was to be provided with updated reports on performance against the agreed plan throughout 2023-2024.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approves the attached plan.

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

Councillor Adair thanked the Head of Parks & Cemeteries for his efforts across the borough.

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

## **9. Q3 PERFORMANCE PARKS AND CEMETERIES** (Appendix VI)

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:** - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing how Members would have known 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 this requirement Council approved the Performance Management Policy and Handbook in October 2015. The Performance Management Handbook outlines 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	April – June	September
Q2	July – September	December
<b>Q3 (attached)</b>	<b>October – December</b>	<b>March</b>
Q4	January - March	June

#### Key achievements:

- Two Apprentices in Horticulture started in Autumn 2022.
- Appointment of Bereavement Services Officer & Tree and Woodland Officer.
- Staff business planning day held at Queens Hall, Newtownards.
- A volunteer programme in Bangor Castle Walled Garden has attracted eleven volunteers to date.
- 2022 Green Flag Awards retained for Castle Park, Londonderry Park, Kiltonga Nature Reserve, Linear Park and Ballymenoch Park. Plus, Green Flag Pollinator award secured for Castle Park. This was the first year of the award.
- Donaghadee and Comber attaining 1st and 2nd place respectively in the Town category of Ulster in Bloom. Donaghadee nominated as a finalist for Britain in Bloom 2023.
- Sponsorship of Roundabouts Policy Agreed.
- Planned programme of Winter Events including Tree Week and other STAND4TREES activities underway.
- New Play Parks in Castle Park (Portaferry), Tower Park (Conlig) & Aurora (Bangor) delivered.
- Nugent's Wood path upgrade and externally financed.
- School Growing Clubs Policy agreed.
- Friends of Groups and Volunteering in Parks & Cemeteries Policy agreed.

#### Action to be taken:

- Draft Local Biodiversity Action Plan is drafted, and Consultation will start in January and reported back to Council meeting in March 2023.
- Works ongoing to Play Parks to be refurbished: Johnny the Jig (Holywood) & Upper Crescent (Comber).
- New splash pads at Groomsport to be delivered for Summer 2023.
- Public consultation is underway for older children play facility in Holywood.
- Application and Business Plans being created for 2023 Green Flag Awards.
- Future Cemeteries Provision Project Brief has been updated and will be progressed in 2023.
- Public consultation is underway for Floodgates Park, Newtownards.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the report.

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

Councillor McRandal extended his thanks to the Head of Parks & Cemeteries and his team for their hard work. In relation to, 'key achievements,' in the report, he was curious as to whether an update existed for the sponsorship of roundabouts policy.

The Head of Parks & Cemeteries explained that a piece of work with local businesses had been carried out, but with finances available only in the next financial year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023/24, it could not be progressed until then but he expected to see results in the next month or two.

Councillor Chambers queried the two horticulture apprentices and asked what would occur at the end of the apprenticeships. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries explained that it was a staffing matter (confidential) but in general the apprenticeships would last for 4 years and the apprentice could apply for a post should it arise in the future.

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
🟢	Total Hectares of Council maintained ground rewilded (m2)	49,195	49,195
🟢	Managed ground with annual sowing (m2)	6,100	6,100
🟢	Number of trees planted	2,470	0
🟢	Number of tree, woodland and orchard projects supported	15	0
🟢	Amount of herbicide used (litres)	138	150
🔴	Publish and implement a new Local Biodiversity Action Plan	No	Yes
🟢	% spend against budget	101.18%	100%
🟢	Investigate sponsorship initiatives and present proposals to Council	Yes	No
🔴	% staff attendance	89.79%	95%
🟢	% staff reporting regular/monthly receipt of team briefings	100%	100%
🟢	Retain Green Flag Awards	6	5
🟢	Best Kept Britain in Bloom and any other relevant award that highlights the excellence of the service offered by the Council	4	4
🟢	% of available allotments utilised	100%	100%

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
🟢	Number of Britain in Bloom projects	17	15
🟢	Overall funding for In Bloom projects	£12,245.00	£12,000.00
🟢	Number of Friends Groups established	1	1
🟢	Carry out ten community events throughout the Borough	14	9
🟢	Investigate opportunities to start an apprenticeship scheme in association with Greenmount College	Yes	Yes

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

## **10. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE PLAN 2023-24** (Appendix V)

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:** The appended report attached was the Service Plan for Environmental Health Protection and Development in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context.
- Provide focus on direction.
- Facilitate alignment between Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities.
- Motivate and develop staff.
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice.
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes.
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

The plan for 2023/24 was attached. This plan had been developed to align with objectives of the Big Plan and Corporate Plan. The agreement of the plan would also assist toward achievement of the Council's performance improvement duties under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

The Service Plan highlighted where the service contributed to the Corporate Plan and, where this was the case, set out the objectives of the service for the 2023/24 year. It further identified the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service will try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The Service Plan also identified key risks to the service along with analysis of these and necessary actions to mitigate/manage risks. Key risks impacting services were incorporated into the Corporate Risk Register. The plan had been developed in conjunction with staff, officers and management and consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.

The plan was based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g., due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP) the plan may have required revision.

The Committee was to be provided with update reports on performance against the agreed plan.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approve the attached plan.

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

Alderman Irvine spoke of the number of items covered in the report and the efforts to complete it. He asked if Affordable Warmth had any further progress.

The Head of Environmental Health, Protection & Development explained that a number of members were nominated to attend the meeting with her and a colleague for a preparatory session with some of the members and an Affordable Warmth meeting with DfC was scheduled for tomorrow afternoon, 16<sup>th</sup> March.

Councillor T Smith referenced the NI Protocol that was mentioned in the report and reminded Members that he had continued to oppose the Protocol and though legal obligations of the Protocol existed, he stated that, like the SLA last year and the document of last month, he would oppose.

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

## **11. Q3 PERFORMANCE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT**

(Appendices IX & X)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing explaining that Members would have been aware that Council was required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements which would secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil this 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 was to 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 were to 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 3 2022-23 is attached.

**Key points to note:**

- Staff absence rates have improved with a number of staff on long term sick returning to work.
- The % Private Tenancy Order (PTO) inspections backlog is being addressed and as a result the % of inspections has improved. It is anticipated that the annual target will be met by the end of the year however this is dependent on gaining access to properties, this remains beyond the control of the officers.
- Premises in priority sectors target is slightly under but work on this area is well underway and the end of year target will be met.
- The % of quarterly targets achieved as determined by Service Level Agreements is slightly under target due to staff recruitment and lateness of funding agreements and targets set by partners and funders.

**Key achievements:**

- The Service has generally performed well against the KPI's for Q3 considering ongoing competing priorities.

**Emerging issues:**

- None.

**Action to be taken:**

An improvement plan is being developed following Covid recovery sessions with "Heads together" which will contribute to the continuous improvement approach being taken within the service.

RECOMMENDED that the Council noted the report.



Unclassified

## Quarterly Performance Report - Environmental Health, Protection and Development

Generated on: 27 February 2023

Last Update Q3 2022/23

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
✓	% of premises in priority sectors inspected and permits issued	50%	25%
✓	% spend against budget	95.05%	100%
✓	% service requests responded to within 2 working days	94.5%	94%
✓	% of Planning comments made within 11 working days	82.5%	90%
⚠	% of quarterly targets achieved as determined by Service Level Agreements	97%	100%
✓	% of customers satisfied with service upon completion of service request	96%	90%
✓	Produce business case and recruit additional support in Health and Wellbeing	1	0
⚠	% staff attendance	93.2%	95%
✓	% of employees in whom time invested in Team Briefings	100%	100%
✓	Complete three CP Market Surveillance exercises	2	2
✓	Complete three HBS targeted inspection initiatives	2	2
✗	% of PTD applications completed within 180 days	79%	90%
✓	% of Caravan Sites inspected annually	100%	75%
✗	% of Petroleum Sites inspected and annual licences issued	44%	50%
✓	% of High Risk Food premises inspected	75%	75%

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

## 12. DEMENTIA FRIENDLY UPDATE

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing explaining that it had been agreed at the Council Meeting on 21 December 2022, that all updates on Dementia Friendly would be moved to the Community and Wellbeing Committee as a standalone item (not through Age Friendly).

It was further agreed that a Dementia Champion would be designated from within Council staff to oversee progress on obtaining dementia friendly status and the mainstreaming of dementia friendly services and policies within Council. After due consideration by officers tasked with progressing this work, it was recommended that the Head of Environmental Health Protection and Development undertook this role, having both a personal and professional interest in promoting Dementia Friendly, and as chair of Age Friendly Alliance, the community planning mechanism through which the dementia work operated.

It was also agreed that a Dementia Champion was appointed from the Members of Council to act as link between the Council and those living with dementia, their families and carers in the delivery of support, advocacy and services. It was anticipated that such an appointment would be agreed by Members at the Annual Meeting in June following the Local Government elections.

In progressing the Dementia Friendly status for the Council, and ultimately the Borough, the Alzheimer's Society had advised that the Council was indeed recognised as working to become dementia friendly and promoted as such because we had Dementia Friendly Communities Champions trained and in place who were creating Dementia Friends within the organisation. At the time of writing, however, the Alzheimer's Society had put a pause on everything regarding Dementia Friendly Communities, so the accreditation process was on hold, in line with this review. The charity had agreed to keep us updated and once we know what is expected, we would report back to Members with a proposed action plan. Alzheimer's had confirmed we would still be allowed to use the wording 'Ards and North Down – Working towards becoming Dementia Friendly' on documents produced that were associated with this workstream until they had established a new scheme.

At the meeting of the Age Friendly Alliance on 7 December 2022, the South Eastern Trust were encouraged to re-establish the South Eastern Dementia Friendly Partnership, and the partners met on 10 January and 7 February to review the pre-covid Action Plan. The Council was represented on this group by the Community Planning Officer and the Age Friendly Coordinator. The general consensus of the group was that the Action Plan was out of date and did not reflect accepted good practice of involvement of stakeholders. It was therefore decided to undertake a consultation and engagement exercise with those living with dementia and their carers. This information was to be used to shape the new South Eastern area action plan and again Members were to be updated on progress. It had been anticipated that actions specific to Ards and North Down would be included within the new action plan.

Council staff had been involved in the development of an in-house training course to raise awareness of dementia and promote good customer care. The initial draft had been reviewed and further work was to be undertaken with the support of Alzheimer's Society and Dementia NI to ensure that the content would be appropriate. It was hoped that this training may be made available to its community planning partners in the future as the Council worked towards becoming a Dementia Friendly Borough.

Plans were also underway to work with the PSNI and Dementia NI to launch the Herbert Protocol in the Borough during March. The Herbert Protocol was an initiative that helped locate a person with dementia if they go missing. Information was collated and stored and would greatly assist with searching for the missing person with a view to locating them quickly and safely.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council note the contents of this report and approve the Head of Environmental Health Protection and Development as the Dementia Champion for the Officers, with the Members' Champion to be agreed and appointed at the Annual Meeting in June.

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

Councillor Thompson welcomed the report and explained that a number of meetings had occurred and they would be working to get a system in place for becoming Dementia Friendly. He was content that an officer had been appointed and looked forward to the new Council progressing it.

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

**13. ARDS AND NORTH DOWN POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY ACTION PLAN 2023-24**

(Appendix VI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing The Council's Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) annual Action Plan was due to terminate on 31 March 2023.

From November 2022 to January 2023 a turning the curve exercise was facilitated by Blu Zebra with the PCSP in order to update the Action Plan for 2023 – 2024.

The PCSP Action Plan (Appendix) had been approved by the Policing and Community Safety Partnership and had been submitted to the Joint Committee for its consideration.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

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

Alderman Irvine was a member of PCSP and spoke of ongoing issues that required work and looked forward to assisting with it.

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

**14. PEACEPLUS MINUTES 19<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2023**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the abovementioned.

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

Councillor Adair thanked the work of the partnership with community engagement across the borough. He looked forward to funding and thanked all those involved. A difference had been made with PEACE IV and he looked forward to PEACEPLUS, reminding Members of Dr Paisley and Mr Hume whose work brought about the Peace Fund.

Councillor Boyle spoke of the hard work for applicants and for the staff, and elected members plus social partners. There was much work to be done which he praised the committee for and looked forward to what it would cultivate. He asked for the Head of Community & Culture to pass on his thanks for their work.

Councillor Thompson was happy to see how many had been involved in consultation meetings and the ideas that had been born from them. Over 500 concept projects had been received which was a large undertaking for the officers. He hoped that projects would be available soon and had confidence in officers' abilities.

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

**15. MOVILLA COFFIN LIDS RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION**  
(Appendix VII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing advising that in December 2022, the Council agreed the following Notice of Motion:

*'That Council officers open discussions with Historic Environment Division regarding the return of the 13<sup>th</sup> 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.'*

**Background**

The remains of Movilla Abbey lie in the northwest corner of Movilla Cemetery, Movilla Road, Newtownards (Appendix 1). While the cemetery is maintained by Ards and North Down Borough Council, the abbey remains were in State Care and maintained by the Department for Communities' Historic Environment Division (HED). The abbey remains were afforded protection under the 1995 Historical

Monuments Act and recorded in the Historic Environment Records of Northern Ireland (HERoNI) as DOW 006:013.

The site was founded during the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD by St Finian, whose death was recorded in the Annals of Ulster in 579AD. St Finian was a member of the Dal Fiatach, one of two leading population-groups in N.E. Ireland from the third to the twelfth centuries and was responsible for other religious sites at Downpatrick, Saul, Nendrum and Bangor. Doubtless the church flourished under the Dal Fiatach patronage and served as an important burial place.

There were no upstanding remains of this early church settlement and the present ruins, which consisted of the nave and chancel of a church, were mostly 13<sup>th</sup> century though with some 15<sup>th</sup> century additions. The north wall of the church had been incorporated into the present precinct wall of the cemetery.

In more recent times, seven Anglo-Norman coffin lids of 13<sup>th</sup> century date were set in the north wall for display along with an undressed grave slab of Early Christian date. The latter bears a ring headed cross and the inscription in Irish "A prayer for Dertrend".

#### **Current issue**

It was hoped that the seven coffin lids and one grave slab would be afforded protection from weathering by displaying them on the north wall of the church. Despite this, they had continued to deteriorate from weather exposure and in the mid-2010s it was deemed necessary to remove the objects to HED's Works' depot in Moira, Co. Down for safe keeping. They had remained there since and were scheduled for conservation work.

Recent correspondence (January 2023) between the Heritage Development Officer and HED's State Care Monuments Team had provided the following statement from Senior Inspector Martin Keery:

*Due to their continued exposure to the elements at Movilla, their carved surfaces had been deteriorating quite significantly despite efforts made to protect them on-site. The stones were removed from Movilla by DfC's Historic Environment Division (HED) for their protection and conservation. They are being stored safely and appropriately, and HED intends to undertake works during 2023 to conserve the grave-slabs. Once completed, HED will work closely with Ards and North Down Borough Council to return them to the historic site at Movilla Abbey.*

RECOMMENDED that Council upon completion of conservation repairs, work closely with HED to forward plans for return of the objects for display at Movilla Abbey.

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

Councillor Thompson spoke of further information received from the HED who had his confidence in their ability to carry out required works. He looked forward to the conservation work being completed and thanked Alderman McIlveen for bringing the original Notice of Motion to Council.

Councillor Adair was glad to see progress and hoped it would not be long before the items were returned.

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

## **16. ARTS BURSARIES** (Appendix VIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing advising of how The Ards and North Down Arts Service offered creative bursaries to artists in the borough to the Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Co. Monaghan (four x one-week bursaries) and to Ballinglen Arts Foundation, Co. Mayo (one x two-week bursary).

These unique bursaries gave an artist the opportunity to focus on a specific project or development in their work and further their artistic and professional practice.

The bursaries were advertised in an e-bulletin that was sent to artists and they were also advertised through social media (Council Facebook and AND Culture), Ards and North Down Culture and Council websites, press release and other online visual artist reference sites e.g., Visual Artist Ireland.

The application process opened on Monday 16 January and closed on Friday 10 February 2023.

Applicants were asked to clearly demonstrate their experience and how they would use the bursary to further their professional practice.



CW 15.03.2023

182

Members of the Arts and Cultural Advisory Panel met virtually on Monday 13 February to assess nine Tyrone Guthrie applications.

The panel comprised the following Arts Panel Members:

- Shauna McGowan: arts specialist - visual
- Dymphna Curran: arts specialist - visual
- Catherine Charley: arts specialist - writer

A second panel met on Monday 27 February to assess the Ballinglen Arts Foundation Bursaries applications.

The panel comprised the following Arts Panel Members:

- Craig Jefferson: Arts specialist - visual
- Dymphna Curran: Arts specialist - visual
- Emily Crawford: Arts and Heritage Manager

Applications were scored against set criteria and the following highest scoring applications from residents of the Borough are recommended for approval by the assessment panel i.e., the top four highest scoring for submissions for the Tyrone Guthrie award and the top highest scoring submission for Ballinglen Arts Foundation. Feedback will be available for unsuccessful applicants.

<b>Name of Applicant</b>	<b>Bursary</b>	<b>Project Score</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Myra Zepf	Tyrone Guthrie Centre	87%	Award one week
Clara Kerr	Tyrone Guthrie Centre	85%	Award one week
Richard Clements	Tyrone Guthrie Centre	88%	Award one week
Kerrie Hanna	Tyrone Guthrie Centre	82%	Not awarded
Michael Geddis	Tyrone Guthrie Centre	83%	Not awarded

CW 15.03.2023

183

Lauren Scott	Tyrone Guthrie Centre	76%	Not awarded
Clare Gallagher	Tyrone Guthrie Centre	81%	Not awarded
Bethany Ashley	Tyrone Guthrie Centre	85%	Award one week Chris Ledger Award
Marie-Thérèse Davis- Henson	Tyrone Guthrie Centre	68%	Not awarded
Kerrie Hanna	Ballinlen Arts Foundation	83%	Award two weeks bursary
Aly Harte	Ballinlen Arts Foundation	72%	Not awarded
Sally Houston	Ballinlen Arts Foundation	80%	Not awarded
Victoria Patterson	Ballinlen Arts Foundation	73%	Not awarded
Owen Crawford	Ballinlen Arts Foundation	53%	Not awarded

### Recommended Bursaries:

#### Tyrone Guthrie Centre Bursary, Co. Monaghan

##### One-week bursary:

- Bethany Ashley received the highest score from the two applications from artists with a disability. Bethany is a poet and creates exhibitions using 3D printers' pieces of her poems in braille. The award was created in memory of Chris Ledger through the developments of the Arts and Disability Working Group.
- One-week bursary: Richard Clements Smyth: playwright
- One-week bursary: Myra Zepf: writer
- One week bursary: Clara Kerr: dancer

**Ballinglen Bursary, Co. Mayo**

- Two-week bursary: Kerrie Hanna

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the recommendations of the scoring panel as detailed in this report.

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

Councillor MacArthur recognised some of the names that had been awarded and referred to Mira Zest who she had personally worked with. She noted those who did not receive awards and asked if any weighting existed for experience or the project and if applicants received feedback as to why they had not been successful.

The Head of Community & Culture explained that she had not been on the scoring panel but would enquire for the Councillor. She was able to state however that all applicants would have the opportunity for feedback.

Councillor Boyle welcomed the report.

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

**17. Q3 PERFORMANCE COMMUNITY AND CULTURE**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing explaining that Members would have been 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 this 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 was to 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 3 2022-23 is attached.

**Key points to note:**

- PEACEPLUS consultation commenced in Q3 with a number of public meetings held in each DEA across the Borough, supplemented by online surveys.

**Key achievements:**

- As previously reported to Members a Social Supermarket, with outreach provision has been established in Ards and is operated by North Down Community Works.
- The number of Community Safety Education programmes delivered to Schools/Community Groups has exceeded expectations.

**Emerging issues:**

- The number of creative class sessions delivered will exceed its target by Q4, as participation is increasing post Covid.
- The number of community safety multi agency meetings is likely to achieve its target by Q4 as the number of multi-agency Anti-Social Behaviour meetings will increase in Q4.

**Action to be taken:**

- Unfortunately, due to a lack of resources due to illness the one stop shop for volunteers has not been progressed. However, this project will be rolled forward to the 2023-2024 Service Plan for implementation.

RECOMMENDED that Council note this report.

Unclassified

**Quarterly Performance Report - Community and Culture**

Generated on: 28 February 2023

Last Update Q3 2022/23

Performance Data Traffic Light icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	Establish a pilot Social Supermarket within the Borough	100%	100%
	% spend against budget	88.55%	100%
	Community consultation and engagement for the PEACE PLUS Plan commenced	50%	20%
	% staff attendance	95.2%	95%
	% staff receiving team briefings	100%	100%
	Creates a one stop shop for Community Volunteers	0%	0%
	Delivery of an annual bursary for artists with a disability	Yes	Yes
	No of Creative Class sessions delivered (cumulative)	42	42
	Museum Education programme developed	Yes	Yes
	Design and deliver the Queens Jubilee Grants scheme	100%	100%
	Number of Community Safety Education programmes delivered to Schools /Community Groups	10	3
	Number of Community Safety multi-agency meetings attended (cumulative)	14	18
	No of young people recruited onto the Ards and North Down Youth Voice	15	20

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

## **18. COMMUNITY AND CULTURE SERVICE PLAN 2023-24** (Appendix IX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that, since 2017/18, Service Plans were produced by each Service in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context.
- Provide focus on direction.
- Facilitate alignment between Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities.
- Motivate and develop staff.
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice.
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

The Community and Culture Service Plan for 2023/24 year was attached.

The plan had been developed to align with outcomes of the Big Plan for Ards and North Down and with the PEOPLE priorities of the Corporate Plan Towards 2024.

The Service Plan highlighted where the services contributed to the Council KPIs as set out in the Corporate Plan Towards 2024 and, where this was the case, set out the objectives of the service for the 2023/24 year. It further identifies the performance measures used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service would try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The Service Plan also identified key risks to the services along with analysis of these and necessary actions to mitigate/manage risks. Key risks impacting the service were mapped to the Corporate Risk Register.

The plans had been based on the agreed budget for 2023/24. It should be noted that, should any significant changes have occurred in-year (e.g due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the community planning legislation) the plans may have needed to be revised. The Committee was to be provided with quarterly update reports on performance against the agreed plan.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approves the attached Community and Culture Service Plan for 2023/24.

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

Councillor MacArthur took the opportunity to thank the Head of Community & Culture whose time was due to come to an end with the Council. Alderman Irvine and Councillors Adair, Boyle and Edmund all shared the same sentiment.

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

## **19. DESPERSAL FUNDING FOR REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS**

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:** - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing explaining that, in December 2021, Ards and North Down Borough Council became aware that a number of asylum seekers were to be temporarily accommodated in a Bangor based hotel, and that a Bangor B&B had been housing asylum seekers for a number of months.

At that time, very little information was available from the responsible Department, the Home Office regarding the asylum seeker i.e. term of stay, numbers, profile or country of origin and there had been no direct contact or information provided to the



Council in advance. Therefore, there was no lead-in time over the Christmas period to prepare for the newcomers. As news of their arrival began to break, concerns were raised by local Councillors and the community and voluntary sector in relation to the needs of those being temporarily accommodated in the hotel and what practical help could be offered to them.

A Local Forum was quickly established, and the Forum was initially chaired by North Down Community Network. This group was now chaired by North Down YMCA together with a separate Forum which facilitated the needs of a new cohort of asylum seekers that were, at the time of writing, being housed in a B& B in Holywood.

Due to the Covid situation at that time, the Forum met via zoom and initially meetings were weekly to deal with the volume of queries and questions coming from local residents, statutory organisations and the community and voluntary sector.

A large number of community and voluntary sector partners and church representatives attended the meetings together with statutory organisations and a wide support network was put in place to address the needs of those in both the local hotel and B&B. Meers Housing, who are contracted by the Home Office to support asylum seekers, also attended the Forum meetings to ensure that any planned interventions were not a duplication of Meers support and that the interventions were welcome and needed and did not adversely impact on any of the residents.

### **Local wraparound Ukraine Assistance Centre**

In March 2022, Council started to receive queries in relation to what help and support it was offering to those refugees beginning to arrive in the Borough from Ukraine.

Discussions with officials from DFC and TEO suggested that 5 Council areas should begin to prepare to set up formal Ukraine assistance centres to help those arriving together with their hosts.

Although DFC/TEO decided there was no requirement for an assistance centre in Ards and North Down due to its proximity to the centre based in Belfast, Council was keen to respond to the increasing demand for help and support from asylum seekers and refugees. In March 2022 Council contracted the services of North Down YMCA to provide a local wraparound assistance centre for all new arrivals the Borough.

The service was delivered via an SLA and was initially for 6 months, with a possible extension, should funding have become available.

The wraparound assistance service was in place to:

- Provide language support and advocacy services to refugees/asylum seekers arriving in Ards and North Down, such as access to health care, education, welfare and employment.
- Provide information and support to local individuals and organisations hosting Ukrainian refugees under 'Homes for Ukraine' and Ukrainian Family scheme and working with asylum seekers residing in Bangor city centre.
- Facilitate access to 'Homes for Ukraine', Ukrainian Family Scheme and Ukrainian Extension Scheme for both sponsors (individuals and organisations based in A&ND) and beneficiaries (Ukrainian citizens).
- Provide weekly drop-in advocacy clinics at YMCA North Down (Bangor) and The Link (N'ards) plus floating support across A&ND (including Ards Peninsula outreach).
- Provide a meeting space for refugees/asylum seekers and their sponsors.
- Facilitate access to ESOL classes for refugees/asylum seekers.
- Facilitate access to support groups and organisations for refugees/asylum seekers.

In November 2022, Council Officers were invited to submit a bid for funding to The Executive Office to help fund the support services that were already being provided to asylum seekers up until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. A subsequent request was issued by The Executive Office asking for further bids to ensure the support continued in 2023 – 2024. The bid from Ards and North Down was based on the consultation with North Down YMCA and other local stakeholders who have been providing support to newcomers since the arrival of the asylum seekers and refugees.

TEO had confirmed that £142,087.46 had been allocated to Ards and North Down Council for the continuation of provision of services to asylum seekers and refugees up until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. A Memorandum of Understanding from The Executive Office is expected imminently.

The bid for funding was to ensure the wraparound service provided via an SLA with the YMCA continued to enable the provision of a weekly drop-in and wrap around support, community art sessions in Boom Studios, some leisure activities in Aurora and Queen's Leisure complex and to help and support those community and voluntary organisations and churches who had been supporting the asylum seekers to date.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council notes this report.

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

Councillor Boyle spoke of the difficulties in the process with regard to questions and queries that had been received. He believed it was a failing that monies had not been forthcoming to some of those in need with more input required from those in Government. With regard to the war, he believed attacks on Ukraine had become worse, adding that his thoughts were with those affected. He was curious where it was going. The Head of Community & Culture explained that Council was doing all it could, engaging with the YMCA and voluntary partners to provide support for asylum seekers and refugees in the area. She stated that if any hosts were experiencing difficulties with payments, they should contact her or the Department so they could get in contact with the responsible agencies.

Councillor MacArthur thought the figures appeared to show the most common refugees were young mothers with children. Sometimes reports were received but she was unaware as to how well some had settled in the borough and in terms of numbers, asked if an update could be supplied as she understood that some did not speak English which would mean reasonable employment could not be found.

Councillor Adair agreed with the sentiments of his colleagues, recalling the image of a boy carrying a suitcase and teddy on television. He thought Northern Ireland residents had tried to help as best they could and provided some local examples.

Alderman Irvine asked if the Marine Court Hotel, Bangor which was to be a temporary place of refuge, had extended beyond a year in light of recent press reports. With rumours in the community, he believed it important for Members to be kept up to date. The Head of Community & Culture explained that monthly meetings occurred with local groups including churches, the PSNI, Health, Education, local community and voluntary groups, with officer support through the Good Relations team to respond to the needs of the newcomers.

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

## **20. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing which outlined that the Community Development (CD) Fund 2023/24 was match-funded by the Department of Communities, Community Support Programme and the Council Community Development Section. The Letter of Offer from the Department for Communities had yet to be received by Council, so all grant awards outlined in this report would be subject to funding being received from the Department for Communities, although costs could be claimed by successful applicants from 1 April 2023.

In November 2022 Council agreed that 100% of the grant scheme could be allocated to running costs, rather than running costs and project costs. It was also agreed that in response to the cost-of-living crisis, the maximum award for running costs was increased from £2,000 to £2,500. With the cost-of-living crisis across the UK, many community groups throughout the borough were fully relying on this fund to continue to operate.

It was further agreed that owing to an increasing demand on this fund from groups whose primary focus is not community development, this included groups who delivered community development outcomes however have a different core i.e., sports, arts, religious, heritage and culture. Council and the DfC had alternative funding streams for these sectors, therefore these groups/sectors were excluded from applying to the fund and this was clearly communicated at the two grants workshops for potential applicants and was detailed in the guidance notes and criteria.

The grants were open for four weeks to allow applicants enough time to gather the necessary documentation and information to support their applications.

The objectives of the CD Fund were to strengthen local communities: to increase community participation; to promote social inclusion through the stimulation and support of community groups; and to encourage and promote community activity.

The expected outcomes of the CD Fund were:

- An active and organised community
- An influential community
- An informed community
- A sustainable community.

There were sixty-nine applications received for running costs applications with a total amount of £120,552 being requested.

The total budget for the Community Development Grant is £92,000

An assessment panel comprised of the Community Development Manager, Community Development Officer, Community Development Grants Officer, Community Arts Development Officer, assessed and scored the grants under the following criteria:

Grant Criteria – <b>Running Costs</b>	Max Points
Purpose and Aim	5

Costs	5
Benefit to community	5
Economic Independence	5
Tackling poverty & social inclusion	5
Encourage and Promote health & wellbeing	5
Equality	5
Value for money	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>

#### Grant Criteria-

A 20% weighting had been applied to:

- i) applicants located in the top 10% of the most deprived wards in the Council area, (using the DFC Recommended Weighting) and
- ii) those that specifically targeted socially excluded groups.

Out of the 69 applications received, 45 were successful, 9 applications did not meet the pass mark of 50% and 13 applications were deemed ineligible (see table below).

In-line with existing Community Development budgets, and projected funding from DFC, it was recommended that 100% of the eligible running costs be awarded to all successful applicants, with a total value of £87,320.50.

**Table 1 Successful Applicants**

Successful Running Costs Breakdown				
#	Name Of Group	Score	Eligible Amount	Amount Awarded
1	Ards Peninsula U3A	65%	£2,240.00	£2,240.00
2	Ards Peninsula Villages Partnership	70%	£1,145.00	£1,145.00
3	Ballyhalbert & District Community Association	50%	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
4	Ballyhalbert Youth Group	52.50 %	£1,680.00	£1,680.00
5	Ballyphilip Youth Club	72.50 %	£2,350.00	£2,350.00



CW 15.03.2023

193

6	Ballywalter Community Action group	62.50 %	£590.00	£590.00
7	Ballywalter Mens Shed	70%	£2,000.00	£2,000.00
8	Bloomfield Community Association	70%	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
9	Breezemount Community Association	70%	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
10	Carrowdore & District CA	65%	£2,000.00	£2,000.00
11	Clandeboye VCA	67.50 %	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
12	Cloughey Heritage Group	52.50 %	£1,655.00	£1,655.00
13	Comber Regeneration Community Partnership	60%	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
14	Conlig Community Regeneration Group	65%	£2,400.00	£2,400.00
15	Discover Groomsport	77.50 %	£1,230.00	£1,230.00
16	Donaghadee Community Development Association	60%	£2,250.00	£2,250.00
17	East End Residents Association	52.50 %	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
18	Hollywood Family Trust	52.50 %	£2,400.00	£2,400.00
19	Hollywood Shared Town	65%	£1,600.00	£1,600.00
20	Inspiring Yarns CIC	57.50 %	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
21	Killinchy & District Community Development Assoc	50%	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
22	Killinchy Senior Citizens	65%	£1,720.00	£1,720.00
23	Lisbarnett and Lisbane CA	57.50 %	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
24	Loughries Men's Shed	70%	£1,260.00	£1,260.00
25	Millisle & District Community Association	65%	£2,500.00	£2,500.00



CW 15.03.2023

194

26	Millisle Health and Wellbeing	67.50 %	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
27	Millisle Regeneration	62.50 %	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
28	Millisle Youth Forum	75%	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
29	Polish Association Bangor	72.5%	£2,450.00	£2,450.00
30	Portaferry and Strangford Trust	52.50 %	£1,730.00	£1,730.00
31	Portaferry Community Collective	60.00 %	£995.00	£995.00
32	Portaferry Community Services Ltd	60.00 %	£1,500.00	£1,500.00
33	Portaferry Gala Fest	52.50 %	£1,600.00	£1,600.00
34	Portaferry Mens Shed	67.50 %	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
35	Portaferry WI	55.00 %	£330.00	£330.00
36	Portavogie Regeneration Forum	60%	£840.50	£840.50
37	Redburn Loughview Community Forum	70%	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
38	Seahaven residents Association	60%	£700.00	£700.00
39	St Patricks Community Centre	55.00 %	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
40	The Link Family & Community Centre	52.50 %	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
41	The Bekind Project	77.50 %	£1,500.00	£1,500.00
42	Twinkle Tots Parent and Toddler	57.50 %	£1,500.00	£1,500.00
43	United Ulster History Forum	55%	£800.00	£800.00
44	Warehouse Open Centre	55.00 %	£1,955.00	£1,955.00
45	Whitehill CA	67.50 %	£2,400.00	£2,400.00

CW 15.03.2023

195

	<b>Total s:</b>	<b>£87,320.50</b>	<b>£87,320.50</b>

Table 2 Unsuccessful Applicants:

<b>Running Costs Applications That Didn't Meet The 50% Pass Mark</b>			
<b>#</b>	<b>Name Of Group</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Reason for Unsuccessful Application</b>
1	1st Newtownards Somme & Historical Society	0%	No detail provided
2	Ballygowan Concert Flute Band	Not scored	Ineligible – Arts – refer to Ards & Heritage
3	Bees Needs EYC	Not Scored	Ineligible – early years/childcare/school based
4	Behind the Stable Door LTD	Not Scored	Ineligible – not grass root community group
5	Cloughey & district community association	37.50%	Failed to reach pass mark
6	Comber Youth for Christ	Not Scored	Ineligible – religious/political
7	Find Help NI	Not Scored	Ineligible – no local constitution
8	Friends of Abbey PTA	Not scored	Ineligible – affiliated with school
9	Glenside Farm CIC	Not scored	Ineligible not grass root community group
10	Groomsport Village Association	45%	Failed to reach pass mark
11	Hollywood residents Association	40%	Failed to reach pass mark
12	Kiltonga Christian Centre	Not Scored	Ineligible – religious/political
13	Ladybirds Parenting Centre	Not Scored	Ineligible – early years/childcare/school based
14	Little Doves Childcare	Not Scored	Ineligible – early years/childcare/school based
15	Lord Londonderry's Own CLB Flute Band	Not Scored	Ineligible – Arts – refer to Ards & Heritage

16	Love Ballyholme	42.5%	Failed to reach pass mark
17	Neurodiversity	47.5%	Failed to reach pass mark
18	North Down & Ards U3A	42.5%	Failed to reach pass mark
19	North Down and Ards Red Squirrels & Pine Marten	Not Scored	Ineligible – conservation group
20	Portaferry in Bloom	Not Scored	Incomplete application
21	The Gaitway Organisation	Not Scored	Ineligible – applying for project/ scheme
22	Uhub therapy centre	42.5%	Failed to reach pass mark

For those unsuccessful applications, officers would be available to provide feedback to applicants, on why their application failed to meet the pass mark of 50% or why it was deemed ineligible. Officers could also assist these groups to source alternative funding.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve the recommendations detailed in Tables 1 and 2 above.

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

Councillor Thompson welcomed the report which mirrored what community groups across the borough had done, providing for the vulnerable. He was happy to see an increase in the amount that could be applied for. Warm spaces had been welcomed and it was great to see the community groups who had applied had received what they asked for.

(Alderman Wilson left the meeting at 20:30)

Alderman Irvine noted some established organisations who did not reach the pass mark whilst Councillor S Irvine referred to the First Somme group and asked why no detail had been provided.

The Head of Community and Culture advised she would contact the member tomorrow, 16<sup>th</sup> March upon investigating the figures.

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

## 21. ARDS AND NORTH DOWN SPORTS FORUM GRANTS

(Appendices X-XIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing of how Members would have been aware that on 26 August 2015, Council delegated authority to the Ards and North Down Sports Forum, in order to allow it to administer sports grants funding on behalf of the Council. £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 January 2023, the Forum received a total of 9 grant applications: 2 Coaching, 1 Event, 3 Goldcard and 3 Individual Travel/Accommodation. A summary of the 9 successful applications are detailed in the attached Successful Coaching, Successful Event, 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 January 2023	Remaining Budget
Anniversary	£1,000	£0	£250
Coaching	£3,000	*£570	*£22.50
Equipment	£11,000	£0	£3,535.14
Events	£6,000	*£500	*£1,200
Seeding	£500	£0	£250
Travel and Accommodation	£14,500	*£390	*-£663.97
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	£1,000
New category under development	£3,000	£0	£3,000
*Goldcards proposed during the period January 2023 is 3 (21 Goldcards in total during 2022/23).			

\* The proposed remaining budget for Coaching of **£22.50** was based on a proposed award of **£570.00** – for Approval. The proposed remaining budget for Events of **£1,200** was based on a proposed award of **£500.00** – for Approval. The proposed remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of **-£663.97** was based on a proposed award of **£390.00** – for Noting.

### **Sports Forum Grant Programme 2023/24**

An increased budget of £45,000 had been allocated within the 2023/2024 revenue budget towards the Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants Programme. Therefore, the proposed award value for each Grant Category was as follows at the time of writing, however this was to be kept under review by Officers and may have changed depending on funding demands:

- Anniversary £1,000
- Coaching £3,000
- Equipment £14,000
- Events £6,000
- Seeding £500
- Travel and Accommodation £14,500
- Discretionary £1,000
- Schools/Sports Club Pathway £5,000

Following a review of the Grants Programme and feedback received from applicants and clubs; the following changes were proposed by Officers and the Sports Forum Working Group:

### **Schools/Sports Club Pathway Category – New Category**

This new category under development was due to be launched on 1 April 2023. The category was to be called "Schools/Sports Club Pathway". Ards and North Down Sports Forum affiliated sports clubs and organisations, which had a sporting remit / section could apply for financial assistance towards the cost of their qualified coaches delivering a "Schools/Sports Club Pathway" programme to schools within the Ards and North Down Borough. Clubs could apply in partnership with the schools for funding towards coaching, equipment, venue hire costs and transport, to deliver these programmes. The programme should have sought to increase pathways between schools and clubs and hence, increase opportunities for young people to participate in sport.

The Schools/Sports Club Pathway programme/sessions must:

- Be a new initiative.
- Be agreed with the school prior to submitting application.
- A School Teacher must be in attendance for the duration of the programme.
- The teacher attending the programme, must sign the application, prior to submission.
- Be delivered at venues within the Ards & North Down Borough.
- Be delivered in accordance with programme Risk Assessment.



- Be delivered by coach(es) who have suitable Governing and/or Awarding Body qualifications.
- Be delivered by coach(es) who have suitable Safeguarding training.
- Be delivered by coach(es) who are Access NI Checked.
- Be delivered by coach(es) who have suitable Public Liability Insurance.
- Be delivered by at least one coach who has a valid First-Aid qualification.
- Meet the Governing Body Safeguarding ratios.
- Be a minimum of 6 sessions and maximum of 12 sessions in duration (final day of delivery must be prior to 31 March 2024).
- Schools must obtain parental consent, for pupils to attend the programme and keep an attendance register.

A Schools/Sports Club Pathway Programme grant of up to a maximum of £500 per club (per financial year) was available, subject to available funding.

**Goldcard Category**

Grant Category	What is in place for 22/23	Proposed changes for 23/24	Rationale / Justification
Goldcard	<p>Duration of free use:</p> <p>The concession is only valid while the athlete remains a member of a recognised squad or holds an individual Northern Ireland /Ireland ranking of 10 or above.</p> <p>The concession will cease on the day after the specified event(s).</p> <p>If selected for multiple events, <b>Goldcards will be issued for the first event listed and can then be extended accordingly, upon</b></p>	<p>Amend final bullet to:</p> <p>If selected for multiple events or part of a recognised squad preparing for events, Goldcards will be issued for the last event listed, as long as it is detailed on the National Governing Body Selection Letter/Email.</p> <p>And remove "successful Goldcard issued for first event may be extended upon request" from the Goldcard Application Form.</p>	<p>Avoid Goldcards being awarded for a period of less than 2 months.</p>



	<b>request by the applicant.</b>		
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RECOMMENDED that Council:

1. Approves the attached applications for financial assistance for sporting purposes valued at above £250, and that the applications approved by the Forum (valued at below £250) are noted; and
2. Approves the changes proposed for the 2023/24 Sports Forum Grants Programme.

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

Councillor Boyle spoke of the good management of the Sports Forum. For those who may not have been successful, the Council would work with them to help. He referred to Ards Cycling Club which had gone to the GAA club in Portaferry which could accommodate great numbers. In regard to the recent success of the Sports Night awards held in Clandeboye Hotel, the borough had a great history of sporting abilities and a great interest. Seven elected Members had attended, and he believed the Council should be trying to enhance the Sports Forum as opposed to making cuts to it. He wanted to congratulate staff, recipients and those involved and shortlisted.

Councillor Thompson spoke of interest from sporting communities to get extra funding and that it had been good to see many applications on a regular basis within that forum. He thanked those who volunteered to go to the forum who looked through reports. He agreed with Councillor Boyle's sentiments on the sports award night. He reiterated a statistic, that if the Ards and North Down was a country, it would have come 19<sup>th</sup> in the Commonwealth games for the efforts of its people. Lastly, he was content to see an award for Dennis Nash had been presented given his work and efforts over the years.

Councillor Irvine agreed with his colleagues on the sports awards night. He wanted to thank the Sports Development Team naming Siobhan, Robbie, Christine, Jenny and Victoria for their efforts.

Councillor Edmund spoke of Dennis Nash's sports column efforts over the years and his deserving of the recognition. He had assisted with publicity in the past and, as in Councillor Edmund's words, was a gentleman.

Councillor Adair commended Dennis Nash who covered football and the sports column in the Chronicle on a voluntary basis. He was a great role model and ambassador of the borough.

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

## **22. Q3 PERFORMANCE LEISURE SERVICES**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would have been 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 this 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 was to 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 were to 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 3 2022-23 is attached.

**Key points to note:**

- Significant overspend due to the identified budget not being provided for the insourcing exercise. This will continue to impact throughout the year.
- Increased demand from the Community for Community Centre post pandemic use required significant additional unbudgeted staffing.

**Key achievements:**

- The number of hours booked in our Community Centres is significantly higher than target and is very encouraging.
- Recycling targets are being met which has a positive impact on our waste costs.
- The number of fitness classes being delivered across the portfolio is extremely positive. Over 230 classes every week providing a broad range of instructor led sessions.
- The number of users of ABMWLC is significantly higher than anticipated and is encouraging with some areas still not fully operational. Over 60,000 extra visitors against target. This is replicated at Holywood (Queens) and Sportsplex which have come through the pandemic exceptionally well.

**Emerging issues:**

- Staff sickness/attendance is a concern. It is regularly reported the strain on the current workforce due to a number of reported issues around staffing levels, job evaluations not being permitted and regular ASB at some of our sites.
- Community Centre demand is substantial and staffing levels need adjusted to facilitate this demand.

**Action to be taken:**

- Staff welfare continues to be a concern and measures need to be taken to minimise the strain on this key workforce.
- Staffing levels in our Community Centre section need to be adjusted if we are to continue to be able to meet demand from the Community.
- Recovery from the pandemic must not be assumed as significant work is ongoing to secure a return to pre covid levels.
- The Facility issues, roof, pool floors, sport hall floor at Aurora will be a focus over the next year.

RECOMMENDED that the Council note the report.

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

Alderman Irvine welcomed the report but was concerned in relation to staff welfare mentioned in the report. He asked if clarity could be given on the issue or if it would need to be In-Committee. Councillor Edmund clarified that a general response could be given by the officer.

The Head of Leisure Services advised that, in general, the staff and team in leisure centres were struggling. A recruitment freeze existed and since Coronavirus, there had been no recruitment, and gaps were being covered by others already employed or were temporary agency workers. Vandalism and antisocial behaviour also occurred at Blair Mayne which did not help morale and the attraction of quality staff was difficult, but such was the problem across Northern Ireland. With the recruitment freeze and appointing of people temporarily, he suspected it may become worse.

Councillor Boyle, in relation to the on-going status, was curious how long it could last before the service was affected and if it may require reduction of services given the problems that had been outlined. The Head of Leisure Services explained that it was not as broad a service as four or five years ago and had not recovered since Coronavirus.

Councillor Thompson welcomed the report and thought the key achievements of the report were encouraging.

Performance Data Traffic Light	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
Green	% <u>sent</u> to recycling rather than landfill for Community Centres	51%	50%
Green	% <u>sent</u> to recycling rather than landfill for Leisure Centres	53%	50%
Red	% <u>spent</u> against budget	122.87%	100%
Green	Number of bookings on grass pitches	2,152	1,895
Green	% <u>customer</u> satisfaction	98%	98%
Green	We will set up community user forums to encourage local community groups to make use of Community Centres	0	0
Yellow	% <u>staff</u> attendance	92.24%	95%
Green	% <u>staff</u> reporting regular (monthly) receipt of team briefings	100%	100%
Green	Maintain Quest awards for all 4 Leisure sites	4	4
Red	% <u>of</u> people who complete the FAR scheme	25%	60%
Green	% <u>of</u> people who take out a membership package at the end of a referral programme	60%	50%
Green	Number of fitness classes per week delivered by Leisure Arts and Service (NCLT)	284	110
Green	Footfall at Aodh Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex	145,000	506,250
Red	Footfall at Comber Leisure Centre	87,500	93,750
Green	Footfall at Portaferry Sports Centre	9,850	9,250

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
✓	Footfall at Londonderry Park	42,000	35,175
✓	Footfall at Aurora	825,352	825,000
✓	Footfall at Queen's Leisure Centre	161,657	67,500
✓	Footfall at Sportsplex	94,511	67,500
✓	Number enrolled in Learn to Swim programme	1,321	1,311
✓	Active Aging Memberships	182	300
✓	Number of Clubs affiliated with the Sports Forum	101	99
✓	Number of Sports Forum Grants awarded (cumulative)	141	94
✓	Number of views of online Sports Directory	1,812	525
⚠	Number of individuals attending Sports Education Courses	24	25
✓	Participation in Sports Development Programmes delivered/facilitated by Council (cumulative)	2,185	1,200
⚠	Total value of Sports Forum grants awarded (cumulative)	£29,576.33	£100,000.00
✓	Number of Sports Capital Grants awarded to clubs	14	10
✓	Total value of capital grants awarded	£46,164.78	£45,000.00
✓	Total hours booked in Community Centres	8,935	4,500

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

## **23 LEISURE SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 2023-24** (Appendix XIV)

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:** - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing outlining that the attached was the Service Plan for the Leisure Services section in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context.
- Provide focus on direction.
- Facilitate alignment between Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities.
- Motivate and develop staff.
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice.
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes.
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

The plan for 2023/24 was attached. This plan had been developed to align with objectives of the Big Plan and Corporate Plan. The agreement of the plan would also assist toward achievement of the Council's performance improvement duties under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.



The Service Plan highlights where the service contributed to the Corporate Plan and, where this was the case, set out the objectives of the service for the 2023/24 year. It further identified the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service would try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The Service Plan also identified key risks to the service along with analysis of these and necessary actions to mitigate/manage risks. Key risks impacting services were incorporated into the Corporate Risk Register. The plan had been developed in conjunction with staff, officers and management and consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.

The plan was based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, if there was to be significant changes in-year (e.g., due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP) the plan may have needed to be revised.

The Committee would be provided with update reports on performance against the agreed plan.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approve the attached plan.

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

Councillor MacArthur spoke of the comprehensive status of the report and the challenges Leisure faced and would continue to. On page 15, she spoke of the installation of Wifi in community centres which she wanted further information on. In addition, she queried Community Service and Halls which would be significant work and was curious would community forums be used. She was curious if the bones of that could be discussed.

The Head of Leisure explained Wifi was being upgraded with three complete and fifteen in the next four to eight weeks. Eighteen of twenty-one would then have improved. In terms of transformation, funding was secured as transformation in the rates setting process with a consultant that would be tendered to look at future provision of community centres. All elements would be looked at and developed by the Consultant with hopes of completion in time for the next rate setting process.

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



## **24. MARY PETERS TRUST**

(Appendix XV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing how Members would have been aware that this Council had previously, on an annual basis, helped to support the Mary Peters Trust in the form of a grant. The Mary Peters Trust did excellent work in supporting upcoming local athletes from a wide range of sports through the distribution of financial support that allowed the athletes to train and compete at the highest levels.

Last year was an amazing year for Mary Peter's Trust as they celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Lady Mary's gold medal success. In 2022 the Mary Peters Trust provided financial support to 19 local athletes from 11 different sports across the Ards and North Down Borough Council area, totalling £13,800 of investment.

Without this support, many of the athletes would struggle to do the training required or be able to afford to travel to events to compete and represent everything that was good about the Borough.

It was proposed to continue to support the work of the Trust through the award of this grant which could be paid from the existing allocation in the Sport Development Budget for 2022/23 (Business Case approved at Estimates Stage). In 2021/22, the Council also provided £3,000 to the Trust.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the award of £3,000 to the Mary Peters Trust from 2022/23 budget.

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

Councillor Boyle thanked the Head of Leisure Services and his team for the earlier subject of the Sports Awards. With regard to the report in question, investment gave great return with great work by the Trust. Councillor Thompson agreed with the sentiments of his Council colleague.

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

## **25. UPDATE ON FUTURE MODEL FOR SOCCER DEVELOPMENT**

(Appendix XVI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing which explained that the Elected Members of Council took a decision on the striking of the rates on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and to reach the 6.8% rate rise that had been agreed, over £5m savings had to be removed from the year's budgets to help manage this and next year's anticipated inflationary and other cost rise pressures. The cost of the direct delivery model of soccer development was a portion of these savings.

Members would have recalled two options that were presented for consideration in relation to the development function of soccer: Option 1 being that no budget was included for 2023/24 and Option 2 was £15,000 to be included in 2023/24 to provide additional funding support/opportunities for soccer. Option 1 was approved and taken forward. The attached savings proposal could be found in the appendix.

Soccer development formed part of Council's Sports Development Unit and as an integral development function of ambitious local clubs as it supported local clubs and other key stakeholders such as schools and community groups. The Soccer development function developed and delivered a wide range of excellent soccer related programmes to schools, clubs and groups in the Borough to introduce and maintain participation in football; and was responsible for the promotion and development of a performance pathway for soccer. The outcome of the budget setting process had not resulted in a removal of the soccer development function of our sports development unit. Rather, it was a change to the delivery model, whereby plans for a supportive role would be developed to enable soccer development to continue along the same lines of all other sports supported by Council.

Clubs were the backbone of sport in our community and Council's Sports Development function offered support and advice to ensure all clubs, new and established, could deliver a quality experience.

### **Sports Development Initiatives at the time of writing**

Below were some of the Council Sports Development initiatives that were in place at the time of writing to develop sport including soccer across the Borough.

#### **Sports Forum**

Ards and North Down Sports Forum existed to support the development, establishment, and sustainability of local sports clubs across the Borough.

It was a voluntary organisation of the Sports Development team, affiliated sports clubs and organisations and associations based or delivering sport within the Ards and North Down Borough.

The role of the forum was to:

- Act as a consultative body between Council and the sporting community
- Provide grants (detailed below) to support local sports organisations and athletes.
- Inform its members about relevant sporting news.
- Contribute to sports development in the area.

The aim of the Grant Programme as to promote and encourage life-long involvement in sport and to create, nurture and develop the sporting community within the Ards and North Down Borough. This would be achieved through funding from the Sports Forum to support talented athletes and the development of quality coaches and sustainable clubs within the Borough. Council had recently approved funding of £45,000 for 2023/24.

Sports Forum Grants were available annually to affiliated Sports Forum members. The various funding which as available included the following:

- Coaching Grants
- Equipment Grants
- Events Grants
- Goldcard Grants
- Seeding Grants
- Anniversary Grants
- Schools/Club Pathway (New Category to be launched 2023/24)
- Club Travel and Accommodation
- Individual Travel and Accommodation

### **Sports Development Capital Grant Programme**

The Sports Development Capital Grant Programme provided financial assistance to eligible Sports Clubs for the delivery of capital projects and the purchase of capital equipment to assist in the development of sport. The Council had set aside £45,000 for 2023/24 financial year and could award up to 50% of eligible capital costs with a maximum award of £5,000 in respect of any one project.

### **Schools Sports Series**

The Council Sports Development Team ran a Schools Sports Series annually. This was a one-day tournament for a variety of sports involving several schools across the Borough. The Sports involved in the 2022/23 Schools Sports were Hockey, TAG Rugby, Netball, Cross Country and Sports hall Athletics. It was proposed to include soccer in the 2023/24 Schools Sports Series Programme.

### **Sports Education Programme**

CW 15.03.2023

209

Council's Sports Development team delivered a Sports Education Programme for Sports Clubs, Coaches and Volunteers. In 2022/23 the following courses were delivered:

- Safeguarding Children and Young People
- Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work
- Positive Engagement with Parents
- Designated Officer – Safeguarding Children and Young People

The team had recently released a Survey to the Sports Forum Members to get an understanding of the sporting educational needs across the Borough to determine what courses are required to be delivered in 2023/24 as part of the Sports Education Programme.

A reduced rate for the participation on any of the courses was given to Clubs who were affiliated to the Sports Forum.

### **Proposed changes to Council's direct delivery of Soccer from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 onwards**

In addition to all of the above initiatives, Council had provided direct delivery of Soccer for many years which had been extremely successful and enjoyed by many. As a result of the recent budget decision, it was proposed that an alternative delivery model was to be used to ensure the development of soccer continued across the Borough, which was consistent with other sports supported by Council.

Therefore, the following changes were proposed to be implemented from April 2023 onwards:

#### **Soccer After Schools Programme**

Over the years, Council's Soccer Development function had, and did at the time of writing, deliver after schools coaching within schools across the Borough. At present and in this school term, four schools were participating in the Programme.

Going forward, rather than Council directly delivering this Programme, an alternative model was being proposed.

The Sports Forum and the Sports Development Team, at the time of writing, were finalising a new funding category for 2023/24 within the Sports Forum Grants Programme titled Schools/Sports Club Pathway. The aim of this initiative was to increase pathways between schools and clubs and hence, increase opportunities for young people to participate in sport (£5,000 budget assigned to funding category).

Ards and North Down Sports Forum affiliated sports clubs and organisations, which had a sporting remit / section could apply for financial assistance towards the cost of their coaches delivering a Schools/Sports Club Pathway programme to schools within the Ards and North Down borough. Clubs in partnership with the schools could apply for funding towards equipment, venue hire costs and transport, to deliver these programmes.

### **Girls Soccer Coaching Programme**

An Ards girls' soccer coaching programme was previously delivered across four weeks with eight schools involved. The same programme was delivered in the Peninsula area across eight schools.

The Sports Development team would actively work with the schools previously involved in this Programme and the neighbouring Clubs to build capacity and create the links between the Clubs and schools via the Schools/ Sports Club Pathway funding opportunity.

### **One Day Primary School Soccer Tournament**

A Soccer tournament could form part of the Schools Sports Series going forward.

### **Soccer Seasonal Camps**

Council directly delivered a number of Soccer camps during the holiday period.

The Sports Development team in partnership with the IFA would actively work with clubs across the Borough to build capacity and assist the clubs in delivering their own seasonal camps. This alternative model not only built capacity within the Club but also automatically created that club link for participants attending the scheme and also provides a source of revenue for the Club that could be reinvested into developing and sustaining the Club.

Affiliated Sports Clubs could avail of funding through the Sports Forum Grants Programme (Events grant).

### **Soccer Disability Programme**

A weekly adult disability programme had historically been delivered.

A weekly kids disability programme was delivered across 30 weeks of the year with 6 children participating at the time of writing. The Programme was getting an element of sponsorship and it was hoped that this sponsorship would continue to cover some

of the costs to deliver this programme in 2023/24. However, additional funding would be required if Council was to continue to directly deliver this element of Soccer development.

The IFA worked with two Clubs across the Borough at the time of writing (one in Ards and one in Bangor) who were developing their disability section. The Sports Development Team planned to engage with the IFA and Disability Sport NI to explore opportunities available that would allow them to continue to develop disability soccer across the Borough.

### **Soccer Development Centres**

Two 12-week programmes and one 6-week programme were generally delivered throughout the year.

The Sports Development Team planned to liaise with the IFA to explore opportunities on how best to deliver this programme going forward.

The Soccer Development Centre (12-week Programme) was due to commence on 17<sup>th</sup> March and was previously advertised prior to the Council decision being taken. This Programme was fully sold out and 64 young people registered therefore it was proposed that this Programme was delivered on this occasion; the cost could be consumed within the Sports Development budget.

### **Borough Cup**

12–16 adult teams had previously taken part in the Borough Cup over a 2-3 week period.

The Sports Development Team proposed to engage with representatives from a number of Clubs to try to ensure this well-known and respected competition continued in the Borough.

However, during this transition period of Council working with the Clubs for the Clubs to directly deliver this Competition instead, an element of funding should be considered; to ensure a smooth transition period.

### **Community Cup**

16 local clubs had previously taken part in the Community Cup over May and June which was directly delivered by Council.



The Sports Development Team proposed to engage with representatives from a number of Clubs to try to ensure this well-known and respected competition continued in the Borough.

However, during this transition period of Council working with the Clubs for the Clubs to directly deliver this Competition instead, an element of funding should be considered; to ensure a smooth transition period.

### **Primary School Boys League**

Up to 18 schools participating over circa 18 weeks in a league format.

The Sports Development team was to work closely with the Newtownards & District Primary Schools' Football Association to see how this League could continue.

However, during this transition period of Council working with the Newtownards & District Primary Schools' Football Association to directly deliver this Competition instead, an element of funding should be considered; to ensure a smooth transition period.

### **Primary School Boys 9-side Tournament**

Up to 12 schools participating over 3 weeks.

The Sports Development team was to work closely with the Newtownards & District Primary Schools' Football Association to see how this League could continue.

However, during this transition period of Council working with the Newtownards & District Primary Schools' Football Association to directly deliver this Competition instead, an element of funding should be considered; to ensure a smooth transition period.

### **Peninsula Primary School Boys League**

Up to 8 schools participating over 4 weeks.

The Sports Development team was to work closely with the Peninsula schools to see how this League could continue.

However, during this transition period of Council working with the Peninsula schools to directly deliver this Competition instead, an element of funding should be considered; to ensure a smooth transition period.

### **Further development of partnership with Irish Football Association (IFA)**

Members had recently met with IFA to have an initial discussion regarding Soccer development across the Borough; a further engagement session between Council and IFA was planned for April.

IFA Officials advised that the Association was also undertaking a structure change and, at the time of writing, were not taking on any more programmes with the potential of reducing some direct programme delivery (i.e. Number of Seasonal Schemes being delivered). The IFA had a similar vision to Council of building the capacity of clubs to directly deliver which in turn would make clubs more sustainable and allow for future proofing. The structural changes to the IFA would be known in the coming months.

Ards and North Down, at the time of writing, had a dedicated full time IFA Grassroots Development Officer, fully funded by the IFA whose role was to further develop the grassroots game across the Borough. Below are some of the initiatives that were being delivered across the Borough by IFA.

#### Small Sided Games Programme

The IFA in partnership with McDonalds delivered a very successful Small-Sides Games Development Centres Programme across the Borough, with circa 1,600 young people and circa 400 coaches taking part every Saturday morning at Bangor Aurora, Londonderry Park and Bangor Sportsplex.

The main objective of the Programme was to develop new football skills and to promote the benefits of a healthy lifestyle among boys and girls from 6-12 years old. The small-side game model was an effective method for developing ball skills and game awareness because it increased opportunities for players to have contact with the ball and to both attack and defend without the tactical regimentation that could occur in 11 v 11 football.

#### Soccer Coach Education Programme

The IFA Grassroots Development Officer delivered a Soccer Coach Education Programme within the Borough to provide Clubs with local opportunities to gain required coaching qualifications. These coaching courses were either held at Londonderry Park or Bangor Aurora. The IFA was committed to providing a high-quality coach education programme to up-skill coaches working at all levels of the game from youth to senior. Some of these courses were free of charge.

#### North Down and Ards Youth Football and Futsal League

Football had always been an integral part of the community within the Ards & North Down area. With the growth of the hugely successful North Down and Ards Small Sided Games programme over many years, a number of lead coaches representing many of our local football clubs had discussed the need for a local youth league to be reinstated. It had been over 25 years from Ards & North Down had its own Youth League. So, when the world paused due to the pandemic of Covid-19 in 2020 this had allowed time for thought and reflection and the decision was made to form a new league in the area. When competitive sport was able to play again the time was right to start a new and exciting opportunity for; local players, coaches, clubs, and family members to complement the existing and excellent leagues all our clubs were already involved in around Northern Ireland.

North Down and Ards Youth Football and Futsal League was not a replacement for any league as this was not a traditional league, being the first of its kind within Northern Ireland as it was a Football and Futsal League. The ethos was to allow each; player, coach & referee involved to be challenged with both disciplines without the need to choose (Hybrid League). The outdoor league would kick off first and then pause to allow the Futsal indoor league to compete over the winter period. The outdoor matches would then recommence to complete the second half of the league. Each of the 11-aside outdoor teams would be divided into two teams for the 5-aside Futsal games, therefore possible fringe players could become central players with the aim of creating challenging Fun competitive development environments for all involved. This League was held in Ards Blair Mayne and Bangor Aurora.

The future was bright as we would see a competitive youth league ran and held with the Ards & North Down area.

#### Let them Play (Schools Programme)

The Ards and North Down area had an assigned Let Them Play Officer who was responsible for delivering a variety of Irish FA Foundation programmes within the education and community sector to meet the targets of the School, Youth, Futsal and Corporate strategies. The Let Them Play Officer was responsible for the development of physical literacy and sport-specific skills to Primary School pupils, the development of football within Primary Schools, and the education and mentoring support of grassroots coaches.

The IFA delivered many other initiatives: Club development, People and Clubs Accreditation Scheme, Inclusive Clubs Programme, Referee Development Programme etc.

#### **Summary**

Hopefully the above provided readers with a summary of the excellent sports development that continued to be delivered across the Borough for the development of sport.

However, it should have been noted that there had been some tremendous direct delivery of soccer over the years and we were therefore entering a period of change and transition for the Sports Development team, Clubs and Schools involved. This transition period therefore needed to be carefully managed to ensure the excellent initiatives that had been in place over the years were not lost which would have had a negative impact on clubs, schools and the young people involved in the programmes over the years.

This period of transition of building the capacity of Clubs and Schools to directly deliver soccer initiatives to further develop the sport would require the IFA, Council's Sports Development team, Clubs and Schools to work in partnership. This partnership would allow Clubs and Schools to be upskilled, building of capacity, sustainable programmes to be developed and creating sustainable Clubs.

In order to manage this transition period as smoothly as possible with minimal impact, Officers requested that Members reconsidered Option 2 of the proposal which would provide funding directly towards some of the Soccer Development programmes that were running at the time of writing in 2023/24 (not for direct delivery but facilitation and to commence the transition). This would provide the Sports Development team the opportunity to engage with the Newtownards & District Primary School's Football Association, Peninsula League Schools, Borough Cup Clubs, Community Cup Clubs, IFA etc to assist with the facilitation of these programmes in 2023/24 with the aim that these programmes could become self-sustaining in due course. A similar and successful approach was taken previously with the Ards half marathon and delivery models for hockey and gymnastics by the legacy Council.

Following recent developments affecting the agreed leisure budget it was believed that there was the potential to secure £15,000 to support a programme of delivery as detailed above, without putting any further pressure on the wider Council budget or affecting the Councils committed rate setting process. This would require £15,000 to be transferred from the leisure operational budget to sport development to ensure a smoother transition for the extensive soccer programme during 2023/24 by supporting Clubs, Schools and other bodies delivered essential programmes.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council considers this report and:

- Notes the work currently being delivered by the Council Sports Development team across all sports;

- Notes that Officers will communicate to all clubs the benefits of becoming an affiliated member of the Sports Forum and the opportunities available;
- Approves that the Soccer Development Centre (12-week Programme) due to commence on 17<sup>th</sup> March should continue (cost can be consumed within Sports Development budget);
- Approves implementation of Option 2 of proposal (additional funding to Sport Development Budget specifically) to assist as the Council enter to a period of transition with Clubs and Schools;
- Further develop the partnership between Council and the IFA to continue to develop football in Ards and North Down for all to enjoy. Next engagement session to take place in April 2023 and;
- Notes that Officers will engage with the affected Clubs and Schools in partnership with the IFA to commence the transition period of change of soccer delivery model.

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

Councillor Edmund spoke of the work that had been carried out and that partnerships were a two-way street.

Councillor Boyle spoke of the time when news broke that the report would be coming through to try and give residents comfort as to what was being planned. He thought there was good work in the report with some aspects being kept alive and other ways of operating to ensure so. It did take a while to build partnerships, and he thought a good link existed between clubs and schools that should be built upon.

#### **A RECESS WAS CALLED AT 21:00, RESUMING AT 21:11.**

Councillor MacArthur in relation to the future model and with regard to the rate setting process, noted a new programme called Soccer Pathway which allowed clubs, in conjunction with schools to apply for £500. As the pot was only £5k, it was concerning given how many could only apply and that clubs could only do so once, on the proviso that they had not applied before. With capacity in clubs to deliver something, she thought capacity building should have occurred first before the stage officers were at. With IFA works due to commence in April, she thought there was risk expecting them to step up. Whilst seconding, she was not completely happy with the report but believed that it was the best that could be done at this particular moment in time. She wanted to know if regular reports could occur and what plans existed for updating given the risks.

The Head of Leisure Services explained the Business Case that had been presented to Members during the estimates process. With regard to the capacity of clubs, 15 years of capacity building investment had been carried out with pathways for

coaches being available with hundreds of coaching qualifications having been gained. He was happy to provide a further report in June subject to Members agreeing the recommendations in the report. It was important to ensure the good work of the clubs continued and their successes were continued to be celebrated as it was at the award ceremony last Friday evening.

Councillor MacArthur asked the Head Leisure Services what the plan was for engagement with schools and who would take the lead in the applications, the school or the club. With regard to capacity in schools, she wanted to know how much they knew about it.

The Head of Leisure Services explained that the changes were in relation to the next school year, post-summer 2023 and so there was time to promote and roll out the scheme.

(The Head of Leisure Services disconnected at 21:18 due to a power cut but reconnected at 21:19.)

The Head of Leisure Services continued, stating that in terms of school capacity, there was a low level of direct contribution by the Council previously. The team would work with teachers to help them take on the role but there was no commitment that the Council would deliver everything that had been provided previously. If that was a requirement, the full amount of budget cut through the rates process would be required to be reinstated.

Councillor MacArthur stated that seminars for schools to reach the maximum people was important and that clubs/schools could only apply once if they had applied for something before. Thence, if it was a new pathway, how could they be excluded.

The Head of Leisure Services did not believe anyone was excluded. Money spread across the borough could be shared amongst ten clubs hence the reason for not applying more than once. Schools and clubs could operate together for efficiency.

Councillor S Irvine asked what would happen if clubs did not apply to which the Head of Leisure Services responded that it could not be delivered if they did not apply. Councillor S Irvine asked if Council would fill the gap. The Head of Leisure Services explained that they would not have capacity to deliver soccer camps and that if the IFA or clubs would not, he believed soccer entrepreneurs would continue to deliver a service as they were in operation already.



CW 15.03.2023

218

To this, Councillor S Irvine followed in stating that the cost to the ratepayer with Council operating was cheaper at £48 whilst private companies were around £65 minimum. He asked if funding could be found for a summer scheme and was informed that soccer clubs would do so in what was hoped to be a not-for-profit basis to provide access to football. If clubs did not provide a more affordable method for local communities, private businesses would step in. He hoped clubs would step in and that it was they who could apply for grants as opposed to businesses. If Members agreed, grants were hoped to be given for the summer. Councillor S Irvine was concerned that the outcome was based on hope more than anything else.

Alderman Irvine agreed the transition would be hard and that access for as many children as possible was important as many would be priced out if a private operator was involved. This was a reason why direct delivery by the Council would be sorely missed. The onus was on the Council, clubs, schools and the IFA to be in constant contact to build relationships and build capacity within clubs so they would be aware of the criteria for the pathway funding.

Councillor Edmund suggested that all present would hope that coaches who had gone through the Council schemes for badges would come back, in effect giving back to the community.

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

## **26. NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

### **26.1. 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.

Proposed by Alderman Irvine, seconded by Councillor T Smith, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Alderman Irvine spoke of how the Council had leased Bloomfield playing fields from the Education Authority and that with upgrades required for the facility, he believed it was time to have discussions about its future. Bangor Young Men's Football Club used the facilities for home games and never had access to intermediate facilities.

The Club had existed from 1941 with many users such as a senior club with three teams, two in INFL and two in the Down area with a senior club of 100 members and

CW 15.03.2023

219

an older men's section as well as past players and associates. The club enjoyed success with the Cochrane cup in '22 and now played in division 2A. With regard to Junior football, if they reached Division 1, they could do so without intermediate facilities. Bloomfield playing fields could have moderate development. He hoped a report could be brought back on a discussion with the Education Authority and one for intermediate facilities at Bloomfield.

Councillor T Smith thought that as Council leased fields, it would be interesting to see what plans the Education Authority had. However, he reminded Members that these issues took time to reach their conclusion with agreement and planning, exemplifying the earlier item surrounding Ashbury play park.

Councillor Boyle was happy to support the Notice of Motion for a report to be returned. He asked if Alderman Irvine could confirm if the Club, having existed since 1942 were ever an intermediate club. In addition, he wished the best of luck with discussions that would take place with the Education Authority.

Councillor MacArthur noted she had worked with the Club through some issues they had suffered in the past. She was happy to see the Notice of Motion and referred to a three-year lease that expired 2022. They had met with the Education Authority already which had seemed positive and were looking for a longer lease such as ten years which would allow time for accessing funding. They had a strong junior team who would be in a good position to move up to intermediate but would require those things in place to do so. She thanked Stephen Dunne MLA and the Head of Leisure Services for meeting with her and thought Football was an accessible sport to many and good for keeping children out of trouble.

Alderman Irvine thanked Members for comments. He was unaware if the Club had ever reached intermediate level in the past but believed the Club had witnessed investment in other areas and looked toward the same.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Irvine, seconded by Councillor T Smith, that the Council tasks Officers with initiating talks with the Education Authority with a view to bringing a report back to Members following them.**

## **27. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

The Head of Community & Culture explained that Council had received correspondence from the Northern Ireland Office on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023 making all Northern Ireland CEOs aware of a grant funding offer that was available from the UK Government in regard to the Coronation on the 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Additional funding was also available if Councils wanted to screen the Eurovision song content the

following weekend. In relation to the Notice of Motion, it was reported that Officers had investigated screening the Coronation and that costs were rather prohibitive in the range of £27k for hiring a screen as well as marketing and infrastructure costs.

The budget was £45k for all Councils of which at least 3 Councils had included the screening and the more that bid for funding, the less would be available for each Council. The screens would need to be hired for three days which would increase the cost to £40k and considerably more if they were retained for the EU Song Contest. The availability of screens and technicians at the time of writing may have been problematic. The Head of Community and Culture noted that as Members did not agree to include screens for the Coronation programme and there was no available budget, Officers would not be bidding to the Northern Ireland Office for the funding.

Councillor T Smith thought the money made available by the Government was very poor, and that if the Council had the money, it would have been a boon to be able to have the screenings but as Council had gone through the estimates process and struggled to find for budgets for other activities such as football earlier in the meeting, it would not have been a sound choice.

### **35. PORTAVOGIE 3G PITCH UPDATE**

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

Item 35 had been brought out of committee, as proposed by Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor Thompson. The report content itself, save the recommendation fell under publication Schedule 6, as outlined below.

Therefore, only information pertaining to the discussion at the Community & Wellbeing Committee was present in this section.

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

Proposed by Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the recommendation amended to:

*“That Council adopt the recommendations in the report and decides proceed with the development of the Portavogie 3G Pitch.”*

Councillor Adair explained that the project had initially been proposed in 2013 and that little movement had occurred in the last decade with many setbacks which had been well documented. He explained that need had changed from 2013 when 250 children were associated with Portavogie Rangers Football Club which, at the time of writing had 400+ service users. He explained that children came from across the borough as well as senior adult teams and that the facilities on New Harbour Road were not fit for use having a worn surface. He believed there was a great need for children and young people to have the right facilities, acknowledged that the project would come at a cost and thought there was no time like the present moment to act. He quoted a friend who stated that, "the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago and the next best time was now." He asked for Councillors to put personal issues and politics aside to support his amendment.

(Rachel Woods left at 21:44.)

Councillor Adair advised Members that if investment had not occurred, children would have to travel further afield as well as other users.

Councillor Thompson agreed with his colleague and believed that a decision should be made one way or the other on the subject at this meeting. He recalled when the subject was first raised and that the Council had many problems throughout the years, most recently with NI Water which seemed to have been partially looked at via a meeting with the Department, officers and elected members on the site. He believed if it was delayed any longer, building costs would only increase and reiterated that it was a decision that could benefit all within the borough.

Councillor Adair asked for a recorded vote to take place.

Councillor T Smith supported bringing the item out of committee given what he believed was large interest by the general public. He had spoken to Councillor Adair on costs and agreed a lot of time had been spent on the subject. He could support the discussion being deferred and looking at it as a single item at a meeting to find out if further savings could be made, but at the time of writing would be unable to support the amended proposal.

Councillor Boyle suggested amending the proposal to the following:

*"That this item is deferred to a meeting to be arranged as soon as possible after tonight so that those from the Community & Wellbeing Committee can have a further explained in detail of all costings and expectations of the report in its entirety."*

This was seconded by Councillor McRandal.

Councillor Boyle said that he always supported the facility going to Portavogie. He was not at the most recent meeting as he did not know it had occurred and explained that he was embargoed slightly given what could be discussed on the item out of committee. He felt concerned that the item could not be decided on so quickly as this evening and though he understood Portavogie's needs and struggle over the 3G pitch, he believed a further discussion was required and advised that he could potentially support it but had questions and thought a more in-depth conversation was required after which he would not have to abstain.

Councillor McRandal appreciated the frustration of peninsula councillors given the length of time the subject had been in existence. He agreed Members needed to further discuss the issue. He also pointed out that Councillor Adair's amendment could not exist with the second part of the officer's initial recommendation.

Councillor Adair could not support the amendment made by Councillor Boyle as the item had been on the agenda for ten years. With papers having been available to Members for a week prior to this evening's meeting, Councillor Adair believed they would have sufficient knowledge of the report to discuss it. He suggested Councillor Boyle take issue with NI Water regarding not having been made aware/invited to the last meeting. Councillor Adair believed they had to move on at the time of writing as costs would only continue to increase. He referenced other reports and projects which had progressed and reminded Members that he wanted to ensure promises made by the DUP would be honoured. He again asked for a recorded vote.

On being put to the meeting, with 4 voting FOR, 8 voting AGAINST, 1 ABSTAINING and 3 ABSENT, Councillor Boyle's amendment FELL.

The voting was as follows:

<b>FOR (4)</b>	<b>AGAINST (8)</b>	<b>ABSTAINED (1)</b>	<b>ABSENT (3)</b>
<b>Aldermen:</b>	<b>Aldermen:</b>	<b>Aldermen:</b>	<b>Aldermen:</b>
	Irvine	Carson	Wilson
<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Councillors:</b>	<b>Councillors</b>	<b>Councillors</b>
Boyle	Chambers		Douglas
McRandal	S Irvine		Woods
Moore	Adair		
T Smith	MacArthur		
	Smart		
	Thompson		
	Edmund		

Councillor Adair advised that, contrary to Councillor McRandal's comment, his amendment worked as he had changed the wording of, 'consider,' to, 'adopt,' and noted that users were willing to pay the price increase. Councillor McRandal asked if the proposal could be read out in full as his understanding had been that the original statement was different from what he recalled.

*That Council adopt the recommendations in the report and decides proceed with the development of the Portavogie 3G Pitch."*

Councillor Edmund as Chair confirmed with Councillor Adair that the second part of the recommendation in relation to anticipated costs had been met at which time, Councillor McRandal stated that he would be in favour of the amendment.

Councillor Smart believed the costs were substantial, given pressures of Council across departments, however the project had been ongoing for some time. He had heard at the recent meeting of the club's community efforts and believed there was a real opportunity for the club to deliver if the pitch was finished. He thought the situation would only become more difficult in the future and thought it was right to proceed, hoping for progress to be made in the near future.

Councillor Adair welcomed comments from Members and again stated the wish to make sure commitments to those in Portavogie was honoured. He said that the club had confirmed they were willing to pay the anticipated costs. He reminded Members that users could not pay any different than other venues across the borough. He hoped a one to two year timescale would be fair, dependent on NI Water's input.

On being put to the meeting, with 12 voting FOR, 0 voting AGAINST, 1 ABSTAINING and 3 ABSENT, Councillor Adair's amendment CARRIED.

The voting was as follows:

**FOR (12)**

**Aldermen:**

Carson

Irvine

**Councillors**

Adair

Boyle

Chambers

Edmund

S Irvine

**AGAINST (0)**

**Aldermen:**

**Councillors:**

**ABSTAINED (1)**

**Aldermen:**

**Councillors**

T Smith

**ABSENT (3)**

**Aldermen:**

Wilson

**Councillors**

Douglas

Woods



MacArthur  
McRandal  
Moore  
Smart  
Thompson

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND**, on the proposal of Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that Council adopt the recommendations in the report and decides proceed with the development of the Portavogie 3G Pitch.

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

**AGREED**, on the proposal of Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the public/press be excluded from the meeting at 22:08.

**28. PCSP MINUTES 5<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2022**  
(Appendix XVII)

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

**SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

**29. PCSP MINUTES 16<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2023**  
Appendix XVIII)

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

**SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

**30. PCSP MINUTES 6<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023**  
(Appendix IXX)

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

**SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

**31. TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF PRE AND POST BONFIRE FLY-TIPPING CONTROL AND CLEANUP SERVICES**

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

**SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

**32. NORTHERN COMMUNITY LEISURE TRUST Q3 2022-23**  
(Appendix XX)

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

**SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

(Councillor Chambers and Alderman Irvine left the meeting at 22:12 due to Declarations of Interest.)

(Alderman Irvine and Councillor Chambers returned to the meeting following the end of the discussion at 22:18)

**33. TENDER FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF AN INTEGRATED DESIGN TEAM FOR THE ARDS PENINSULA MULTI-USE 3G PITCH PROJECT AND LANDS UPDATE**

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

**SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

**34. DONAGHADEE SPORTS FACILITIES OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE**  
(Appendix XXI-XXII)

CW 15.03.2023

226

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

**SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

**35. PORTAVOGIE 3G PITCH UPDATE**  
(Appendix XXIII-XXIV)

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

**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 T Smith, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the public/press be re-admitted to the meeting at 22:36.**

**TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 22:37.

## ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Audit Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards and via Zoom, on Monday 20 March 2023 at 7.00pm.

### PRESENT

**In the Chair:** Councillor Gilmour

**Via Zoom:**  
**Alderman** Armstrong-Cotter

**Councillors** Greer McAlpine  
Irwin Thompson

**Independent Member** Mr P Cummings

**In Attendance:** ASM (via Zoom) - C Hagan  
Deloitte (via Zoom) - C McDermott  
Deloitte (via Zoom) – D Kinsella

**Officers:** Chief Executive (S Reid), Director of Corporate Services (M Steele), Head of Finance (S Grieve) and Democratic Services Officer (H Loebnau)

### 1. APOLOGIES

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

Apologies were received from Councillor McClean and Councillor McRandal.

**NOTED.**

### 2. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting including the internal and external auditors to the Committee from the Northern Ireland Audit Office, ASM and Deloitte. She also welcomed the independent Member Mr Paul Cummings who was present in the Chamber.

**NOTED.**

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

The Chairman asked for any Declarations of Interest and none were noted.

**NOTED.**

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

#### **(a) Committee Minutes from December 2022 (Appendix I)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

Proposed by Councillor McAlpine, seconded by Councillor Greer, that the minutes be noted.

Mr P Cummings, referring to a line in the minutes, made it clear to the Chief Executive who had not been at the last meeting that he was not disappointed in him but rather disappointed that the Committee were not able to explore the follow up audits and that hopefully there would be an opportunity to do that later in this meeting.

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

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

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

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

### **5. EXTERNAL AUDIT**

#### **(a) Draft Audit Strategy (Appendix II)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Northern Ireland Audit Office.

The Chair invited the external auditor to speak to the report and Ms Hagen (ASM) outlined the above report to Members, highlighting the findings and recommendations within in it.

Members had no questions it was proposed by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor Irwin, that the Draft Audit Strategy be noted.

At this point Ms Hagen drew Members attention to page three of the Draft Audit Strategy, Actions for the Audit Committee, asking them to indicate whether they had knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud affecting the Council or knew of instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that could be expected to have a fundamental effect on the operations of the Council. None of the Members made a declaration.

**AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor Irvine, that the information be noted.**

## **6. INTERNAL AUDIT**

### **(a) Internal Audit Progress Report 2022/23 (Appendix III)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Deloitte summarising the internal audit progress.

The Chair invited the internal auditors Ms McDermott and Mr Kinsella (Deloitte) to speak to the report and highlight the findings and recommendations within in it and to outline the reports below.

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Thompson, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the Internal Audit Progress Report 2022/23 be noted.**

#### **(i) Environmental Health Service Review (Appendix IV)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above report.

**AGREED, that the report be noted.**

#### **(ii) Strategic Environmental Planning Review (Appendix V)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above report.

**AGREED, that the report be noted.**

#### **(iii) Waste Management Review (Appendix VI)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above report.

**AGREED, that the report be noted.**

#### **(iv) Labour Market Partnership (Appendix VII)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above report.

**AGREED, that the report be noted.**



**(v) Procurement Review**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above report.

Councillor McAlpine asked if the auditors had been concerned about any of the procurement practices that the Council had carried out. In response Ms McDermott indicated that where a procurement process involved a payment over £30,000 from a provider in the framework auditors would like to see an analysis on why the supplier was chosen. It was accepted that in some instances there were limited suppliers available in specialist areas, but no concern was being raised by the Procurement Review and the Council had not shown tendencies towards preferred suppliers.

**AGREED, that the report be noted.**

**(vi) Follow-Up Review**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above report.

Deloitte had undertaken the review and highlighted that 78 issues remained open and of those 66 were overdue and that was viewed as significant. The Council should consider finishing those in a timelier manner.

Councillor McAlpine asked the reason for that and in response the Chief Executive stated that while some progress had been made the number remained unacceptably high and that it was important that further progress was made. There were a number of issues such as the challenge of staff resources and additional funding had been put in place to address the matter. The biggest issue was the need to take responsibility for that across the Council and it was not a matter for the finance section alone to address. The Council's Corporate Leadership Team would be working with the Heads of Service to continue to give full attention to the matter and provide the resources to do that.

The Director of Corporate Services echoed those comments and hoped that a fresh perspective would re-energise management's attention to addressing recommendations. He was aware that action was being undertaken to improve the situation and that was not reflected in the current figures. Going forward the matter would be placed high on the agenda of Council Directors and Heads of Service.

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Irwin, seconded by Councillor McAlpine, that the report be noted.**

**(b) Annual Assurance Statement**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above report.

Mr Kinsella, Deloitte, gave a summary of the Annual Assurance Statement and referred to the Council's satisfactory level of assurance.

Independent Member, Mr Cummings, commented on the warning within the letter indicating twelve months to get the 'house in order' and he hoped that the figures referred to would come down significantly.

RECOMMENDED, that the report be noted.

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

**(c) Contract Update**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services detailing that as Members were aware the current internal audit contract was due to expire at the end of this month. An invitation to tender was issued in December 2022. A number of submissions were received, and an award report was approved at the Corporate Services Committee in February. Following due process an award notice was recently issued to Deloitte in line with the Council decision and the agreement of acceptable terms.

As a result of that recent award, planning for the next four-year strategic plan and the first annual plan had only recently commenced and was scheduled to be reported to the June meeting of this Committee for approval.

However, in order to allow for steady progress to be made during the full financial year it was requested that the Council approve the commencement of a number of audit reviews in advance of approval for the whole year as follows:

Audit Area	Reason for early start
Service review 1 – Finance	Two reviews carried out each year focussing on governance. This approach will continue as only half of the Council's services has been reviewed to date.
Service review 2 – to be determined	
Policing and Community Safety Partnership	Undertaken each year as required by funders.
Labour Market Partnership	

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the appointment of Deloitte and approves commencement of work in the areas noted in the report.

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

**7. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

**(a) Corporate Risk Register**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services detailing that as Members would be aware, the Corporate Risk Register (CRR) was

a live document which was amended as required to reflect new or changing risk factors. The following detailed deletions and key amendments.

### **Risks removed from the Register**

Three risks had been removed.

CR11, Impact of Brexit on Council. That risk had been removed as the level of risk was no longer viewed as having the potential for a high impact on the Council. Any significant residual risk would be reflected in service plans and risk registers.

CR14, Covid-19 Response and Recovery, had been removed entirely as had references to Covid (where they involved arrangements) had also been removed. Covid-19 was still a cause for concern and remained monitored by the Risk Management Service Unit. At the current level of risk, with Covid measures still in place where appropriate, any residual risk would be managed at Service level in line with existing Health and Safety policies and procedures.

CR16, the integration of former North Down leisure facilities had been recorded as a potential risk (noted in the previous report to Committee as being under consideration as a significant risk). It had now been removed following the Council Decision to extend the existing management contract with NCLT.

### **Changes to remaining Risks**

Minor updates to reflect progress or changes to Current Controls had been made across the CRR however this report did not seek to report on each change.

CR1 The Community Plan implementation risk had been significantly updated to reflect progress and further actions.

CR2 Service delivery, staff morale and well-being risk. Priority recommendations from the December 2023 IIP Audit had been Implemented and the New Ways of Working Group was reviewing and looking at ways to further embed the Behaviour Charter.

CR4 Business Continuity and Emergency Planning risks, identified Martyn's Law as potentially having significant impacts on the Council and those using its premises or land. That was currently a draft bill, to be published in spring, which was aimed at forcing venues to draw up plans to prevent terrorist attacks and ensure public safety. Whilst it would have a layered approach to the extent of considerations and arrangements according to the numbers attending it was not known at this time whether the provisions would extend to facilities such as leisure centres for their normal operation or whether the focus would remain on events. The potential significant business continuity risk of industrial action impacting on Waste and Cleansing had been removed following the outcome of payment negotiations. Cloud based systems and the implementation of the Core 2 system had built on the resilience required whilst also facilitating hybrid working arrangements. Whilst that risk control was reflected in CR4 it was also considered to have a positive impact on service delivery (CR2).

CR10 Local Development Plan, identified the need to seek Counsel opinion in relation to the requirement for Sustainability Appraisals under the draft Local Development Plan.

CR15 Impact of Inflation, was a new risk recognising the potential high impact of excessive inflation on Council operations. Financial measures had been implemented and planned which complemented the current financial arrangements and controls in CR3. In addition, a Vacancy Control Policy was in place.

#### **Future Actions**

Risk Strategy training, incorporating the Corporate Risk Register and Assurance Statements was ongoing with two more sessions in March facilitated by Deloitte. If required additional sessions would be facilitated by the Risk Manager in the first quarter of the new financial year. Following training the planned update to the CRR, to bring it in line with the revised Risk Strategy and facilitate improved reporting on risks and progress, would be progressed.

RECOMMENDED that the Council note the report.

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

#### **(b) Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services detailing that in line with good practice, the Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy had been reviewed by Finance management. There had been limited changes to the previous version of the policy, largely around:

- aligning the principles of public life to those stated in the Nolan review
- updating terminology; and
- the introduction of a fraud notification form.

Both the Heads of Service Team and Corporate Leadership Teams had been consulted on the proposed changes.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the version 3 of the Anti-fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy.

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

### **8. MEETING SCHEDULE AND WORK PLAN 2023/24**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services detailing that in order to assist the Committee with its oversight responsibilities a suggested meeting schedule and work plan had been prepared.

Meeting Date	Agenda Items
26 June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Financial Statements Review</li> <li>• Governance Statement Review</li> <li>• Statements of Assurance Update</li> <li>• Review of Terms of Reference</li> <li>• Internal Audit Strategic and Annual Plan</li> <li>• Performance Improvement Progress</li> </ul>
18 September 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audited Financial Statements Approval</li> <li>• Draft Report to those charged with Governance</li> <li>• Internal Audit Recommendations follow-up</li> <li>• Corporate Risk Register Review</li> <li>• Policy Status Review</li> </ul>
14 December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Report to Those charged with Governance</li> <li>• Final Audit Letter</li> <li>• Improvement Audit and Assessment Reports</li> <li>• Interim Statements of Assurance Update</li> <li>• Performance Improvement Progress</li> </ul>
18 March 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Internal Audit Report</li> <li>• Draft Internal Audit Plan for 2023/24</li> <li>• Review of Corporate Risk Register</li> <li>• Internal Audit Recommendations follow-up</li> <li>• Internal Audit Plan 2024/25</li> <li>• Meeting Schedule and work plan 2024/25</li> </ul>

In addition, there were standing items on the agenda:

- Declarations of Interest
- Follow-up actions from previous committee meetings
- Outstanding Audit Recommendations Follow-up
- Performance Improvement Progress
- Internal Audit Update
- Single Tender Action Update
- Fraud, whistleblowing and data breaches update

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the work plan for the 2023/24 financial year.

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

## **9. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

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

NOTED.

## **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

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

## **10. QUARTERLY SINGLE TENDER ACTIONS REPORT Q4**

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

## **11. FRAUD, WHISTLEBLOWING AND DATA-PROTECTION MATTERS**

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

## **12. MEETING WITH NI AUDIT OFFICE AND INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE IN THE ABSENCE OF MANAGEMENT**

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

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 AND PRESS**



AC.20.03.2023

236

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND**, on the proposal of Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor Irwin, that the public/press be readmitted to the meeting.

### **TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 8.03 pm.