

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

19 October 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, 25 October 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 October 2023
6. Minutes of Council meeting dated 27 September 2023 (Copy attached)
7. Minutes of Committees
 - 7.1. Minutes of Planning Committee dated 3 October 2023 (Copy attached)
 - 7.2. Minutes of Environment Committee dated 4 October 2023 (Copy attached)
 - 7.3. Minutes of Place and Prosperity Committee dated 5 October 2023 (Copy attached)
 - 7.4. Minutes of Corporate Services Committee dated 10 October 2023 (Copy attached)
 - 7.5. Minutes of Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 11 October 2023 (Copy attached)

8. Courses and Conferences
 - 8.1 Northern Ireland Economic Conference 2023 (Report attached)
9. Draft Response to Public Consultation on the Eastern Transport Plan 2035 (Report attached)
10. Nomination to Trustees on Northern Community Leisure Trust (Report attached)
11. Handling Correspondence Related to Roads Maintenance Defects (Report attached)
12. Sealing Documents
13. Transfer of Rights of Burial
14. Notice of Motion Status Report (Report attached)
15. Notices of Motion
 - 15.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor W Irvine, Councillor S Irvine, Alderman Cummings, Councillor Morgan, Councillor Hollywood and Alderman McIlveen

That this Council bestows the Freedom of the Borough of Ards and North Down upon the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service. This is as a mark of deepest appreciation, respect and in recognition of their unwavering dedication to duty and selfless service, bravery in the face of danger, saving lives and protecting our community with great honour and distinction.

- 15.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Adair, Councillor Edmund and Councillor Kerr

That Council recognise the value of our Beaches and coastal environment to our residents and tourists alike note the new DEARA regulations for the cleaning and maintenance of our beaches and task officers to bring forward a report on cleaning and maintaining our beaches on a proactive basis in line with the new DEARA regulations to ensure our beaches continue to be a clean, safe, attractive and well-managed coastal environments.

- 15.3 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cathcart and Councillor Martin

That this Council, further to recent positive discussions with landowners, agrees to reexamine the April 2014 decision of North Down Borough Council to accept a gift of open space at Ambleside, Bangor, which was never completed and tasks Council Officers to bring back a report looking at (i) acquiring the land and (ii) options around future uses for the land.

15.4 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Woods, Councillor Smart, Councillor Boyle and Alderman McAlpine

That this Council, in recognising the decision taken in July 2023, titled 'Leisure Transformation Project' reference LE1 20, (i) requests the completion of the recommendation and action points agreed in this report ahead of consideration of the current NCLT/Serco bid relating to the provision of leisure for the remainder of the in-house services. This action will permit elected members to consider all relevant information and data relating to the in house leisure offering (in-house bid) or a LATCo and, (ii) holds a Members Workshop on said options, as has been previous practice, as soon as possible, prior to any decision being taken by Full Council.

15.5 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Wray and Alderman Smith

That this council asks officers to include the repainting of the traditionally styled bus shelter (owned by council), located in Main Street Grey Abbey, in the 2024/25 maintenance budget.

Furthermore Council seeks an officer's report on the feasibility of council painting the decorative Grey Abbey lamp posts (in the ownership of DFI). This is a feature of the historic village, and we understand the current shabby condition impacts not only residents of the village, but the wider tourism and regeneration potential of this scenic conservation area.

15.6 Rescinding Motion submitted by Councillor McRandal, Councillor Irwin, Councillor Creighton, Councillor McKee, Councillor Moore, Councillor Harbinson, Councillor McCollum and Councillor Rossiter

That this Council rescinds its decision taken at the Council meeting on 27 September to agree the Minutes of the Community and Wellbeing Committee meeting on 13 September with regard to item 23 where the decision was to not accept this Grant offer or to authorise the Head of Environmental Health Protection and Development to sign and return the grant acceptance form on behalf of Council, and instead proposes that the Council agrees the Officer's recommendation from the report that, "Council accepts this Grant offer and authorises the Head of Environmental Health Protection and Development to sign and return the grant acceptance form on behalf of Council.

15.7 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor MacArthur and Councillor Cochrane

That this Council accepts its responsibility for the maintenance of memorials to our borough's war dead, recognising that they should be maintained to a high standard.

Further to that, this council notes with concern the significant erosion of lettering on the VC Kenny memorial in Donaghadee and, in light of that, brings back a report to Council which outlines the cost of upgrading this memorial, siting it in a more appropriate location in close proximity to the War Memorial, if appropriate, following engagement with the RBL.

In addition, Council explores how the narrative of VC Kenny's story and connection with Donaghadee may best be conveyed to the public.

15.8 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter and Councillor Douglas

That this council condemns the recent and ongoing terrorist attacks by Hamas and stand with Israel. Further, that we highlight the availability of the Mayors book of condolence and encourages all those who wish to sign to avail of this opportunity. We request that the Mayor writes formally to the Israeli Ambassador to the Court of St James to express our condolences. Finally that we condemn the slaughter of all innocents and join all right thinking people in praying and hoping for an end to the bloodshed in Israel and Gaza.

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

16. LMP Tender for the provision of a Transport Academy in Ards and North Down (Report attached)
17. LMP Tender for Academy for People with Disabilities (Report attached)

MEMBERSHIP OF ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

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 27 September 2023 commencing at 7.00pm.

In the Chair:	The Mayor (Councillor Gilmour)	
Aldermen:	Adair (Zoom)	McAlpine (Zoom)
	Armstrong-Cotter	McDowell
	Brooks	McIlveen
	Cummings	Smith
Councillors:	Ashe	MacArthur
	Boyle	Martin
	Cathcart	McCollum
	Chambers	McCracken
	Creighton	McKee
	Cochrane	McKimm (Zoom)
	Douglas	McLaren (Zoom)
	Edmund (Zoom)	McRandal
	Harbinson	Moore
	S Irvine (Zoom 7.35 pm)	Morgan
	W Irvine	Rossiter
	Irwin	Smart
	Kennedy	Woods
	Kerr	Wray

Officers: Chief Executive (S Reid), Director of Corporate Services (M Steele), Director of Place (S McCullough), Director of Prosperity (A McCullough via Zoom), Director of Environment (D Lindsay), Director of Community and Wellbeing (G Bannister), Head of Communications and Marketing (C Jackson), Democratic Services Manager (J Wilson) and Democratic Services Officer (H Loebnau)

1. PRAYER

The Mayor welcomed everyone present and the meeting commenced with the Chief Executive reading the Council prayer.

2. APOLOGIES

The Mayor sought apologies at this stage. Apologies were received from Alderman Graham, Councillor Hollywood and Councillor Blaney. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor S Irvine.

NOTED.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Mayor asked for any Declarations of Interest and none were made.

NOTED.

4. MAYOR'S BUSINESS

The Mayor began by extending her own, and those of the Council, best wishes to former Member and Alderman, Karen Douglas, who had resigned from the Council earlier in the month. She thanked her for her service to the Borough over the years and wished her the very best for the future. She also warmly welcomed the new Elected Member who had taken her seat, Councillor Alex Harbinson, to his first meeting.

She commented that a number of congratulations were in order; to Councillor Ashe on her recent marriage and to Councillor Cathcart on his recent engagement.

She explained that the previous Sunday the Mayor and Chief Executive had visited the Council's Sister City of Virginia Beach, United States, where they had met with the Mayor Bobby Dyer, who presented them with the City of Virginia Seal and Proclamation. It had been a successful visit where they had met a wide range of contacts from the City Council, Economic Development, Culture, Education, and Public Services and explored the Sister City relationship and opportunities for future engagement. She explained that a full report would follow in due course.

Finally, she was delighted to announce the Mayor's charities for this year were confirmed as; The Royal British Legion Ards and North Down, K9 Search and Rescue and The Royal National Lifeboat Association. She looked forward to working with them over the coming year.

NOTED.

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

(Appendix I)

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

The Mayor outlined her engagements over the previous month and thanked the Deputy Mayor for her assistance, particularly during the time she had been travelling to Virginia Beach.

AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the information be noted.

6. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING DATED 30 AUGUST 2023

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above minutes.

Proposed by Councillor Smart, seconded by Councillor Adair, that the minutes be adopted.

Arising from Item 25.2 and Item 25.3 - Notice of Motions

Councillor Wray referred to the Motions around policing and transitioning and what the Council could do to contribute towards making communities safer. The Member had met with District Commander PSNI for Ards and North Down, Superintendent Johnston McDowell, who had thanked Members for their comments made at the August Council meeting. The Police believed that the number one issue for tackling crime was the CCTV footage in Newtownards which was very poor and not of sufficient quality to detect the crimes being committed in the town. He considered that more crimes could be captured with improved quality footage.

He enquired where the Council stood on that matter and if it was happy to progress that with the Police in terms of funding a better CCTV system which the Police could use. The Director of Environment informed the Member that the matter had been discussed at the Environment Committee but due to budgetary constraints of the Council a full review of CCTV had not been funded for this year.

NOTED.

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

7. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

7.1 Minutes of Planning Committee dated 5 September 2023

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes

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

7.2 Minutes of Environment Committee dated 6 September 2023

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes

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

In Respect of Item 19.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Adair, Councillor Edmund and Councillor Kerr

Councillor Boyle noted that he had not been quoted as speaking on the Motion when in fact he had been supportive of it in the same way that other Members from the Ards Peninsula had been.

NOTED.

In Respect of Item 17 – Northern Ireland Local Authority Municipal Waste Management Statistics, January to March 2023 and Quarterly Update on Recycling Progress

Alderman Brooks had been pleased with the targets set and believed that waste tourism had been the primary reason for the introduction of the current booking system. He wondered why ID checks had not been introduced in the first instance. The Director explained that a business case had been drafted in advance of the introduction of a booking system and that had been brought to the Council setting out a range of options that would be available in relation to the management of HRCs. The booking system had been agreed as the best option to ensure sustainability and longevity of waste management in the medium to long term.

Alderman Brooks proposed an amendment in respect of the item which was seconded by Councillor W Irvine.

"Given the failure of Council to implement the decision on ID checks passed by the Council, we will suspend the booking system and have the ID checks only with a report back in two months on its operation."

The Director explained that ID checks had been introduced for a three month period prior to the introduction of the booking system and that during that period almost 2,000 potential users had been turned away because they did not have the required identification proving that they were residents of the Borough.

Alderman Brooks explained how he hoped that the Council's targets for waste management could be achieved but that he had received many questions about the booking system and wondered if the new system would make it easier to achieve. He had been informed that multiple forms of ID had been requested from residents and they had spoken of queuing at the recycling centres and difficulties with time slots. He suggested that it did not sound like the Council was making life easy for its residents and asked Members to consider his amendment and for the Council to act similarly to nine other Councils in Northern Ireland by operating an ID system alone.

Councillor W Irvine rose to support Alderman Brooks' amendment and believed that all Members would have received a raft of emails outlining residents' concerns about the online booking system. He thought that there had been little public consultation, and many believed that what was now in place was a barrier to recycling, it had introduced complexity into the system, was cumbersome and complicated and he was also concerned that the Council would see increased levels of illegal dumping and fly tipping. He called for a recorded vote.

Councillor McKimm absolutely concurred with the amendment which had been brought and had read many emails referring to the issue. Residents had spoken of

making appointments, ID not being checked and there was a feeling in the community that it was not what they wanted to have had implemented. He thought the amendment gave time to reflect and listen to the public and he entirely supported it.

Alderman McIlveen had not been the biggest supporter of the booking system but stressed that the Council had agreed to make the changes since they amounted to approximately £300k of savings which was a significant amount to the ratepayer. He had a problem with the amendment since it was not comparing like for like. He appreciated that the decision was not a popular one and was an added inconvenience to people but it was in response to an imposed target by the Northern Ireland Assembly of a 70% recycling rate in a relatively short period of time and the possibility of a double digit Rate rise if levels of recycling were not being achieved. This was a decision which ultimately was of benefit to ratepayers so the Council needed to stick with the plan or find an alternative way to fill the financial gap.

Councillor McRandal was of a similar view to Alderman McIlveen on the matter and reiterated that the decision had been made for good reasons. He agreed that some residents did not like it but there was no evidence after three weeks that the decisions which had been taken would not help to deliver the benefits. He thought to ditch the initiative now would be to make the Council a laughingstock. He suggested there was no proof that staff had not been implementing the identification checks and in fact there was evidence that they had been with so many people being turned away. The Director had apologised if identification was not being asked for on every single visit but officers were aware that the public should be asked. The Member believed that the amendment was based on an incorrect assumption.

Councillor Woods referred back to the suggestion made by Alderman Brooks that multiple forms of ID were required to visit the recycling centres and asked the Director if that was correct. The Director replied that it was not and that a range of forms of identification could be accepted which proved a resident's address. The Member was therefore confused at the amendment wording and where it had come from since the Council had voted for it as part of what she referred to as the big list of savings brought forward through the Rate setting process. She suggested that more information would be required such as costs and data and while she appreciated the sentiment behind the amendment she thought it was a little early to scrap it at this stage.

Alderman Smith also could not support his colleague's amendment because he considered it to be premature. The matter would be discussed further later in the meeting and some of the data in that report had been encouraging and some was challenging but more information was needed before making any changes. He thought the public would become disillusioned and confused if changes were made unnecessarily. The Council had a responsibility to meet the net zero requirement and waste management had a huge impact on that so it needed to be consistent in respect of the climate emergency.

Councillor Boyle had some sympathy with Alderman Brooks but believed that the Council needed to take a stand and the decision had not been made lightly. It had not been made to upset ratepayers but to assist the Council to meet its targets. He

had had some sensible conversations with the public who could accept that it needed to be done and there was a lot of money at stake and the Council could not carry on as things stood. The ratepayers would not thank the Council for making wasteful decisions.

Councillor Cathcart was aware that no Member had been enthusiastic to introduce this new policy but Members needed to manage ratepayers money well and there would be consequences to stopping this now. He believed most people were understanding when the reasons were explained and in time if it did not deliver it could be changed. However, it was clear there was no evidence to do that at this point.

As Chair of the Environment Committee Councillor Morgan explained that the committee had spent a huge amount of time debating the matter and there was no doubt that it was an inconvenience to many people but it had been thoroughly discussed. This Borough produced more waste by far than the Northern Ireland average and Members should be angry about that since it was bad for the Borough's ratepayers and also the environment. She urged Members to hold their nerve and keep going to achieve the results which were required.

A recorded vote had been called for and when the amendment was put to the meeting with 3 voting For, 34 voting Against, 0 Abstained and 3 Absent it **FELL**.

FOR (3)	AGAINST (34)	ABSTAINING (0)	ABSENT (3)
Alderman	Aldermen		Alderman
Brooks	Adair		Graham
Councillors	Armstrong-Cotter		Councillors
W Irvine	Cummings		Blaney
McKimm	McAlpine		Hollywood
	McDowell		
	McIlveen		
	P Smith		
	Councillors		
	Ashe		
	Boyle		
	Cathcart		
	Chambers		
	Creighton		
	Cochrane		
	Douglas		
	Edmund		
	Gilmour		
	Harbinson		
	S Irvine		
	Irwin		
	Kennedy		
	Kerr		
	MacArthur		
	Martin		
	McCollum		

McCracken
 McKee
 McLaren
 McRandal
 Moore
 Morgan
 Rossiter
 Smart
 Woods
 Wray

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Morgan, seconded by Councillor Cummings, that the minutes be adopted with the exception of Item 7.2.1 - Governance Arrangement for Manager of Council Harbours Appointment to 'Duty Holder' which would be taken in confidence later in the meeting.

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

7.2.1 Matter Arising – Governance Arrangement for Management of Council Harbours Appointment of 'Duty Holder'

The Chair informed the meeting that this item would be taken 'In Confidence' later in the meeting.

NOTED.

7.3 Minutes of Place and Prosperity Committee dated 7 September 2023

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes

Proposed by Councillor McCracken, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that the minutes be adopted.

In Respect of Item 3 – Draft Urban Masterplan Review

Councillor McCracken noted that the regeneration proposals had originally been brought forward in 2013 by the Department for Communities and he hoped that in the coming years good ideas for towns and the city would not sit on a shelf inactively. He had some questions relating to the alarming statistics related to relatively poor economic activity in the Borough and of the land that Invest NI was holding in the area which could be released for development, job creation and housing. He considered that high density homes in town centres could support the economy of those areas.

The Director of Place explained that the Masterplans had new monitoring systems in place with detailed action plans and were an all-partnership approach. There would be further information in a report to the Committee next month. There were two studies ongoing looking at industrial land for zoning around the Borough but there were some challenging situations in relation to that. Meetings with Invest Northern Ireland were still ongoing and unfortunately the strategic review was not yet

completed and there would be a push on that and it was hoped to bring back a further report on the use of the land.

Alderman McDowell also had had a matter to raise in respect of the Newtownards Masterplan as he had not been at the Committee on the evening. He felt the creation of employment within Newtownards was missing from the Plan. He referred to statistics which showed a marked and steady decline in employment in Newtownards over recent years. While some areas of decline were in health care, professional, scientific and technical there was an increase in retail and food services. That should be worrying to the Council since its non-domestic Rate base was shrinking. The priorities for Newtownards were viewed as growth in connectivity to the town centre hub but he hoped also for increased employment and the attraction of high-tech companies within the town centre. The figures showed that there was limited start up accommodation and places to grow in to and so he suggested that the Council needed and take action urgently. He asked for the Masterplan to be referred to the next committee meeting to keep a strong focus on that. That was supported by Councillor McCracken and Alderman McIlveen.

AGREED.

In Respect of Item 11 - Small Settlements Regeneration Programme – Greyabbey Community Park and Viewing Platform

(Councillor MacArthur declared an interest and left the meeting at 8.07 pm)

Councillor Wray questioned how the online consultation was undertaken and explained that these could be easily manipulated and skewed by individuals submitting many responses. He asked if the Council had looked at software which aimed to prevent that taking place.

In response officers explained that the Council did not currently have that software and did not have the budget to introduce it as a new system. The Member's comments were noted and discussions could take place with the current provider to potentially consider that more fully in the future.

On the same matter Alderman Adair had spoken to his neighbours and they had informed him that they had been unable to respond more than once to the consultation. In Greyabbey the overwhelming majority of people were in support of the scheme and he was delighted to see that come about. He had pushed for this funding and was delighted with the additional budget. He stressed the need to have projects worked up to ensure that rural communities were not left behind and forgotten.

Councillor Boyle also spoke about the Greyabbey viewing platform and had been contacted by those who did not support it. He asked was this an amended and reduced scheme. In response the Director of Place explained that the proposal which had originally been presented was later amended due to the fact that the landowner was no longer willing to have it on his land. The grant would, however, be utilised on the Council's own land and the landowner had been informed that there

was community support for the scheme. The Director agreed to discuss the scheme with the Member.

Councillor Edmund was pleased to see the community support for the scheme and welcomed the investment which would benefit the local community in that area.

NOTED.

In Respect of Item 15 - Proposed Rural Projects for Development

Councillor Wray was delighted to read about the rural projects along with the budget to be worked up and due to be completed by end of financial year. He wondered would planning permission be included in that process because the opportunity to get external funding would arise in the next financial year and he urged the Council to be prepared for that.

The Director of Place stated that it was the intention for Millisle and Portaferry projects to be developed under Rural Projects and planning applications would be submitted.

NOTED.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McCracken, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that the minutes to include the referral of the Newtownards Masterplan back to the Committee be adopted.

(Councillor MacArthur returned to the meeting at 8.20 pm)

7.4 Minutes of Corporate Services Committee dated 12 September 2023

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

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

In Respect of Item 13 - Car Free Days - Follow up report to NOM 174

Councillor Woods had been disappointed in the report and its contents and viewed it as a missed opportunity. A similar initiative had been carried out in the Botanic area of Belfast and it had really helped to promote a sense of place in that location. She praised the community input that had been evident there and asked the Director if there was a mechanism for communities to get involved in a similar way in the Ards and North Down Borough.

The Director of Corporate Services replied that many groups were supported by the Council and could apply for grants. What was outlined in the report was the Council's responsibility within this and there were things that others could do to take projects forward.

NOTED.

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

7.4.1 Matter Arising – Report on the Consultation Response to Northern Ireland’s 2030 and 2040 Emissions Reduction Targets and First Three Carbon Budgets and Seeking Views on Climate Change Committee (CCC) Advice Report: The Path to Net Zero Northern Ireland
(Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services detailing that the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (‘the Act’) received Royal Assent on 6th June 2022. A briefing of the Act was reported to Corporate Committee, 15 February 2023. To summarise The Act would:

- (a) set targets for net zero for the years 2050, 2040 and 2030 for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions
- (b) set out a carbon budgeting framework (Carbon budget was a term used to refer to the maximum amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions allowed over a period of time, to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius);
- (c) provide for reporting and statements against those targets and budgets;
- (d) confer power to impose climate change reporting duties on public bodies;
- (e) establish a Northern Ireland Climate Change Commission and appoint a Climate Change Commissioner to oversee and report on the operations of the Act and states a commitment to developing a climate action plan within 2 years of the Act receiving Royal Assent.

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) on behalf of the Northern Ireland Executive had published a consultation on Northern Ireland’s 2030 & 2040 Emissions Reduction Targets and First Three Carbon Budgets and Seeking views on Climate Change Committee (CCC) Advice Report: The Path to a Net Zero Northern Ireland.

The main aim of the consultation was to consult on the proposed 2030 and 2040 emissions targets for Northern Ireland and proposed carbon budgets for the periods 2023-2027, 2028-2032 and 2033-2037. They were also using the opportunity to seek the public’s views on the Climate Change Committee’s (CCC) [Advice Report: The Path to a Net Zero Northern Ireland](#) published in March 2023.

DAERA was required to prepare regulations on carbon budgets and interim targets guided by advice from the Climate Change Committee (CCC).

Climate action was a high priority for all departments and work was progressing well in respect of the development of Northern Ireland's first Climate Action Plan, which would set out policies and proposals for achieving Northern Ireland's first carbon budget (2023-2027) as well as setting out how the 2030, 2040 and 2050 emissions reduction targets would be met.

The consultation document was attached for further information along with a draft response for approval. The draft response was circulated internally to the Sustainability Champions and Climate Working Group for comment and had input from Sustainable NI. The draft response was revised following debate at Corporate Services Committee meeting on the 12 September 2023.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approve the consultation response.

Proposed by Alderman Smith, seconded by Councillor McRandal, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Smith had reviewed the content and was pleased to see it revised and amended particularly for the local agri-food industry which had been acknowledged. It was comprehensive but focussed on what was in the hands of the Council.

Alderman McIlveen was in agreement and thanked Alderman Smith for drawing attention to the item raised on the night and stated that he could not have supported what had been originally presented. Much of that had come from an outside source, Sustainable NI, and he would not have believed that any Council officer would have recommended the greater use of meat grown in laboratories. He was pleased that the Director had taken on board the concerns that Members had raised but disappointed that waste had not been mentioned since the Council had responsibility for that.

Councillor Rossiter believed that the consultation recommendations were future proofing for the Council but must go further and it was important that the Council had a say in developing plans for the future. He pointed to the fact that in Northern Ireland 30% of emissions came from the agri-food sector compared to 10% within the United Kingdom as a whole.

Councillor Woods felt that the Council needed to make its own contribution in line with the Climate Act and asked if there would be a review on what the Council was doing across its departments. The Director of the Environment replied that the Environment Directorate was co-ordinating plans for the overall target. There had been a number of cross sectoral engagements facilitated by the Department and part of the outworking would be sectoral blueprints for all eleven Councils. Reviews of the Roadmap to Sustainability would take place regularly and it would be a dynamic and fluid document.

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

7.5 Minutes of Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 13 September 2023

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

Proposed by Councillor Martin, seconded by Councillor Creighton, that the minutes be adopted.

In Respect of Item 15 - Playpark Locking Update

The Mayor raised an issue of accuracy relating to page 27 of the minutes in what groups had met with the Head of Parks and Cemeteries and felt that 'as part of the consultation' should be added.

Councillor Woods believed there was an error in the minutes in that Members were to be contacted with named groups. It was not her belief that those groups were consulted on the correct basis and also that Bloomfield community had not been consulted and asked for that to be reflected in the minutes. Councillor W Irvine raised the same matter and shared the view of Councillor Woods that the community was not given the opportunity to put forward its views.

The Mayor explained that she had argued for the residents in terms of the locking of some of the playparks and had been quite disappointed in the process that was undertaken as part of the consultation. She thought it was underwhelming to say the least and the questions were poorly directed and did not assess the impact on the community. At a meeting with the Clandeboye Village Association they had expressed a wish to engage with the Council but consultation had not taken place sufficiently. She reminded the Council that it had unanimously agreed to lock the playparks and that was not taken on board. She was taking the opportunity to voice her frustration and concerns over the consultations and believed that the residents had been let down.

NOTED.

Arising from Item 6 – Trial of Dogs in the Courtyard at North Down Museum

Councillor Cathcart asked to put forward an amendment on the recommendation which was seconded by Councillor McKee.

"that Council agree, that a site meeting is held with officers, museum staff, a Coffee Cure representative and Bangor Central DEA Councillors to discuss a potential solution involving cafe staff providing access to the Courtyard via the gate and not the museum which will allow continued access for dogs whilst providing better access for those with mobility issues. Dogs will continue to be permitted in the Courtyard until a further report is brought back to Council with potential options following the site meeting".

Councillor Cathcart said that he had spoken about this matter previously and stated that the operator of Coffee Cure wished to pursue it. The coffee shop was in a prime location within Castle Park and he thanked officers for allowing the trial report to go to the committee but felt that it had been a little negative. The coffee shop did welcome dogs and hoped that it could continue to do so. It was recognised that the

arrangement with the Museum raised some concerns and dogs accessed the courtyard through the gate entrance rather than through the Museum itself. The gate entrance was also used by visitors who had issues with mobility. He hoped that a site meeting would allow the issues to be discussed fully.

Councillor McKee was in agreement with those comments and appreciated the balance the coffee shop needed to make but felt that not enough had been done to overcome the issues and balance it out and considered that a site meeting was an appropriate way to do that. He hoped Members would support that.

Councillor McKimm was in total support and referred also to disability access as well as his love of dogs. He explained that the access lift at the Museum had been out of use for many years. The staff in the Museum were helpful but were often too busy to open the gate to the courtyard in good time. He questioned why the gate could not be left open every day of the week to assist those working in both the coffee shop and the museum. Councillor Creighton shared those concerns referring to what she had experienced when visiting with her mother.

Councillors W Irvine and McRandal also added their agreement with the amendment to allow for further discussion of the issues raised.

On the amendment being put to the meeting, it was AGREED THAT a site meeting is held with officers, museum staff, a Coffee Cure representative and Bangor Central DEA Councillors to discuss a potential solution involving cafe staff providing access to the Courtyard via the gate and not the museum which will allow continued access for dogs whilst providing better access for those with mobility issues. Dogs will continue to be permitted in the Courtyard until a further report is brought back to Council with potential options following the site meeting”.

AGREED.

In Respect of Item 16 – North Down Coastal Path Task and Finish Working Group

Councillor McKimm referred to the frustrations relating to the North Down Coastal Path and the working group. He was sure many Members would have received communication from the For Another Path group expressing concerns which he understood would be dealt with when the Task and Finish Working Group was formed. He asked what the plans were for the group and the purpose of it. There remained a distrust toward the Council and there was a need in his view for reassurance and consistent communications.

The Director of Community and Wellbeing stated that that had not yet been discussed but would be when the group was formed. The Member asked for assurance of a robust communications strategy and the Director confirmed that that would be an item on the agenda of the group.

NOTED.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Martin, seconded by Councillor Creighton, that the minutes be adopted, subject to the above amendment.

7.5.1 Matter Arising – Report on the Funding Offer from Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) for Capacity and Capability Building Programme Northern Ireland: Non-Food Products 2023/24

This item was not discussed.

RECESS 9.00 pm

RECOMMENCED 9.27 pm

7.6 Minutes of Audit Committee dated 18 September 2023

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes

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

Councillor McCollum reported that it had been said that the Audit Committee was currently light on experience but heavy on enthusiasm. One matter which was raised by Councillor Wray at the meeting was that of delays in the implementation of targets. She hoped that it could be agreed that the Committee be given an indication of why so that it could get a better understanding and could better scrutinise the reason for the delay. She also hoped that that could be received in advance of the next meeting.

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

8. REQUESTS FOR DEPUTATION

(Appendix III)

8.1 RE-GEN

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive detailing that correspondence had been received from Re-Gen requesting to present to the Environment Committee to outline the benefits of commingled collection for householders and the Council, and extended producer responsibility and other legislation affecting recycling and waste management.

In line with the Council's decision in July to hear a deputation from Keep Recycling Local, it is recommended that Council approved this request for a deputation.

RECOMMENDED that the Council accepts the request for a deputation from Re-Gen and refers it to the Environment Committee.

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

(Councillor Boyle left the meeting at 9.48 pm)

9. NOMINATION TO EAST BORDER REGIONAL MEMBERS FORUM

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

Following the resignation of Alistair Cathcart from the East Border Region Members Forum, a place had now become available. The current membership was as follows for 2023/27:

- Alderman McDowell
- Councillor Rossiter
- Councillor Blaney
- Councillor Boyle
- Councillor McKimm
- Vacant

A nomination was sought from the Council to fill the above vacancy for the remainder of the four-year term.

RECOMMENDED that the Council nominate a Member to the East Border Region Members Forum.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the recommendation be adopted, and that Alderman Adair be nominated.

10. NILGA ACCREDITED PROVISION FOR ELECTED MEMBER DEVELOPMENT 2023/2024 (Appendices IV – VII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services detailing that Members were asked to consider nominations to the following NILGA accredited Elected Member Development Programmes, commencing in the Autumn 2023:

Programme	Indicative Cost per nomination
Local Planning Programme (ILM endorsed award)	If 30 participants across councils: £622

5 Modules (4 online and 1 face to face) delivered from November 2023 to April 2024, and additionally, a non-obligatory study trip to the Republic of Ireland	
Leadership Programme (CPD Standards) 8 Modules (6 online and 2 face to face) from October 2023 to May 2024	If 20 participants across councils: £1,215

Beneficially, most of the modules for the accredited programme were delivered online at less than half a day, with further details set out in the enclosed correspondence.

RECOMMENDED that the Council consider nominating to each of the NILGA Local Planning and Leadership programmes, with costs to be met from the approved Member Development budget.

Proposed by Councillor McRandal, seconded by Alderman McIlveen that a nomination be made.

Proposed by Councillor McRandal, seconded by Councillor Ashe, that Councillor McCollum be nominated to the Local Planning Programme.

Proposed by Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that Councillor Kerr, be nominated to the Local Planning Programme.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McRandal, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that the recommendation be adopted, and that Councillor McCollum and Councillor Kerr be nominated to attend the Local Planning Programme.

11. IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW HRC ACCESS BOOKING SYSTEM UPDATE (Appendices VIII & IX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing that Members would be aware that the Council agreed to the implementation of a new booking system to manage access to our network of 9 Household Recycling Centres (HRCs). On that basis £300K was removed from the budget during the 2023/24 estimates process, representing the net savings projected to accrue as a consequence of this service development.

The stated key aims of the measure were summarised as followed:

- Protect our HRCs for the exclusive use of householders who paid for them through their domestic rates;
- Minimise queues and site congestion, enhancing the quality of customer experience whilst using the centres; and

- Reduce the costs of the service overall by reducing the total amount of waste received into HRCs and reducing the amount sent to landfill.

At the 5th July Council meeting it was agreed that the early experiences of implementing the agreed new booking system should be reviewed as a matter of process at the September Council meeting when a further decision can be made regarding onward implementation.

Implementation Process

Officers within the Waste and Cleansing Department worked with our Corporate Communications Team to plan and deliver a comprehensive package of information and communications regarding the new HRC access booking system. This included:

- Delivery of a programme of in-person drop-n sessions across the Borough. This was heavily advertised and promoted through Council's various communication channels. A prototype of the online booking platform was available at all sessions, giving residents the opportunity to see first-hand what the booking process involves and experience making a trial booking. The sessions were held as follows to provide as much geographical spread as possible across the Borough, with daytime and early evening sessions to accommodate as many residents as possible:
 - Ballygowan Village Hall: Monday 3 July, 11am - 3pm
 - Carrowdore Community Centre: Tuesday 4 July, 11am - 3pm
 - Comber Adult Learning Centre: Wednesday 5 July, 11am - 3pm
 - Conlig Community Centre: Thursday 6 July, 11am - 3pm
 - Portaferry Market House: Friday 7 July, 11am - 3pm
 - Donaghadee Community Centre: Monday 31 July, 11am - 3pm
 - Manor Court Community Centre, Newtownards: Tuesday 1 August, 2pm - 4pm and 6pm - 8pm
 - Hamilton Road Hub, Bangor: Thursday 3 August, 2pm - 4pm and 6pm - 8pm
 - Portavogie Community Centre: Monday 7 August, 11am to 3pm
 - Redburn Community Centre, Holywood: Tuesday 8 August, 11am to 3pm
 - Kircubbin Community Centre: Friday 11 August, 2pm - 4pm and 6pm - 8pm

Recycling Information Pop-Up Centres | Ards and North Down Borough Council

In total we had 66 attendees across the 11 drop-in sessions and staff reported that amongst those there were no significant issues raised, with queries being satisfactorily addressed.

- A leaflet was designed and produced explaining the introduction of the new access booking system from 4th September and the rationale and key customer information associated with that.

AND_HRC_booking_information.pdf (ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

This leaflet was handed to customers entering all 9 of our HRCs during August, and to residents who attended sites during the grace period after the implementation date of 4th September without having made a booking.

- Press release, social media, web and Bin-Ovation posts were made to publicise the commencement of the new HRC access booking system and provide key information to residents about that.



News and Info Tab on Bin-Ovation App

Officers worked closely with the booking software development company to review and refine the layout and functionality of the booking platform, as officers trialled the prototype version over a number of weeks and identified improvement opportunities before going live. The key emphasis in the process was user friendliness and functionality, as well as facilitating achievement of core outcomes by Council/management (effective access control and improved recycling participation).

Further to engagement with Elected Members at the June meeting of the Environment Committee, the following specific additional amendments were included to the booking platform:

- The minimum advance booking time was reduced to 30 minutes.
- The requirement for entry of the resident's name was removed.
- A tick box option was added to allow blue badge holders to flag up a request for assistance whilst on site.

The design and functionality of the booking platform was reviewable going forward under the Council's contract with the software provider, and further tweaks could be made as required to further enhance/refine the service.

The finally agreed version of the booking platform was made live to residents on Monday 21st August, with messaging advising that residents of the Borough could, from that date, begin to make bookings for access from Monday 4th September.

Upon booking at a particular site, the resident received a confirmation email which outlined key information, including recycling guidance and site location and layout maps – all designed to reinforce the recycling imperative and thereby enhance resident preparedness to fully engage in recycling of their waste.

If a booking was made more than 24 hours before the planned visit, the resident received a reminder email 24 hours in advance of the booked slot. That again reinforced the key messages that were important for a resident's easy and productive use of their HRC visit.

During the first 2 weeks (4 – 17th September), where a resident turned up without a booking, site attendants advised of the new booking system and reinforced the requirement to book for all future access – but allowed entry without a booking on that occasion. After that grace period (from Monday 18th September 2023), access had only been permitted to residents who had booked.

Whilst residents were urged to turn up on time in accordance with their booked slot, where someone was slightly early or late, site staff exercised discretion to allow entry providing that did not compromise efficient and safe site operating outcomes. That discretion continued, without any problems or dissatisfaction expressed by customers.

Review Findings

The following key findings illustrated the success of the new HRC access booking system during the first 3 weeks (4 – 21 September 2023).

- 15,465 bookings were made of which 14,692 (95%) were made online and 773 (5%) were made by telephone.
- 1,103 (7%) of bookings were cancelled by the booker in advance of their planned visit, freeing up those slots for other residents.
- 274 residents used the booking facility to flag up a request for blue badge holder assistance.
- Between 18th – 20th September after the grace period was ended, a very small proportion of residents (34 no.) were denied entry due to having no booking.
- Staff reported that instances of queues waiting to access sites were all but eliminated (in contrast to pre-booking circumstances, when queuing was experienced at most sites at certain times of the day/week). That was a positive of the booking system that was mentioned most frequently by residents in conversation with staff on site.
- There were 2 recorded instances of access to booked residents being delayed due to unplanned/unforeseen requirement to service containers on site, something that would have been a much more frequent experience at most sites previously. Now that the booking system was up and running, officers were monitoring the flow of waste through all sites under the new regime, to more effectively pre-plan the servicing of sites; that would allow greater precision in targeting of specific days/times when slots could be

blocked out to facilitate such servicing, and thereby avoid customer inconvenience of having to wait for entry outside sites.

- Bookings were well spread across the opening hours of sites, with periods that would generally have been very quiet now being more productively utilised and numbers of bookings during what would have historically been unacceptably busy periods being sustainably managed.
- No complaints were received alleging inability to secure a booking slot.
- Between 4th and 18th September there were 33,390 bookable slots available across our 9 sites, of which 34% (10,879) were utilised.
- The highest level of utilisation of available slots was at Balloo (84%), and the lowest was at Donaghadee (10%).
- At no site was the available number of bookable slots fully utilised on any day. The highest level of daily slot utilisation was 84% (Balloo).
- All 9 sites opened on Saturdays, and during the review period 37% of bookable slots were utilised on that day of the week. The highest level of utilisation of Saturday slots was at Balloo (75%) and the lowest was at Donaghadee (12%).
- 2 sites opened on Sundays, and during the review period 74% of bookable slots were utilised on that day of the week: Balloo 81% and Holywood 49%.

Customer Survey

During the period 11th to 22nd September, site user surveys were conducted to gauge customer satisfaction with the new booking system. Those were conducted face to face with residents by recycling officers across all 9 HRCs. A sample of 219 surveys were completed, with the following results:

- At 83%, an overwhelming majority of respondents indicated they had had a positive experience of accessing the HRC on the day of their visit.
- At 65%, a significant majority of respondents also indicated they had a positive experience of using the online booking system.
- At this early stage, opinion was more divided on whether the booking system had increased their level of engagement in recycling, with 40% indicating that they believed it had and 60% that it had not.

At a meeting of the Council's Disability Forum, facilitated by the Council's Equality and Safeguarding Officer, the group welcomed the introduction of the access booking system.

Staff Observations

Staff involved in delivery of the Council's HRC service, both operational site staff and recycling officer team, reported the following key observations:

- Flow of residents through sites was well spaced across the working day at sites, with site access delays and site congestion issues eliminated.
- Residents were visibly much more relaxed when using sites and much more likely to instinctively use the correct site containers for disposal and recycling of their waste.

- Site staff reported having more time and space to engage more fully and meaningfully with residents on site, assisting them with disposal of their waste and promoting better recycling engagement.
- As time moved on, more and more residents appeared to be arriving at sites with waste pre-sorted more fully for correct recycling disposal when they arrived on site. The instances of residents having to be prompted by staff to go to the sorting bays appeared to be reducing as time progressed.
- From informal observation, the amount of waste being placed in landfill skips had been significantly reduced relative to the amount of waste material placed in recycling containers.
- There had been a very minimal level of resident dissent or complaint expressed on sites about the booking system, with staff on the contrary reporting a significant level of site user satisfaction with their experience. That was reflected in the site user survey referred to at section 3.1 of the report.
- Staff had reported an upturn in enquiries and sign-ups to the kerbside commercial waste and recycling collections service.

HRC Landfill/Recycling Rates and Waste Disposal Costs

The precise figures relating to tonnages of HRC waste streams were collated on a quarterly basis in a highly regulated manner and had to be verified before submitting the Council's statutory statistical returns to DAERA. There was a time lag between the reporting period and the finalisation of waste tonnage statistics for that period, therefore the precise picture on overall HRC waste receipts, landfill and recycling rates for the first full quarter (October to December) following the implementation of the booking system would not be available until the new year.

Notwithstanding the above, the commencement of some measures which were now being more comprehensively and systematically embedded and applied through the implementation of the booking system (requirement to sort waste, prohibition of recyclable waste from landfill skips and showing residency ID on entering), commenced in December last year. Members may be aware through a report brought to the September meeting of the Environment Committee, that for the reporting period January to March 2023 the Council collected 1,322 tons less of waste destined for landfill compared to the same period last year; at current landfill cost (£127.42/T), that represented a £168,449 saving. Furthermore, the percentage of materials collected for recycling at the HRCs rose by 5.5% and at the kerbside by 7.2% compared to the same period last year. Our overall Borough household waste recycling rate rose by 6.5% during the quarter.

The full definitive picture regarding HRC waste statistics following the commencement of the booking system would be communicated as part of our Q3 Northern Ireland Local Authority Municipal Waste Management Statistics and Update on Recycling Progress Report, which was scheduled to come to the Committee in March 2024.

Ongoing Implementation

The review period had been somewhat limited, and officers had worked extremely hard to ensure that relevant key review data had been gathered over the past month to allow compilation of the report.

However, the report clearly demonstrated that the new HRC service model was showing early signs of delivering on the key objectives that were set before the programme began, which were:

- Protect our HRCs for the exclusive use of householders who paid for them through their domestic rates;
- Minimise queues and site congestion, enhancing the quality of customer experience whilst using the centres; and
- Reduce the costs of the service overall by reducing the total amount of waste received into HRCs and reducing the amount sent to landfill.

During the review period, officers' summary assessment would be that the new HRC access booking system had been highly successful, with no issues arising that would require significant changes to the current arrangements.

Notwithstanding the above, as things moved forward officers would be monitoring implementation of the new system very carefully and making/recommending relevant adjustments to both the booking process and onsite operational management processes, where deemed necessary to maximise user friendliness, efficiency and effectiveness. One change already in hand, was a widening of the availability of sites where residents could book to bring hard plastics too for recycling. From Monday 2nd October, Comber was scheduled to be listed on the booking platform as a second site in the Borough where this recycling option could be accessed. Further site recycling enhancements made possible as a consequence of the impacts of the booking system, would be explored on an ongoing basis.

RECOMMENDED that:

1. Progress with the implementation of the new HRC access booking system be noted.
2. Officers continue to review the new HRC access booking system and onsite operational management arrangements, to identify potential for further improvement.
3. Waste statistics following the introduction of the new HRC management regime be reviewed as part of a report to the Environment Committee on Q3 Northern Ireland Local Authority Municipal Waste Management Statistics and Update on Recycling Progress, scheduled for March 2024.

Alderman McIlveen stated that he would like to submit the following wording as an alternative proposal by making an addition to point 2 of the recommendation adding:

...and that a further report to be brought to the November Council meeting to include:

- details and an assessment of reports of fly-tipping in the Borough since implementation of the booking system compared to previously

- an assessment of whether the implementation of the booking system has had an impact on the total amount of waste deposited at each of the Borough's HRCs
- an assessment as to whether there has been an increase in the misuse of grey bins as a result of the implementation of the booking system such as whether there has been an increase in the detection of misuse and the issuing of letters regarding such misuse or sampling of waste from grey bins against baseline figures.
- proposals to provide additional booking slots or additional means to address the traditionally busy festive period
- in particular those who have served or continue to serve in security sensitive roles.

Alderman Smith seconded the proposal.

Alderman McIlveen stated that this followed up on the debate which had taken place earlier at the meeting and appreciated that even three months was not long enough to fully monitor the progress of the position closely. He was mindful of some of the issues outstanding, in particular, about data protection by people who did not wish to put their personal details on a booking system. He was also concerned that as the Council moved toward the Christmas period more waste would be generated by households. He hoped that there would be additional slots at the recycling centres over that busy time of year. He hoped that grey bin content could be examined also to ensure that the problem of waste was not being passed on elsewhere. It was his opinion that all the information needed to be examined and if that was done after three months it might provide an opportunity to nip further problems in the bud.

Alderman Smith was happy to second that proposal and considered that it added a lot of value to the recommendation from Officers. There were pertinent questions to reflect upon, particularly the capacity of the recycling centres over the festive period and he was happy to support the proposal. It would consider the views of constituents and look at the data being generated and allow the Council to plan for the Christmas period. Although he acknowledged that some of the information coming back was good this would allow Members and the Council to make a better decision

Councillor Woods was happy to support the proposal with a few further suggestions. She hoped that the Council would consult with other bodies such as the NIEA to find out if there were increased incidents of fly tipping locally and what the position was in neighbouring recycling centres close to the Ards and North Down Borough boundary. She asked the Director of Environment if the projected saving of £300k was likely to be reached.

In response the Director stated that he could confirm that the Council was doing well and he expected figures from the start of September to show an even greater improvement. He said that the reporting of waste statistics was a highly regulated matter which was scrutinised and signed off at different stages. The Council reported statistics on a quarterly basis so the next full reporting period would be October/November/December when a full picture would show the position compared

with other Councils. The additional staff were recruited on a very temporary basis and that was built into the costs and savings.

Councillor Wray was supportive of the proposal and understood Councillor Woods concern regarding the time frame. He believed that the Council should continuously look at the data. He referred to hard plastics being accepted at the Comber site but so far that was not the case on the Ards Peninsula and he described the long journeys of up to 44 miles that some people may have to endure to recycle and do the right thing regarding their waste. He hoped that some of the sites on the Peninsula would soon accept hard plastics.

In reply the Director was pleased to report that the Member had hit on something which while it had irked some people was now being addressed. A positive benefit to the new system was already being seen in that there was reduced landfill skips at sites so space was being freed up for other recycling options. This had been one of the aims of the system to facilitate and maximise recycling and the plan was to do away with one of the large landfill compacting skips and have one for hard plastics. It was hoped that that would continue.

Councillor Kerr referred to the customer surveys and asked if they were offered to all and also wished for the Director to explain the use of the body cameras that staff were wearing and who had access to the information that was stored by them. The Director said that the survey had been carried out very randomly across all the sites within the Borough. The body cameras were used for the protection of staff and only recorded when the staff member felt threatened and had explained that a recording would be made via the press of a button. That information was strictly controlled under data protection.

Councillor W Irvine asked to bring forward an amendment that this Council suspends the online booking system until full public consultation takes place with a report to be brought back at the November Council meeting.

The amendment was not accepted since it was a direct negative of the proposal which was being discussed.

The Member believed that the system needed to have the support of the public and he pointed to a petition which had been handed in to the Council in recent days showing that 4,000 had expressed their strength against what the Council was doing.

Members were informed that a petition had been received but on closer examination there were significant anomalies within it. According to the addresses recorded approximately 41% of all the signatories did not live in the Ards and North Down Borough.

Councillor Morgan was very happy to support the proposal and stressed the need for the Council to be ambitious. Waste took up a quarter of the overall Council budget and it was important to get it right. An additional report would provide the extra information needed and it would be good to be able to feedback to residents in a timely manner. The partnership between the Council and residents she believed was very important.

Alderman McDowell fully supported the proposal and he explained that he had needed to use the recycling centres more regularly of late. He felt the booking system was straightforward and provided a more relaxed visit and he was of the view that much of what was going on was simply scaremongering and he felt sure that the Council should carry on with what it was undertaking. He thought there was a public perception that a resident was limited in how many visits could be made during the year. The Director confirmed that that was false and there was no limit to the number of visits that any householder could make. The system was designed to weed out abuse and clamp down on business waste, but legitimate householder waste was guaranteed.

Councillor Douglas wished to put on record her thanks from her constituents for the opportunity to recycle hard plastics at Comber saving them a drive to Bangor.

Councillor McKee asked about extended opening hours at the recycling centres and the Director informed the meeting that that matter had not yet been explored because there was still significant capacity in the system. There were no complaints being received from people who were finding it difficult to get a slot but it would be looked at again in future to cover busier times of the year.

Councillor Irwin had heard from some of her constituents that some residents had had to queue outside centres, and she asked if there was evidence of that. The Director said that it was his understanding that that would be an exception and would be rare in comparison to what had taken place before.

Councillor MacArthur stated that, like most others, she had been contacted by many people who were ideologically opposed to having to go through this practice of booking to use recycling centres. Having said that she had used the booking system and believed it to be straightforward. There had been a few teething issues and she hoped that the system would generate real behavioural changes. The Director stated that there was an increased level of engagement with many respondents to the survey expressing that they believed they were giving recycling more attention.

Councillor MacArthur hoped that landfill skips would be freed up on other sites and the Director believed that Millisle was being considered as another site for hard plastics. She referred to small electrical appliances too and wondered how the Council was progressing to have those recycled at the kerbside. The Director stated that the next item for focus would be textiles but that the resources of the Council were finite and kerbside recycling for electrical items was not on the cards at the moment but that it would be kept under review.

Alderman McIlveen thanked Members for their support and felt it would do no harm to look at the figures again in November to spot emerging issues before the busy period in December. It was not an easy system to have to implement but it was necessary, and he hoped that it would bring the results required.

When Alderman McIlveen's amendment was put to the meeting with a show of hands 34 voted for it and 2 voted against so it was CARRIED.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Smith that;

1. Progress with the implementation of the new HRC access booking system be noted.
2. Officers continue to review the new HRC access booking system and onsite operational management arrangements, to identify potential for further improvement and that a further report to be brought to the November Council meeting to include:
 - details and an assessment of reports of fly-tipping in the Borough since implementation of the booking system compared to previously
 - an assessment of whether the implementation of the booking system has had an impact on the total amount of waste deposited at each of the Borough's HRCs
 - an assessment as to whether there has been an increase in the misuse of grey bins as a result of the implementation of the booking system such as whether there has been an increase in the detection of misuse and the issuing of letters regarding such misuse or sampling of waste from grey bins against baseline figures.
 - proposals to provide additional booking slots or additional means to address the traditionally busy festive period
 - a report on the handling of our constituents' data in line with GDPR obligations in particular those who have served or continue to serve in security sensitive roles.
3. Waste statistics following the introduction of the new HRC management regime be reviewed as part of a report to the Environment Committee on Q3 Northern Ireland Local Authority Municipal Waste Management Statistics and Update on Recycling Progress, scheduled for March 2024.

12. NOMINATION TO OUTSIDE BODIES

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

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

1. Arts and Heritage Advisory Panel – 5 Places (1 Year Appointment)
2. North Down and Ards Road Safety Committee – 7 Places (1 Year Appointment)
3. National Association of Councillors – 8 Places (4 year Appointment) (2023-27)
4. Northern Ireland Museums Council – 1 Place (4 Year Appointment)

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

Body: Arts and Heritage Advisory Panel – 5 Places (1 Year Appointment)

1	Councillor MacArthur
2	Councillor Kennedy
3	Councillor Smart
4	Councillor Wray
5	

Body: North Down and Ards Road Safety Committee – 7 Places (1 Year Appointment)

1	Councillor McRandal
2	Councillor Morgan
3	Councillor Cochrane
4	Councillor Wray
5	-
6	-
7	

Body: National Association of Councillors – 8 Places (4-year Appointment) (2023-27)

1	Councillor Boyle
2	Alderman McDowell
3	Councillor Hollywood
4	
5	-
6	-
7	-
8	-

Body: Northern Ireland Museums Council – 1 Place (4-year Appointment)

1	
----------	--

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

RECOMMENDED that Council nominate a Member to the following groups:

1. Arts and Heritage Advisory Panel – 5 Places (1 Year Appointment)
2. North Down and Ards Road Safety Committee – 7 Places (1 Year Appointment)
3. National Association of Councillors – 8 Places (4 year Appointment) (2023-27)
4. Northern Ireland Museums Council – 1 Place (4 Year Appointment)

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McRandal, seconded by Councillor Irwin, that the recommendation be adopted and that Councillor Harbinson be nominated for the Arts and Heritage Advisory Panel, no further nomination be made for the North Down and Ards Road Safety Committee and that Councillor Creighton be nominated for the National Association of Councillors and the Northern Ireland Museums Council.

(Councillor S Irvine left the meeting at 10.45 pm)

13. SEALING DOCUMENTS

RESOLVED: - On the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter

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

- (f) Grant of Rights of Burial: Deed D40122 – D40177
- (g) Statutory Receipt for Dfl Vesting in 2007 of A20 Southern Distributor Road, Newtownards - Plot 16
- (h) Statutory Receipt for Dfl Vesting in 2007 of A20 Southern Distributor Road, Newtownards – Plot 37

14. TRANSFER OF RIGHTS OF BURIAL

The following transfers were received:

Transfer:

Movilla Cemetery - Section 61 Grave 232 - Kathleen Dorrian – Rachel Curran
 Clandeboye Cemetery – Section AH Grave 2548 - George Matier – Dorothy Sinclair
 Redburn Cemetery – Grave 978 - Sheila King – Jennifer King
 Redburn Cemetery – Grave 979 - Sheila King -Jennifer King
 Ballyvester Cemetery Section North Verge West End Grave 18 - Mrs H McClurg – Mrs Hannah Irwin

Duplicate:

Clandeboye Cemetery AH Grave 2547 - George Matier

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Martin, that the transfer be noted.

15. NOTICE OF MOTION STATUS REPORT

(Appendix X)

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.

Proposed by Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Councillor Woods, that the Notice of Motion Status Report be adopted.

Councillor Cathcart asked if there had been any progress in relation to naming a place in Bangor after Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The Chief Executive informed that it was unfortunate that the Council had not yet heard back from the Northern Ireland Office but he would chase that up.

Councillor Woods asked about how items were removed from the Status Report and the Chief Executive informed her it was when the actions were complete. The Corporate Leadership Team of the Council made the decision as to when this point was reached but Members could raise matters where they believed that that this was not the case.

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

16. NOTICES OF MOTION

16.1 Notice of Motion from Councillor Moore and Councillor Creighton

This Council believes:

- education should be accessible to all who seek it and embedding a culture of lifelong learning in our society is essential to enabling people to realise their potential.
- part-time flexible learning is crucial to meeting the skills needed to build a modern, inclusive and green economy.
- part-time students are a unique demographic, they are more likely to have disabilities, come from disadvantaged backgrounds, have caring responsibilities, such as children or elderly relatives, and in general, be part of a 'hard to reach' group who missed out on full-time study.¹
- lifelong learning, including non-formal education, addresses social issues, strengthens communities and builds civic engagement. It is the most effective tool for meeting social policy objectives and creating positive social change.
- recognises that lifelong learning must become a meaningful and developed policy area with tangible actions and outcomes, underpinned by the wealth of best practice and innovation from across the UK and Ireland.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- To work with the Lifelong Learning Alliance to develop a Lifelong Learning campaign, to inform and raise public awareness of how lifelong learning transforms lives and communities.

- Engage with MLAs and MPs to prioritise funding for formal and informal part-time education when the Executive is formed.
- Encourage MLAs to form an All-Party Group on Lifelong Learning to support an evidence and best-practice informed approach to policy making, in collaboration with adult education bodies to form a voice for Lifelong Learning in the Assembly when an Executive is formed.

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

16.2 Notice of Motion from Councillor Woods and Councillor McKee

That this Council, recognising its commitment as a responsible employer, and that staff are paid the current Living Wage, tasks officers to explore becoming 'Living Wage' accredited with the UK Living Wage Foundation, as well as ensuring any regularly contracted employees and workers, including those who are employed externally to deliver Council services, are paid the living wage hourly rate. It also explores also becoming Living Hours and Living Pensions accredited too.

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

16.3 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Adair and Councillor Douglas

That Council notes the increasing complaints regarding the poor condition and appearance of our cemeteries across the Borough and tasks officers to bring back a report on options to improve the maintenance of our cemeteries which are places of special significance to those who have lost loved ones.

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

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

7.4 Matter Arising Minutes of Corporate Services Committee dated 12 September 2023

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

In respect of Item 3 – Minutes of SPFG Meeting 23 August 2023

Questions were asked by Members relating to the minutes of the Strategic Policy and Finance Group of 23 August 2023.

7.2.1 Matter Arising – Governance Arrangement for Management of Council Harbours Appointment of ‘Duty Holder’

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

A report on the arrangements for the governance of Council harbours was considered.

It was agreed to adopt the recommendation that the Environment Committee of the Council be considered as “The Duty Holder” under the Port Marine Safety Code, with ongoing delegated authority to make decisions relating to Harbour Safety.

17. DISPOSAL OF KINNEGAR LOGISTICS BASE UPDATE (Appendices XI – XIII)

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

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

The report provided an update on privileged legal advice received on the Council's decision to instruct Council's solicitors to engage with any companies, groups or organisations expressing an interest in working in partnership with the Council. As well as legal advice on a MOU received by Council. It was recommended and agreed that Council, after careful consideration of the legal opinion, does not proceed to negotiate or enter into a MOU with organisations until such times as the SOC for Kinnegar Logistics Base has been considered and agreed by Council, and a public process to invite expressions of interest has been launched. Council also noted a letter received from an organisation expressing their potential interest in the purchase of the site. It was further agreed that Council continues to complete the SOC.

18. NIE REQUEST FOR USE OF LAND CASTLE PLACE CAR PARK, NEWTOWNARDS (Appendices XIV - XVI)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION – EXEMPTION CLAIM TO LEGAL PROFESSIONAL PRIVILEGE

The Council had received a request from NIE Networks for a lease for a new substation at Kennel Lane Carpark along with a licence for a temporary working area, Newtownards which will facilitate a connection to a social housing development

C27.09.23PM

36

in Frances Street. Council was asked to agree to the request subject to the terms and conditions outlined in the report.

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 11.55 pm.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Planning Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards on Tuesday 3 October 2023 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Alderman McIlveen

Alderman: Smith (7.03 pm)

Councillors:	Cathcart	McRandal
	Creighton	McLaren
	Kerr	Morgan
	McCollum	Wray

Officers: Director of Prosperity (A McCullough), Head of Planning (G Kerr), Senior Professional & Technical Officers (C Rodgers, P Kerr & A Todd), Principal Professional & Technical Officers (C Blair (zoom) & L Maginn) and Democratic Services Officer (S McCrea and J Glasgow)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend were received from Alderman Graham, Alderman McDowell, Councillor McKee, Councillor Martin and Councillor Woods.

An apology for lateness was received from Alderman Smith.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest notified.

(Alderman Smith entered the meeting – 7.03 pm)

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE 05 SEPTEMBER 2023

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above.

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

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

4.1 LA06/2018/0673/O - Lands approx. 51m east of 1 Cardy Road East and approx. 11m south of 10 Cardy Road East Greyabbey (Appendices I - II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's report and addendum.

DEA: Ards Peninsula

Committee Interest: A local development application 'called-in' to Planning Committee from the delegated list by a member of that Committee.

Proposal: Proposed dwelling and garage

Site Location: Lands approx. 51m east of 1 Cardy Road East and approx. 11m south of 10 Cardy Road East Greyabbey

Recommendation: Refusal

The Principal Planning Officer (C Blair) addressed the Committee and explained that the application was before members as it had been 'called-in' to the Planning Committee from the delegated list by Councillor Cathcart. Members were asked to note that as the application was for outline approval, it was the principle of development that was being considered with any detail to be submitted for reserved matters should the recommendation to refuse planning permission be overturned by members. The application was originally refused planning permission on 25 February 2020 after it appeared and was not called in from the weekly planning applications delegated list. The application was then appealed to the Planning Appeals Commission. However, the PAC determined on 30 September 2021 that the Council's decision could not be considered valid, as per section 58 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 as the address submitted by the Planning Agent was incorrect. As it had been advertised and used on neighbour notifications, the PAC found that the requirements of Article 8 of the Planning (General Development Procedure) Order (NI) 2015 had not been satisfied, which rendered the application invalid. The application was therefore required to be considered again and following inclusion on the delegated list for a second time, was called in for debate at Planning Committee.

As there had been no change in the policy to be considered, the reasons for refusal had not changed since the Council's original decision on 25 February 2020. Furthermore, the applicant had not amended the application since it was previously refused by the Council. The reasons for refusal were not considered by the PAC as it found the application to be invalid. The refusal reasons listed included, the proposal was contrary to the SPPS and PPS 21 'Sustainable Development in the Countryside' – policies:

- CTY 8 – the proposal did not constitute a small gap site and would result in the creation of a ribbon of development;
- CTY 2a – the proposal was not within an existing cluster of development;
- CTY 13 – the proposal failed to be integrated into the surrounding countryside and lacked long established boundaries;

- CTY 14 - the proposed development would erode the rural character of the area due to a build-up of development and the creation of a ribbon of development along Cardy Road East.

Since this application was made valid in November 2021 with a corrected address, two letters of objection had been received. On the day the application was included on the delegated list last month, 14 letters of support were submitted, which had been considered in the Addendum to the Case Officer Report. Members were asked to note that although an additional 14 letters of support were submitted, it counted as 6 given the same address was provided for several letters and others signed a proforma template.

No statutory consultee had objections to the application.

The site was located on the southern side of Cardy Road East within the rural area outside of any settlement limits, consisting of part of a field located between Cardy Gospel Hall and its associated car park to the west of the site and a dwelling to the south of the site at 7 Cardy Road East. The site was relatively flat and the boundary to the road was open with the exception of a couple of small trees. The southeastern, southwestern and western boundaries of the site were undefined while the northwestern boundary with the Gospel Hall was defined by a fence along with some trees. The area was rural in character with agricultural fields, dispersed dwellings and agricultural buildings.

With regard to the policy consideration for the application, the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 was the local development plan for the area. The site was located in the countryside and was not within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or any specific zonings. The Planning Department's professional judgment had been that the proposal was contrary to the Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland and policies contained within PPS 21 'Sustainable Development in the Countryside'.

Policy CTY 8 of PPS 21 stated that planning permission would be refused for a building which created or added to a ribbon of development. The policy also stated that in order to assess whether an infill opportunity existed, it was necessary to ascertain whether a substantial and continuously built-up frontage existed. Policy CTY8 defined a substantial and built-up frontage to include a line of three or more buildings along a road frontage without accompanying development to the rear. A building was considered to have frontage to a road if the plot on which it stood abutted or shared a boundary with that road. It had been established through a number of Planning Appeal decisions that it was the building's curtilage that needed to extend to the road rather than merely its access.

In this case, there were two buildings located to the immediate northwest of the site. Both belonged to Cardy Gospel Hall and both had a frontage to the road. To the immediate southeast of the site was the dwelling at 7 Cardy Road East. The plot belonging to No. 7 was set back from the road and only its access adjoined the road. As such it could not be considered that this dwelling had a frontage to the road and therefore in this case there was not a substantial and continuously built-up frontage

of 3 or more buildings and the site could not be considered as a gap site for the purposes of Policy CTY8.

Additionally, the proposal for a dwelling and garage would result in the creation of a ribbon of development along this southern side of Cardy Road East as it would clearly read with the two existing gospel hall buildings particularly given that much of the site's vegetation had been removed, which opened up views right to the back of this flat site.

CTY2A explained that planning permission would be granted for a dwelling at an existing cluster of development provided all the listed criteria were met. The first criterion listed in policy CTY 2a stated that the cluster of development lay outside of a farm and consisted of four or more buildings (excluding ancillary buildings such as garages, outbuildings, and open-sided structures) of which at least three were dwellings.

Whilst the area to the northern side of Cardy Road East identified by the applicant's agent would include four or more buildings of which at least three were dwellings, the area did appear to include farms with associated dwellings including numbers 6, 8a and 10. As such, the first criterion of policy CTY 2a could not be met.

An aerial image in slides was shown to provide a clearer view of the site and surrounding area which comprised of a scattering of dispersed development with considerable gaps between buildings close to the Cardy Road / Cardy Road East junction. The agent had advised that the dwelling to the southeast of the site – No.7 Cardy Road East, was outside what was considered by the applicant to be the existing cluster in this area. As such, the sole property to the southern side of the road at the time of writing and next to the application site within the proposed cluster as defined by the applicant's agent was the Gospel Hall site.

The next criterion under Policy CTY 2A was that the cluster appeared as a visual entity in the local landscape. There was no perception of an existing cluster appearing as a visual entity when approaching the site from the east. When viewing the site from the west, there was an acknowledgement of an existing ribbon of development to the northern side of Cardy Road East comprising four dwellings, however there was no appearance or link with being a visual entity to the existing development to the southern side of Cardy Road East, which comprised solely of the Gospel Hall sandwiched between existing fields (as No.7 Cardy Road East was beyond the purported cluster as identified by the applicant).

The third criterion under policy CTY 2a was that the cluster had been associated with a focal point such as a social/community building/facility or was located at a crossroads. The existing gospel hall would represent a focal point given that it would constitute a community building. However, it was not considered that this was located within an existing cluster of development for the purposes of this policy. Additionally, there was no visual link between the alleged cluster and the existing junction between Cardy Road and Cardy Road East. This had been reinforced by the clear visual break in development on the southern side of Cardy Road East. The fourth criterion stipulated that the proposal site provided a suitable degree of enclosure and was bounded on at least two sides with other development in the

cluster. From the slides, the Officer directed Members to a photo which showed that the site was not bounded on at least two sides with other development in the cluster. It also had a number of boundaries which were undefined and could not provide a suitable degree of enclosure lacking integration.

The fifth criterion required that the proposed site could be absorbed into the existing cluster through rounding off and consolidation and would not significantly alter its existing character or visually intrude into the open countryside.

The Planning Department's professional opinion was that there was no existing cluster, which this site was part of. The character of the area was that of a dispersed pattern of development with the exception of the ribbon of development on the opposite northern side of the road. The site would not be easily absorbed given its lack of enclosure and very open views from the public road. It was considered that a dwelling on this site would intrude into the open countryside resulting in an urbanising effect through the creation of a ribbon of development when read with the existing gospel hall buildings and contributing to the general build-up of development within this locality when also read with the dwelling opposite at No. 10. It was also considered that the proposed site did not meet the requirements of policies CTY 13 and 14 of PPS 21 given the lack of integration and erosion of rural character. It was considered that the proposal complied with the final criterion of CTY 2a in that it would not adversely impact on residential amenity. The proposed site did not meet all of the requirements as required under policy CTY 2a and therefore could not be considered to be a part of an existing cluster of development in this countryside location. In conclusion, the Planning Department's professional opinion had not changed from February 2020 in that the proposed site was contrary to the requirements set out under the SPPS and PPS 21 policies CTY 8, 2A, 13 and 14. The Planning Department remained of the opinion that this application should be refused, as it did during the original processing of the application in February 2020.

The Chairman invited questions from Members.

Councillor McRandal queried CTY8 and built-up frontage wherein there was a requirement for three or more buildings on the road and that a building's curtilage had to extend to the road than just access to the site. The Officer, whilst referring to the slide, pointed out that No.7 Cardy Road East's access reached the roadside as opposed to curtilage abutting the road. There was a green space alongside the road to the left-hand side of the access on the site location plan that appeared to be land owned by the applicant as outlined in blue on the site location plan and as such it was not part of the curtilage of No.7 Cardy Road East.

The Chairman referenced planning site history and whether the invalid determination would be included on that as well as what buildings were included as dwellings within the discussion. The Officer explained that the policy had to be reconsidered during reassessment. There had been no policy change since the time of the original submission. The only change was one reason for refusal being based on a lack of environmental information which had since been submitted. NIEA was content and so the original refusal reason was removed. In regard to the invalid decision being included on planning history, the Officer explained that it was a set context and given that it had been appealed, the committee needed to know. Houses 10, 8A and 6 were on land associated with the farm and with potential dwellings under CTY2A

which states what can be considered to form part of an existing cluster, this was considered part of an existing farm and could not be included. With other remaining dwellings on the northern side, Planning considered they formed part of an existing ribbon of development and not considered to form part of an existing cluster. At the Gospel Hall site, there was the former hall and new building at the back of the site. There was, at the time of writing, no information pertaining to whether houses 10, 8A and 6 were part of the farm, sold off or just on land surrounded by a farm.

The Head of Planning added that, given the extremely tight positioning of dwellings near the farm as could be viewed by aerial photographs, it was acceptable to assume they were farm dwellings.

As there no further questions at this stage, the Chairman invited Mr Magill (Agent) to be brought into the meeting via Zoom.

Mr Magill explained that Mr Davidson ran two large companies in the area and as a reputable businessman he did not seek that which he was not entitled to. He believed Cardy Road was considered as part of a cluster and that it was unfortunate such had not been taken into consideration by the Council. It was his opinion that No.7 was part of the cluster and the site was surrounded by development on all sides whilst being bounded on two sides. He suggested it already availed of a degree of natural enclosure and the site did not intrude on open countryside. With regard to No.7a, 6 and 7 lying within a farm, Mr Magill stated no evidence existed to support the claim and that Mr Davidson had also attested to such not being the case. When viewing the area from the Northeast or whilst rounding the corner, he suggested the area did appear to be a visually entity suggesting a cluster. Vegetation that existed already was in keeping with the environment and would assist in integration however, given this was an outline application, there was an ability to allow for further requirements made through proposals at reserved matters stage. In addressing dwellings, he believed No.4 opposite and No.7 were within the cluster with the latter appearing to be part of the cluster when viewed from Cardy Road East. In addition, Mr Magill believed it met Policy CTY2A to be part of a cluster without changing the character of the area and, when viewed alongside more supporting than objecting representation, he would hope the recommendation would be approval.

The Chairman invited questions from Members.

Councillor McLaren queried Mr Magill's view of No.7 and whether he believed the Committee should place more emphasis on those letters with addresses at the location. Mr Magill disagreed with the Planning Departments' view of that No.7's screening and distance from the road would place it outside of a cluster. He accepted that of 14 letters received, six had separate addresses but pointed out that there were only two objections by comparison and that any representations regardless of address locations should be considered.

In response to Councillor Cathcart querying the farm dwellings, Mr Magill explained that whilst an assertion had been made that the dwellings were part of a farm, no evidence existed to back that claim and though they may appear as part of a farm,

the applicant had confirmed no farm existed in the area and as such the buildings should not be excluded.

Given that two buildings existed at The Cardy Gospel Hall and Mr Magill's suggestion of No.7 being considered part of a cluster would meet a policy for three dwellings, he believed it would be beneficial for Members to visit the site to better understand the view of it being a cluster.

The Chairman asked for clarification on the policy requiring bounding on two sides how this requirement was met. Mr Magill appreciated that the Planning Department were using the argument that No.10 was located across the road and as such would not form a boundary and had been a reason in the past for exclusion. However, he advised the Committee of the PAC setting a precedent in that buildings opposite roads or laneways had been considered previously. If No.10 had been set further back from the road, he agreed it could be called into question but given that it was located right on the road, it was close enough to the site and therefore other than the width of the road, did bound the site.

As there were no further questions for Mr Magill he was returned to the virtual public gallery.

The Chairman invited further questions for the Planning Officer.

Councillors discussed the letters of support and objection and their position in terms of locality to site. Both the Principal Planner and Head of Planning explained that several of the letters had no addresses but that any representations made would be considered no matter the geographical location of the sender. Letters of support had been forwarded at the time of the application appearing on the delegation list and Officers had been unaware if any letters had been received from the local area.

Councillor Cathcart asked, whilst referring to figures 7 and 8 of the presentation, how development would cause demonstrable harm to the locality given his perception of continuous frontage and being bound on sides of the site. In addition, he wanted some clarity on the Planning Department's stance regarding No.7 and the view that it did not form part of a gap-site.

The Head of Planning explained that clusters were not a common subject in the Committee and provided a definition; that clusters appear as a visual entity, associated with tight bands of development; something this location would not be considered as. Clusters included crossroads, staggered junctions and community buildings. If the Committee were to decide this was a cluster, it would also have to accept the decision would open the location to possible future development. A driver would perceive the road as open with no sense of a cluster and, given the wide area considered, it was believed the decision to approve would lead to demonstrable harm. In regard to No.7, the Head of Planning explained there was no frontage to the road and that the curtilage does not fall under ownership of No.7.

Councillor McCollum asked of the initial application's status regarding the dwellings forming part of a cluster and how to resolve the disagreement regarding whether dwellings were part of a farm or not. The Head of Planning advised that as the initial

application had been deemed invalid, the process had begun anew and that proof had not been provided on dwellings being included in a farm or not. As such, it would not meet the policy.

Councillor Wray asked of the merit in a site visit and if the recommendation was overturned, would the precedent significantly affect future planning applications for the area or if a case-by-case methodology could still be applied.

The Chairman explained that a site visit would be a matter for consideration against the Committee's Planning Protocol and that the Committee could visit the site at the next stage of proposal if it helped with a decision. The Head of Planning added that any plans presented in the future would require Members to be mindful of decisions made tonight and provide explanation on why any future consideration would be different.

In response to Councillor McLaren referencing the cleared site and possibility of interference with natural boundaries, the Head of Planning advised that the Case Officer had assessed the site at the time and noted extensive clearing of vegetation when the proposal was first submitted.

Alderman Smith spoke of Policies CTY13 and CTY14 as well as CTY2A and identifying what constituted as farm. He recalled the Principal Planner having spoken of five criteria that all needed to be met. In that analysis, none of the five had been met but in a scenario where only one or two criteria failed, he asked if his understanding was correct in that the whole policy would fall, which the Head of Planning confirmed.

The Chairman recognised the Committee had a lot of issues regarding the identification of a cluster and whether houses in the area formed part of a farm. With no evidence from Mr Magill or the Planning Department, it was up to the Committee to decide on all matters.

Proposed by Alderman Smith, seconded by Councillor McRandal that the recommendation be adopted and that planning permission be refused.

Alderman Smith explained that Officers had clarified that the application did not meet Policies CTY8, then CTY 13, 14 and CTY2A and as such, there was no criteria on which to approve the application.

With 7 voting FOR, 3 AGAINST, 0 ABSTAINING and 6 ABSENT, the recommendation was agreed. The vote resulted as follows:

FOR (7)	AGAINST (3)	ABSTAINED (0)	ABSENT (6)
Alderman Smith	Alderman McIlveen		Aldermen Graham McDowell
Councillors Creighton McCollum McLaren McRandal	Councillors Cathcart Kerr		Councillors Harbinson Martin McKee Woods

Morgan
Wray

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Smith, seconded by Councillor McRandal, that the recommendation be adopted and that planning permission be refused.

4.2 LA06/2021/1168/O - Land approx. 70m SE of 15 Newcastle Road, Portaferry
(Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's report.

DEA: Ards Peninsula

Committee Interest: A local development application 'called-in' to Planning Committee from the delegated list by a member of that Committee.

Proposal: Dwelling and garage on farm

Site Location: Land approx. 70m SE of 15 Newcastle Road, Portaferry

Recommendation: Refusal

The Principal Planning Officer (C Blair) advised Members that as the application was for outline permission, it was the principle of development that was to be considered with the detail of the proposal to be submitted at any reserved matters stage should the recommendation for refusal being overturned by members this evening. The application was before members as it had been 'called-in' to the Planning Committee from the delegated list by Councillor Wray.

In terms of consultation responses, DAERA had confirmed that the farm business had been established for more than 6 years with application land part of the farm holding. Members were asked to note that although recommending refusal of the application, the Planning Department was content that Policy CTY 10 of PPS 21 'Sustainable Development in the Countryside' had been met and had not formed a refusal reason on this basis. In addition, Historic Monuments Branch had requested an archaeological evaluation of the site given it contained an archaeological site/monument and this was reflected in the refusal reasons under lack of information as per policies BH2 and BH 3 of PPS 6 'Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage'. The remaining consultees had no objection subject to conditions. No representations had been submitted either in support of or objecting to the proposal during the processing of the application.

The application site was located roadside, approximately 70m southeast of 15 Newcastle Road, Portaferry, and was part of an agricultural field. An agricultural gate was located on the southwest boundary and led to the respective field/application site. The applicant's existing farm dwelling and sheds lay adjacent and northwest of the application site. The western side of the application site was elevated above road-level with the topography then declining in an easterly directly with road frontage for approximately 44m with its southwest roadside boundary defined by a stone wall, backed by post and wire fencing. The northern boundary was defined by post and wire fencing and vegetation. The southeast boundary was

defined by a hedgerow and post and wire fencing. The northeast boundary was undefined as the application site formed part of a large agricultural field.

A number of residential properties were located in the immediate surrounding area however, only No. 15 Newcastle Road (the applicant's farm dwelling) and No. 17 Newcastle Road had road frontage on the eastern side of Newcastle Road. A row of detached dwellings was located north of the application site on the opposite side of Newcastle Road.

As for policy considerations for the application, the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 was the local development plan for the area at the time of writing. The site was located in the countryside and was situated inside Strangford and Lecale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and contained an unscheduled archaeological site and monument. While the Planning Department accepted that the applicant had demonstrated six years for an active and established farm, there were also other criteria related to CTY 10 that required to be met including CTY 13 – Integration and CTY 14 – Rural Character.

Policy CTY 13 of PPS 21 which dealt with integration and design of buildings stated that planning permission would be granted where a building could be visually integrated into the surrounding landscape and was of an appropriate design. As this was an application for outline planning permission, the design of the building was not a relevant factor, which would be considered under Reserved Matters. The site fronted the roadside adjacent and southeast of the existing farm dwelling, yard and buildings. The application site occupied a prominent roadside position on elevated land, which was at the highest point in the existing field, and which was visible when travelling in either direction on Newcastle Road, especially from the south to southwest, where the application site could be seen for a considerable distance (up to 380 metres away heading northwards towards the site).

The site lacked long established boundaries to the front and rear with a stone wall and post and fencing along the front (44 metre-wide frontage) and rear undefined. When approaching the site from the southwest, the existing farm dwelling and sheds provided only a partial, short distance minor backdrop as the farm holding was located on a descending sloped site which dropped away from the roadside. When approaching the site from the northwest, there was no backdrop as existing agricultural land fell away from the roadside behind the site. The proposed site did not blend unobtrusively into the surrounding landscape. A new building on this site, which was at the top of a slope would read as a skyline development and prominent feature in the landscape, with no backdrop from most of the short distance and long-distance critical views along Newcastle Road. As such, this proposed siting was considered to be unacceptable in terms of Policy CTY 13.

In terms of Policy CTY 14 'Rural Character,' as had been established, the site was prominent in the landscape and as such Criterion (a) of CTY 14 could not be met. The proposed roadside location of the dwelling and garage would result in a suburban style build up when read with existing and approved development. Although the proposed site had a roadside frontage as per the majority of existing dwellings along Newcastle Road, including the applicant's existing farmhouse, the site's location added to a ribbon of development on this side of Newcastle Road,

which included the applicant's existing farm dwelling and a couple of agricultural sheds. This resulted in an urban form of build-up and loss of rural character failing to comply with CTY 14 and additionally policy CTY 8, which dealt with 'Ribbon Development.

Policy CTY 8 of PPS21 dealt with Ribbon Development. CTY 8 stated that Planning permission would be refused for a building which added or created to a ribbon of development. In the consideration of this application, it was considered that the application site represented roadside development which would extend built development along Newcastle Road and would be considered as ribbon development.

As this site was located in Strangford and Lecale AONB, policy NH6 of PPS 2 'Natural Heritage' applied. As this was an application for Outline Planning Permission with no building details required at this point, criterion (a) applied. As the proposed siting failed to comply with policies CTY 8, 13 and 14 of PPS 21 it was also considered that it was unsympathetic to the special character of the AONB in general and of the particular locality.

Members were asked to note that the Planning Department had attempted to work with the applicant regarding this application and had communicated the need to explore potential alternative sites, including immediately to the rear of the existing farm holding of farm dwelling and sheds, as this would be a location significantly less prominent in the landscape and would not result in adding to a ribbon of development. However, this alternative siting was considered to be unacceptable to the applicant. The Planning Department's professional recommendation was therefore refusal.

The Chairman invited questions from Members.

The Chairman's view had been that an archeological evaluation had not been requested as the application was not being accepted in principle and asked if the applicant would have to provide one in the event that the Committee were minded to overturn the recommendation. The Principal Planner agreed, stating this would be required at reserved matters stage.

Councillor Cathcart referenced the proposed alternative site and what reasons existed in the applicant wanting to place the barn in the suggested location. The Principal Planner explained that no verifiable information had been submitted regarding the placement location of the barn and from that perspective, there was nothing before the Committee suggesting that the applicant could not consider alternative sites given the Planning Department were content that the farm was active and established. The Head of Planning acknowledged that there had been a legitimate case for a farm dwelling and that they had not wished to decline the application. As such, they had attempted to negotiate for more acceptable alternative sites but the applicant did not agree with alternatives, mentioning future plans of the barn but no plans had been submitted in relation to that.

Councillor Wray asked what the sufficient degree of enclosure would be in relation to CTY13 on page 5 of the report. The Principal Planner advised that it was difficult to

indicate what was acceptable given they had not considered it the case in this instance as the existing farm was located on sloping land with only a minor location it could provide as an element of backdrop. Councillor Wray noted the report had stated other sites may exist on page 10 but that the statement could also infer that they also may not exist and asked if the barn was erected, would Planning have to show there was no alternative.

The Chairman warned of the difficulties when investigating from hypothetical standpoints and that Members should consider applications based on what existed instead of what may exist. The Head of Planning advised that the Department would relay alternative sites to a planning agent and that if none existed, the application would still be deemed as unacceptable as it would not have met policy.

Proposed by Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Councillor Morgan that the recommendation be adopted and that planning permission be refused.

Councillor Cathcart spoke of the sloping site with an area of archeological interest and how the opportunity to integrate with the farm in the future would be a good approach. However, the application in its current form was not suitable.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Councillor Morgan, that the recommendation be adopted and that planning permission be refused.

4.3 LA06/2021/0061/F - Lands to West of Nos. 110 & 110A-110D Movilla Road; North of Nos. 6-10 (evens) Cloverhill Park, Nos. 1, 3 & 10 Cloverhill Crescent, Nos. 5, 7 & 8 Deanswood Crescent, Nos. 12-26 (evens) Edenvale Crescent, Nos. 58 & 87 Stratheden Heights, Nos. 7, 8, 10 & 12 Kensington Park, and Nos. 2, 2A & 4 Earlswood Drive, East of Nos. 15-27 (odds) Cronstown Cottage Avenue, South of No. 8 Cronstown Lane & North of Phase 2 of "Rivenwood", Newtownards
(Appendix IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's report.

DEA: Ards Peninsula

Committee Interest: Application in the Major category of development

Proposal: Proposed residential development comprising the erection of 188 No. dwellings, open space (including NS 43) landscaping, children's play area, next phase of the distributor road, internal road network, SuDs ponds and all associated site and access works and proposed amendment of the section 76 planning agreement (additional information and amended Concept Masterplan and Phasing Plan).

Site Location: Lands to West of Nos. 110 & 110A-110D Movilla Road; North of Nos. 6-10 (evens) Cloverhill Park, Nos. 1, 3 & 10 Cloverhill Crescent, Nos. 5, 7 & 8 Deanswood Crescent, Nos. 12-26 (evens) Edenvale Crescent, Nos. 58 & 87 Stratheden Heights, Nos. 7, 8, 10 & 12 Kensington Park, and Nos. 2, 2A & 4 Earlswood Drive, East of Nos. 15-27 (odds) Cronstown Cottage Avenue, South of No. 8 Cronstown Lane & North of Phase 2 of "Rivenwood", Newtownards

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

The Senior Professional & Technical Officer (C Rodgers) explained that full planning permission was sought for the next phase of the Rivenwood housing development in Newtownards. The proposal was for 188 dwellings, open space, a children's play area, the next phase of the NS20 distributor road and a SuDS Pond. In addition, the Applicant had requested an amendment to the terms of the original S76 Planning Agreement. The recommendation was to Grant Planning Permission subject to the execution of an amended planning agreement. In the presented slide, Members could see the location of the site to the north of the existing Rivenwood development accessed from the Movilla Road.

The site formed part of the NS20 housing zoning and the NS43 area of open space designated by the Ards and Down Area Plan. With regard to DP requirements, the Plan stated that development of the zoning would only be permitted in accordance with an agreed comprehensive scheme that would incorporate the NS43 open space and provide the necessary public infrastructure to serve those lands. The Plan further stated proposals that were reliant on the construction of roads schemes would not be permitted in advance of the road scheme being completed to an appropriate stage.

Key Design Considerations for the zoning included:

- A minimum of 20 and a maximum of 25 dwellings per hectare
- Provision of a distributor road – which would run from a roundabout on the Movilla Road to a roundabout on the Donaghadee Road. This would connect to the adjacent housing zonings NS19 and NS21 and would form part of the wider Eastern Distributor Road.
- Phasing of housing development in relation to infrastructure works.
- A 2-hectare site reserved for a new school.
- A local neighbourhood centre on an approximately 1.5 hectare site.

Members were shown the Concept Master Plan for the wider NS20 site: The Applicant's land holding comprised phases 1,2 and 3 of the zoning. The application at the time of writing related to phases 3a and 3b. In 2016 the Council granted planning permission for phase 1 which included the land set aside for the school.

The Council subsequently granted planning permission for phase 2 in 2019. This permission was subject to a Planning Agreement which related to all of the Developer's land holding, including the land which was the subject of the application at the time of writing. The development of phase 1 had been completed and phase 2 was at an advanced stage of construction.

The Original Planning Agreement was designed to ensure comprehensive development of the zoning and in so doing, prevent piecemeal development or the creation of ransom strips of land contrary to planning policy.

The developer agreed to the phased delivery of the key development plan requirements: including the construction of a distributor road through the Developer's entire land holding at various trigger points linked to the quantum of dwellings occupied.

The proposed Concept Masterplan showed the other key requirements of the plan including the school site, neighbourhood centre and NS43 open space located within the Applicant's land holding.

In another slide, a summary of the obligations in the original Planning Agreement in relation to the Distributor Road was provided. The road had already been constructed through phases 1 and 2. The original agreement required the delivery of the entire phase 3 distributor road before the final 35 houses (approved under phase 2) could be occupied.

An issue had arisen whereby NI Water had sought to restrict the occupation of new housing development in the area until the foul sewage infrastructure had been upgraded to deliver sufficient capacity. NI Water had advised that the solution must be developer led and funded. As a consequence, the Developer had requested that the planning agreement was amended to permit occupation of additional units prior to construction of the phase 3 Distributor Road.

In order to facilitate delivery of the development plan in the wider public interest, Planning officials and the Council's solicitor worked closely with the Applicant to agree a solution that was both Plan and policy compliant. Members were presented with the amended obligations. Whilst the amended agreement would allow additional houses to be constructed prior to completion of the road in Phase 3, dates had been introduced by which stage the road was to be delivered which did not feature in the original agreement.

No more than 170 Dwellings in Phase 2 could be occupied until the Road had been constructed in full to the point that was marked, 'Y,' on the phasing plan and this was to be delivered no later than 31st December 2025;

No more than 40 dwellings within Phase 3 could be occupied until the Road had been constructed in full to the point that was marked, 'Z,' and this was to be delivered no later than 31st December 2027.

In order to guarantee the delivery of the road, the applicant had agreed to additional safeguards which also had not formed part of the original agreement.

In the event of non-compliance with the obligations, the Applicant had agreed to the Transfer of the phase 3 road corridor to the Council. The Officer advised Members that the acquisition of land by the Council had been agreed, in principle, by the Council's Corporate Services Committee. The Applicant had also agreed to provide a secure guarantee which would pay to the Council the cost of the construction of the phase 3 distributor road.

Therefore, if the agreement were breached, the Council would have access to the road land and would be able to call upon the secure guarantee to fund its construction. This provided the Council with certainty in relation to its delivery. The Planning Department was satisfied that these measures would ensure comprehensive development of the zoning.

Members were asked to note that there would be no change to obligations relating to the delivery of the remaining road infrastructure including the Movilla and Donaghadee Road roundabouts, the neighbourhood centre and open space, and the transfer of school site to the education authority.

Members were next shown images of the existing Rivenwood development including signalised junction at the Movilla Road, a view across phase 3 lands, the range of the different house types proposed with finishes including white brick and grey cladding, details landscape proposals including the SuDs Pond, Play Park and NS43 Area of open space and finally, the Site Layout Plan.

The overall design, scale, and massing of the proposed dwellings were largely in keeping with the existing Rivenwood development and would respect the character of the wider area where a mix of finishes and house types are present.

Planting was proposed throughout the site to soften the visual impact of the development and assist integration. Trees would line both sides of the distributor road and would also contribute to an attractive street scene. Existing mature vegetation along the eastern boundary was to be retained and enhanced to define the settlement limit.

The Applicant had made adequate provision for open space in line with policy requirements and an equipped children's play area was to be provided in the central landscaped square. Planning conditions would ensure that the open space and playpark were provided, and subsequently managed and maintained in perpetuity by a management company on behalf of the residents.

The impact on residential amenity had been considered in detail. The layout and separation distances provided would prevent any unacceptable impact occurring. In accordance with Creating Places guidance, a local distributor road (to connect the Movilla Road to the Donaghadee Road) was required at the point at which around 400 dwellings had been served.

Therefore, there would be no change to the obligation in the original planning agreement which prevented more than 119 units in phase 3 being occupied until the distributor road was constructed through phases 4&5 to connect to the Donaghadee road.

DFI Roads had provided no objection to the proposal. The proposed DR would allow for bus permeability, and cycleways and pedestrian footpaths would also be provided to promote a shift to a more sustainable mode of transport. It was proposed to amend condition 22 to ensure details of a bollard at the Old Forge pedestrian link were agreed post decision.

Subject to mitigation, no objection had been provided from key consultees in terms of natural heritage interests or designated sites with development carried out in accordance with Construction Environmental Management Plan.

The applicant had proposed to attenuate surface water via a SuDS Pond located in the open space to the west of the site. Underground storage tanks (control flow),

would swale treatment before being discharged to watercourse and permeable paving would be used in driveways.

A peer review of the SuDS design was completed and was subsequently appraised by the Storm Water Management Group in DFI.

In accordance with the advice provided, it was considered that the SuDS proposal was acceptable in principle subject to a negative condition which ensured the detailed design was approved prior to commencement of development. The condition would also require agreement of its future management and maintenance.

DFI Rivers provided no other objection to the proposal in terms of flood risk.

Members were asked to note that the planning agreement would place a restriction on development that could take place prior to a solution to the NI Water sewer capacity issues being agreed and delivered. This was to prevent any risk of harm arising.

Eight letters of objection had been received, and issues raised had been considered in detail in the Case Officer Report. With all material planning considerations examined, it was recommended that Planning permission be Granted subject to the obligations included in an amended planning agreement.

The Planning Agreement would require the separate execution of a land transfer for the road corridor in the event of a default on the terms of the planning obligations, and also a further separate deed of guarantee. This would add a further layer of protection to the Council and guarantee construction of the road.

Delegated authority was sought from the Planning Committee, post resolution, to finalise the terms of the legal documents prior to their execution by the parties.

There were no questions from elected members to the Officer.

The Chairman invited Mr Stokes and Mr Fraser to come forward who were speaking in support of the application.

Mr Stokes thanked the Committee for the opportunity to speak and introduced James Fraser, from Fraser Partners. The application represented phase 3 of the popular Rivenwood development on zoned housing lands 'NS 20'. Subject to approval at the evening's meeting, this phase would provide 188 no. high quality homes for the local community and would build upon the success of the first two phases. The development comprised a mix of detached, semi-detached and bungalow dwellings which would all incorporate eco-friendly components as standard, such as - Inset solar roof panels - Cabling for EV charging point - Double height glass elevations & enlarged window openings (designed to maximise solar gain and maintain higher temperatures in colder months) The proposals represented a high-quality and spacious residential layout which provided for various areas of open space. In Phase 3A, the zoned open space NS43 was incorporated and there was a central area within Phase 3B with an equipped children's play area. There was also a SuDS pond area, which in Phase 2 had proven popular amenity space and

biodiversity area with new residents, and was one of the first of its kind in NI. The proposals were in general conformity with the approved Concept Masterplan and retained a 1.5 hectare site for a future Neighbourhood Centre. The Phase 3 layout also included for the next Phase of the NS 20 Distributor Road. The Applicant had already delivered a substantial section of Distributor Road from Movilla Road into their lands. The delivery of the Distributor Road was secured by a Section 76 Legal Agreement, however, due to the unavailability of NI Water connections for most of Phase 3 of the Rivenwood development at the time of writing, they had made a request to vary the triggers within the Section 76. This request had been subject to careful discussion between the Applicant and the Planning Officers since the application was lodged, to balance supporting ongoing housing with the comprehensive delivery of the distributor road. During the course of the application, it had been agreed that no housing in Phase 3 could be occupied until a 200 metre section of the road between two defined points was constructed and completed to the standard for preliminary adoption, and in any event this initial section must have been completed no later than 31 December 2025. Furthermore, no more than 40 dwellings in the Phase 3 lands could then be occupied until the road was continued to the boundary of the Applicant's lands and in any event no later than 31 December 2027. These commitments to deliver the Distributor Road through the Applicant's lands in two stages had specific dates attached by which those sections must be completed. This, together with a land transfer, and a guarantee to provide funding in the event of default, were all significant assurances that the Distributor Road would continue in advance of occupation of dwellings within the Applicant's lands and were an improvement on the existing Planning Agreement, as there was, at the time of writing, agreed firm dates by which the road must be delivered by and in place.

Finally, Mr Stokes thanked officers for all their input over the last number of years working through the next phase of the development, which the applicant was keen to continue delivering. The scheme represented an investment of around £25m and would sustain around 60 construction jobs and support local suppliers. He respectfully requested the Committee to endorse this recommendation, thanking them for their time.

Councillor Cathcart referenced slide 15 and phasing, and, presuming further development would occur between the open space and playpark with access, asked if they would ensure access would remain available. Mr Stokes directed Members to the slide, explaining that the right-hand side of the image included three pockets of open space. NS43 was the area that had been identified as part of the plan which sat above the 60 metre contour. The middle section where the play area was to be located was accessible by a road network. The open space to the far left of the slide was where the pond would be located which would not be accessible until the rest of the land was developed.

Alderman Smith, in regard to NI Water capacity issue and the Section 76 agreement asked about implications and how it had shaped the proposal before the Committee. In addition, he was concerned about assurances regarding the road in the event that the business could not supply. Mr Stokes advised Members that there were NI Water capacity issues all around Newtownards and that the solution appeared to be one led by multiple house builders with zoned land in the area. At the time of writing, connections were agreed with NI Water for 31 dwellings and with the proposal and

amendment for the road to be delivered in two sections, to build them along with the next 200 metres of road which was approximately 18 months' worth of work. During that time, it was hoped the wider strategic solution with NI water would be resolved with expenditure on local house builders' costs being in the £1.2m to £1.5m region. As for assurances, a third party guarantee existed meaning that, in the very unlikely event that the business was bankrupted, the Council would not be left with a landlocked site and would have control over the road corridor with the third-party funding.

Councillor Morgan asked how provision of pedestrian cycleway was linked to the Movilla Road and how it was affected by delay. Mr Stokes, whilst using the context map, showed how the school site had been reserved and explained that footways and cycleways were in place and identified. The Neighbourhood Centre was within the next section and if planning permission were granted, there would be an obligation to complete that section of road which would effectively unlock the Neighbourhood Centre and design process. There had to be 1.5h centre site set aside, and it had been well documented that a neighbourhood consisting of 500-600 houses meant sustainability. Where any inability to link through for cycling, links were already in place adjacent to and in existing neighbourhoods.

The Chairman asked for further clarity on the guarantee in place, especially with regard to timeframes and whether it would still hold worth with inflation. Mr Stokes explained that there was a new structure in the legal agreement and that the guarantee bond could not be called up in the event of the NI Water solution not being resolved, as Fraser would still hold the obligation to complete the works. As for the third-party guarantee, assurances had been given to legal advisors as to the level of and strength of the balance sheet of the company.

As there no further questions, Mr Stokes and Mr Fraser returned to the gallery.

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

Councillor Wray was happy to see progress in such a large project as well as the various community elements that were to be included whilst Alderman Smith appreciated the gesture of Fraser maintaining the play park in perpetuity.

Councillor Cathcart gave thanks to the developer for their efforts including tree lining and future proofing for car chargers and cycle lanes. He also thanked Officers for their efforts through the process and working so closely with the developer.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Alderman Smith, that the recommendation be adopted and that planning permission be granted.

4.4 LA06/2019/0751/F - Land at Back Hill to the rear of 7 West Hill, Groomsport
(Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's report.

DEA: Bangor East & Donaghadee

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

Proposal: Demolition of rear double garage and erection of single storey detached building for ancillary use

Site Location: Land at Back Hill to the rear of 7 West Hill, Groomsport

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

Speaking to the Committee, the Planning Manager (A Todd) explained that the application had been recommended for approval and was brought before Planning Committee as six or more representations contrary to the officer's recommendation had been received.

The site was located in a predominantly residential area within the settlement limit of Groomsport. It comprised a 1 ½ storey end terrace dwelling with a detached garage in the garden area to the rear which was separated from the dwelling by a right of way known as Back Hill running along the rear of the terraced properties. The character of Westhill was defined by terraced properties which each had linear plots of garden beyond the right of way containing a variety of ancillary buildings. The site was also located within the proposed Groomsport Area of Village Character with the mid and late Victorian buildings along The Hill and West Hill being highlighted as a key feature of the proposed AVC in draft BMAP. Slides were provided including photos of the site and area. The first photo showed the existing dwelling at No. 7 and whilst the second provided view of the right of way to the rear and some of the existing ancillary buildings on the garden plots behind. The next slide showed the existing double garage which was to be demolished and then also a view of it from the rear within the garden plot. The final two photos showed some more examples of existing ancillary buildings along Back Hill.

The original proposal submitted was for a separate one bedroom dwelling within the rear plot of No. 7 as was shown on the first image. However, the Planning Department considered this proposal to be unacceptable from the outset as it would have resulted in a loss of both parking provision and amenity space for the existing dwelling at No. 7. The proposal was subsequently amended to include ancillary accommodation only for No. 7 as was shown on the second image. This amended proposal also reduced the overall size of the building and retained ample in curtilage parking provision for the existing dwelling. The design and overall scale and massing of the building was modest and simple in form with a pitched slate roof and rendered walls, reflective of the many other ancillary buildings along Back Hill. The building would sit in a similar position on the site to the existing garage to be demolished and would have a modest floorspace of 57sqm. Existing trees and hedgerows within and along the boundaries of the site were to be retained. For these reasons, it was not considered that the proposed building would cause any harm to the overall appearance of the immediate area or the proposed AVC. The

principle of accommodation ancillary to existing dwellings was acceptable under the Addendum to Planning Policy Statement 7 Residential Extensions and Alterations provided its function was supplementary to the use of the host dwelling. While it was recommended that such accommodation should normally be attached to the existing property, exceptions were permitted in cases where an extension was not practicable and provided the scale of accommodation was modest. In this case, due to the right of way located to the immediate rear of the existing dwelling, an extension was not possible, therefore the detached building had been proposed. The level of accommodation was considered to be modest with a small bedroom and a separate small living room.

Similar ancillary accommodation for No. 9 The Hill was approved by Planning Committee in February 2020 as shown on a further slide and had since been constructed. There were also several long-established dwelling units located within some of the back land plots, therefore, a precedent existed for residential accommodation within these rear plots along Back Hill and West Hill which formed part of the character of the area. The proposed small ancillary unit would be entirely in keeping with this established pattern of development.

Objections to the amended proposal for ancillary accommodation had still however been received from 4 separate addresses. The main concerns raised included:

- Adverse impact on character of area
- Loss of privacy to existing dwellings
- Increased traffic congestion
- Potential use as Air BnB

As had been already outlined, the proposal was ancillary accommodation for the existing dwelling at No. 7 and did not involve the creation of a separate self-contained residential unit. It had also been recommended that a condition was attached to any permission stipulating that the building was to be used only for purposes ancillary to the existing dwelling at No. 7 and could not be separated, sold off or leased from No. 7. Any future letting of the building for Air BnB use would be in breach of the recommended planning conditions and would be a matter to be referred to the Planning Department's Enforcement Section. As the proposal was effectively providing additional residential accommodation associated with No. 7, it was unlikely that there would be any intensification of traffic to the site. Furthermore, three in-curtilage parking spaces were proposed which would comply with the parking standards set out in Creating Places for accommodation of this size. The Planning Department had also carefully assessed any potential impact on existing dwellings and was satisfied that there would be no adverse impact by way of loss of privacy or loss of light. The building would be 27m away from 24 The Brae which was located to the rear of the site. This was well in excess of the recommended 20m as set out in the Creating Places Guidelines. Furthermore, the finished floor level of the building would sit 3.5 metres below that of No. 24, and as such would not in any way appear dominant or result in any overshadowing to this dwelling.

In summary, it was considered that the proposal did not offend the policy requirements of either the Addendum to PPS 7 Residential Extensions and Alterations or the Addendum to PPS 6 with reference to the potential impact on the proposed Area of Village Character. The principle of ancillary accommodation was

acceptable and the scale and design of the building was modest and in keeping with other existing buildings in the rear garden plots.

On this basis it was recommended that full planning permission should be granted.

The Chairman invited questions from Members.

Councillor McCollum queried if the report would exclude AirBnB as she thought it had only been mentioned verbally. The Officer confirmed that a condition existed that covered that issue and that letting for AirBnB would not be considered as an ancillary use. The Enforcement Section would investigate any potential breach.

Proposed by Councillor Cathcart, seconded Councillor Kerr, that the recommendation be adopted and planning permission be granted.

Councillor Cathcart believed a precedent had already been set in the past which helped inform the decision to propose.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Councillor Kerr, that the recommendation be adopted, and that planning permission be granted.

RECESS

The meeting went into recess at 9.00 pm and resumed at 9.12 pm.

4.5 LA06/2023/1329/F -17 Braeside, Newtownards (Appendix VI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's report and addendum.

DEA: Newtownards

Committee Interest:

Proposal: Demolition of existing garage, two storey and single storey side extensions, Juliet balconies and dormer window to front

Site Location: 17 Braeside, Newtownards

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

The Officer (P Kerr) outlined the detail of the application which was a proposal for householder development at 17 Braeside Newtownards consisting of the demolition of the existing garage, two storey and single storey side extensions, Juliet balconies and dormer window to front.

The site was located within a small development of houses consisting of 12 units of varying designs. The character of the area was not uniform. One of the units located within the cluster of development was a bungalow.

The proposal was amended to address overlooking to the rear-two Juliet balconies were removed and in place two obscured windows and a roof light were added.

(Councillor Wray and Councillor McLaren re-entered the meeting)

There were 10 objection letters from six separate addresses and the planning issues raised were:

Overdevelopment of the site, loss of light, loss of privacy, visual impact, parking issues and increase in vehicles, scale, water capacity, flooding, disturbance. Those were addressed in detail in the case officer report and the addendum.

Other issues raised were; property value and potential use as air b'n'b. With regard to impact on property value, that was not a planning concern. With regard to the potential use as an air b'n'b, that was not the proposal presented. This application could and would be conditioned to ensure that the extensions were only used as ancillary accommodation to the dwelling.

Domestic extensions like this due to their scale and nature did not usually warrant consultation with statutory consultees. As the dwelling already existed, the water and roads infrastructure were already in place.

The proposal was within the settlement limit of Newtownards in the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 and was also located in close proximity to an ecclesiastical site and historical graveyard. HED was consulted and was content with the proposal. The proposal was within an existing domestic curtilage. It was in compliance with the development plan.

The main policy considerations were PPS2 Natural Heritage, PPS3 Access Movement and Parking, Addendum to PPS7 (Residential extensions and alterations), PPS 6 Planning, Archaeology and the Built Heritage.

The proposal was deemed to be compliant with PPS2 Natural Heritage as there were no ecological issues presented by the proposal. The proposal was compliant with PPS3 as it sought to extend a single unit dwelling house to be used by one family and no parking spaces would be lost. Consultation was not required with DFI Roads. There was space in the driveway for five cars and another one in garage as shown in the visuals. PPS 6 had also been complied with as stated above through consultation with HED.

The Planning Officer explained that the main policy consideration was the addendum to PPS7 for residential extensions and alterations, Policy EXT1 which had criteria relating to scale, massing, design, and materials and character of surrounding area, impact of amenity, impact on trees and impact on amenity space of host dwelling. Character of area was not considered to be an issue as there were large dwellings on similar sized plots in the immediate area. The Juliet balconies and dormer window would not have an adverse impact on the character of the area. The site was not located within an ATC. The proposal would be using materials to match the existing dwelling. The dwellings in the area were not uniform. The area had a mix of dwellings which included the co-existence of a single storey dwelling alongside large irregular dwellings.

Due to the fact that the existing garage was to be demolished, the single storey extension to the north was the only notable increase to the foot print of the dwelling.

The dimensions of the two storey extension were 7.3m x 8 x 8m. The dimensions of the single storey extension were 4.6m x 8 x 6.7m. Those were not out of scale with the host dwelling. The different heights of the extensions helped to reduce the massing of the dwelling. The extensions were subordinate to the host dwelling and did not dominate it.

Loss of light and loss of privacy had been considered. With regard to the single storey element there would be no overlooking as there were only ground floor windows. The low ridge height would ensure no significant loss of light was suffered by any adjacent neighbours.

For the two storey element, the Planning Officer referenced each dwelling located adjacent to the proposal. No19 was currently adjacent to the garage of number 17 that would be replaced. Due to separation distance and orientation no significant loss of light would be suffered. The ridge height of the existing garage was 5.4m high and the proposed ridge was 7.3m. There was only a door and roof lights proposed on the two storey extension gable to No.19 and so no overlooking would be created.

With regard to No 5 there were only obscured bathroom windows to the rear and a roof light and therefore no overlooking would be created. There would be no significant loss of light suffered due to the existing rear windows of No 5 being overshadowed by their own tiled canopy. The Officer highlighted that there was an existing garage at this location and the proposed extension was only an additional 1.7m. There was also vegetation breaking the light test at this location.

With regard to number 7 and 9 the location of the two storey elements would mean no impact would be suffered.

There would be no dominant outlook created by the development for any of the adjacent properties due to the scale of the proposal and the fact that the existing garage was part of the current views from neighbouring properties already.

The Juliet balconies and dormer window look over the applicant's own front garden/amenity area and nearby road and no overlooking would be created by those additions.

There would be no impact on trees and approx. 220 sqm of amenity space would remain. With regard to flooding issues, the existing garage took up most of the area where the proposed two storey extension was to be located and therefore would not result in a loss of soak off area. The single storey extension was minor in scale and would not create potential to exacerbate any flooding issues the site may experience in the future as after checking the flood maps there were no current issues. The dwelling would be left an excess of 200sqm amenity space.

With regard to other issues raised - NIW was not consulted as this was an extension to an existing dwelling and therefore there was no capacity issue. The occupier could

add in as many showers/toilets and sinks into the dwelling as they desired at any stage without a planning application or consent from NIW.

With regard to the standards set out in Creating Places it was important to remember that this guidance related to new build housing. Although the document could be used as a useful guide for other applications it was important to remember that the proposal was in relation to a domestic extension and not a new build dwelling.

With regard to the parking issue the family could subdivide their existing dwelling to make more bedrooms without planning permission. Although there was no plan to make any of the grass at the front into hardstanding and it was important to note that that could also be done under permitted development rights up to 5sqm. The parking standards were set out for new build residential development. To expect more than six in curtilage spaces measured out in accordance with parking standards for an existing single unit family dwelling would be unreasonable. After informal discussion with a DfI Roads official on 29 September to ascertain if consultation should have been carried out, he confirmed that consultation was not necessary for a domestic extension and that as the property was not a new build the parking standards did not have to be applied in the same manner. The provision of five to six in curtilage parking spaces was deemed more than appropriate for a single family dwelling whether it was multi-generational or not and no matter the arrangement. It was up to the occupants to decide how the cars were to be parked in-curtilage.

In conclusion the proposal, the Planning Officer stated that the proposal was in compliance with planning policy and approval was therefore recommended.

In relation to the Planning Protocol, the Chairman highlighted that as Councillor McLaren and Councillor Wray had re-entered the meeting after the break during the presentation of the application they were unable to take part in the debate or vote on the application.

The Chairman invited Mr Dickson (Agent) to come forward who was speaking in support of the application.

Mr Dickson commenced by stating that he concurred with the Case Officer's thorough assessment of the application and the recommendation for approval. The development proposed was for the demolition of the existing garage, a two-storey extension to the south side and single storey side extension to the north side. The two-storey replacement was slightly further away from the boundary of No 19 and appeared to be the contentious part of the development for the neighbours. The proposed development was subordinate in scale, height and floor space to the existing dwelling. The design, scale and massing of the proposed extension was not detrimental to the character of the area. The dwelling was to be enlarged to provide for the applicant's traditional extended family and family members who came to stay from the UK and the applicant's home country. The applicant's elderly family would make use of the ground floor extension. The applicant's eldest children would be going to university in Belfast and the proposal enabled them to live at home with a more independent student living environment, but yet within their traditional close family surroundings.

The proposed extension was not a separate annex as there was good integration to the main dwelling and living accommodation. There was no separate access / new entrance to the new accommodation and no separate cooking facilities.

In terms of impact on privacy and amenity of neighbouring residents, Mr Dickson outlined that the garage extension had two additional first-floor bathroom windows with obscured glass proposed to the rear elevation and a velux roof light to the existing bedroom which by its nature would not cause overlooking. There would not be any overlooking of the private amenity space of any adjacent neighbours.

There were two first floor Juliet balconies proposed to the front of the new garage, and a new dormer window to compensate for the removal of the existing gable windows. Those new windows overlooked the applicant's own front garden / driveway / parking area and the development road. No adverse overlooking to neighbours would be created by those across the development road as there was a substantial difference.

The single storey extension would not cause any overlooking or overshadowing due to its height and scale. The applicant's existing detached garage which was generally in the same position already broke the light test. The existing garage was 5.4m high and the proposed extension was 1.7m higher. The pitch roof sloped from the boundary.

In terms of overshadowing, use of the 'light test' was described to be used as guidance in assessing the loss of light any development may create on neighbouring properties. With the angled setting and pattern of development it was difficult to apply the test accurately and conclusively.

Regarding the design and impact on the character of the area, the development was to the sides of the existing dwelling on site and would not be prominent from the street. The single storey would be completely secluded from the road. The applicant's site could arguably be one of the largest plots on the development with 220 sqm of amenity space still being retained. The proposed extended dwelling was not out of character for the area.

The proposed development would not intensify the use of the dwelling as a single dwelling. There was space in the existing driveway for five cars already and another space in the proposed garage. The impact on adjacent dwellings' private amenity was considered and had been assessed within the case officer's report. It was irrelevant and ludicrous that the proposal was suggested to be used for self-catering. The proposed extension was ancillary to the host dwelling.

Mr Dickson stated that all the issues raised by third parties had been considered and assessed within the planning report. The proposals did not create an unacceptable affect, disturbance or loss of privacy on the neighbouring properties.

The Chairman invited questions from Members.

Councillor Cathcart referred to Mr Dickson's comments in respect of the light test and asked Mr Dickson to expand on his point as to why the test light was not

relevant. Mr Dickson explained that the test was carried out from the centre of windows at an angle. The building was already on that angle with a veranda immediately behind the extension. Therefore, he contended the dwelling as it sat already affected the light test.

Councillor Cathcart noted that Mr Dickson did not feel the proposal out of character, Councillor Cathcart stated that it was of a significant scale and questioned how Mr Dickson contended the application was not out of character. Mr Dickson did not feel the proposal was of a significant scale, it was in keeping with the development. It was a replacement of the existing garage, it was a bit closer to the main principle dwelling. The roof would be raised slightly higher however would be a 1m further from the boundary.

The Chairman appreciated the applicant's proposal was for visiting family however the Committee had to give consideration to anyone beyond those currently residing. He was mindful that the application was a homeowner application rather than a developer application however there would be seven bedrooms and he wondered if the application had been a new development would five parking spaces have been sufficient.

Mr Dickson stated that the proposal was not a new development and therefore considered under different planning policies/guidance. The Case Officer had commented that there could be any number of bathrooms installed. The bedrooms were his designation of the names of those rooms, highlighting that a bedroom could be used for different uses including a study, gym, etc. The dwelling housed a big family from Bangladesh and the traditional family unit included grandparents, uncles etc.

The Chairman referred to the consideration of the impact on the amenity of neighbouring properties and the capacity within the curtilage to ensure there was no adverse impact. He referred to the guidelines in respect of the car parking and sought assurance in that regard. Mr Dickson highlighted that there were no restrictions for any residents in the area for parking on the road, it was a public road. All developments for new dwellings had to contain a minimum of two parking spaces within the curtilage. There were six car parking spaces within this proposal.

As there were no further questions for Mr Dickson he returned to the public gallery.

The Chairman invited Mrs Robie to come forward who was speaking against the application.

Mrs Robie commenced by stating that the majority of residents in the area were opposed to the application to increase by more than a third via a double and single storey extension at No 17 Braeside. She stated that she was pleased that the Planning Department had acted on her submission and rectified most of the inaccuracies, although she noted some remained outstanding, including the wrong name of the road detailed by the Architect. She had questioned why DfI Roads had not been consulted as there were plans to have five car parking spaces in curtilage on a bad bend. The road was an adopted public road and there was currently an application in the planning system for that road to serve multiple vehicles leading to a

much larger development behind Braeside. Those vehicles would pass No 17 and she could not understand why DfI Roads had not needed to be consulted.

She did not believe the space available met the standards stipulated in Creating Places, for example in respect of in-curtilage spaces. The planning guidelines, Creating Places, were mentioned in the Planner's report, but many of the reasons for allowing the application were at odds with that same document.

NI Water had not been consulted over sewer capacity, a separate application for two units to the north of Braeside, to connect to the same sewer network as the applicant's was originally refused due to the network capacity constraints, as could be read in the Drainage Assessment. The developer for that application had to undertake further assessments for NI Water Assessment before being permitted connections. With the increased loading on the foul network due to extra bathrooms and extra occupants planned for No 17, she wondered how it could be guaranteed that there would be no detriment to the sewer capacity if NI Water had not been consulted. Page 10 of the Case Officer's report stated, under drainage and sewerage, that there was no intensification of the site but page 4 stated that the dwelling was to be enlarged to provide for the applicant's large family and family members who come to stay. Mrs Robie viewed that as contradictory.

The existing garage of 17 Braeside was 8 metres from the nearest corner of 5 Braeside. The rear of No 17 mostly faced the eastern gable of No 5 giving no current concern with privacy. But replacing the garage with habitable rooms, would render the separation distance unacceptable and contrary to Creating Places guidance. Parage 7.16 of Creating Places stated "Where the development abuts the private garden areas of existing properties, a separation distance greater than 20m would will generally be appropriate to minimise overlooking, with a minimum of around 10m between the rear of the new houses and the common boundary". At 8 metres separation, Mrs Robie highlighted that fell well short of the stipulated distances. Paragraph 7.18 stated that "...schemes likely to result in a significant loss of privacy or overlooking, particularly of existing properties, will not be acceptable." Provision of a suitable boundary treatment to improve the affected privacy would adversely impact the level of daylight received in the garden of No5. The report stated that the proposal would not overlook the private amenity space of any adjacent neighbours. It was acknowledged that the windows would contain obscured glass, but they could still be opened to a clear view of the amenity space of 5 Braeside.

There were concerns about the environmental impact of replacing the front lawn with hard standing. The enlarged footprint along with the plans to lay patios was contrary to Creating Places guidelines (2.01) which say the site should make the best use of existing vegetation, flora and fauna.

The report quoted the Human Rights Act which stated that a person had the right to peaceful enjoyment of all their possessions which includes the home and other land. Mrs Robie did not feel that her human rights had been considered as the proposed development would have a dominating impact on her and her family's and the quiet enjoyment of her property.

Braeside comprised of 11 houses of three different styles. The density, height, coverage, open spacing, scale and proportioning of the extended property would not respect the character and amenity of its neighbours, encroaching on gaps between the boundaries.

Referring to the scale of the extension in comparison to the other properties in the area, Mrs Robie felt the proposal would create a visually unattractive extension and affected the current land proportionality. She viewed the extension as excessive to an already sizeable house on a small and inadequate site. When completed the house would be a 7-bedroom, 5-bathroom house and she could not fathom how that could be acceptable. Residents did not feel the letter of objection had been taken into account, and she hoped the Committee would take the concerns on board and respectfully requested that the application was rejected.

As there no questions from Members for Mrs Robie she returned to the public gallery.

The Chairman invited questions for the Planning Officer.

Referring to the amenity of neighbouring properties, Councillor Cathcart stated that the light test failed and he wondered now with the increase in height to the garage why there would not be more of a detrimental impact. The Planning Officer explained that the existing garage already broke the light test and with the path of the sun that would not result in a significant loss of light. The proposed garage contained a sloping roof. Referring to the visuals, the Officer showed the canopy at No 5 which already overshadowed those windows.

Councillor Cathcart accepted that contact with the statutory consultees NI Water and DfI Roads was not needed for such an application. However, he questioned why contact had since been made with DfI Roads and not NI Water. The Officer explained that because of the parking standard and the general arrangement, she wished to seek assurances that DfI was content that it had not been consulted. Parking standards only went up to five bedrooms and she wished to obtain guidance and advice in that regard. In respect of NI Water, the existing house already had a water connection.

Alderman Smith referred to the issue around dominance and questioned if there was a scale of an extension that would be considered overbearing on neighbours. The Officer explained that the dominance was examined on a case by case basis. In relation to the proposal, there was already an existing garage, there would be a pitched roof and that would not be considered to be a massive increase from what was already in place. The 1.7m increase was not deemed to create a dominant outlook.

Councillor McRandal referred to the increase in footprint of the property, he appreciated the garage was a replacement, however the extension to the other side of the property. With the proposal included, No 17 would appear to be the largest property in the area. Councillor McRandal therefore wondered why that would not be detrimental to the character of the area or the development.

The Planning Officer stated that the proposal met policy requirements, the extension was in scale with the dwelling. The proposal was for a small single storey extension and replacement garage. The type of proposal was not uncommon and such applications had been before the Committee before and appeared on the delegated list. The dwelling was already large and was situated on a large plot. There was a mix of dwellings in the area, referring to the visuals she outlined some had turrets, different angles and levels and therefore visually the proposal would not look out of scale or out of character.

The Head of Planning added that each application was considered on a case by case basis and had to meet the relevant planning policy, not guidelines. In relation to dominance, the properties were large in the development; however, as alluded to by the agent there was break in ridge heights and the proposal would not create one block of extension. There were no material planning policy considerations as to why this proposal should be refused.

Proposed by Councillor Morgan, seconded by Councillor McRandal, that the recommendation to approve planning permission be adopted.

Speaking to her proposal, Councillor Morgan stated that it was difficult to balance someone's right to an extension with someone's right to amenity. In this case she felt that the Planning Officers had looked at all the issues and she was satisfied that the matters had been satisfactorily addressed.

Councillor McRandal agreed that the application had been thoroughly considered and the reasons for recommendation were sound.

FAVOUR (5) Aldermen Smith	AGAINST (1) Councillor Cathcart	ABSTAINED (2) Alderman McIlveen	ABSENT (6) Aldermen Graham McDowell
Councillors Creighton McCollum McRandal Morgan		Councillor Kerr	Councillors Harbinson Martin McKee Woods

*Councillors McLaren and Wray were unable to vote on the application.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Morgan, seconded by Councillor McRandal, that the recommendation to approve planning permission be adopted.

4.6 LA06/2022/1150/F - Abbeyfield, 156 Upper Greenwell Street, Newtownards
(Appendix VII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's report.

DEA: Newtownards

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

Proposal: Assisted living accommodation for young adults

Site Location: Abbeyfield, 156 Upper Greenwell Street, Newtownards

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

The Planning Officer (P Kerr) outlined the detail of the application for Members firstly highlighting that all consultees were content with the proposal.

There were 17 letters of objection received and two petitions. The main issues were concerns over noise and antisocial behaviour.

The site was located at 156 Upper Greenwell Street, Newtownards, and comprised of a two storey building with a single storey return. The building was currently vacant but was previously used as a 12 bedroom residential care home.

The proposal was in compliance with the SPPS and the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 as well as Planning Policy Statements 2, 3, 7 and 12, and also Development Control Advice Note 9 on residential and nursing homes.

The provider for the assisted living accommodation was Connected Health which supports adults with Learning Disabilities, Autism and/or Mental Health illnesses to live in their own homes, which often came after individuals had spent a significant amount of time in hospital. Connected Health did not provide any services in the addiction space and had communicated with the Council that it has no intentions of doing so. The adults would be post-18 age group and the intention was that they would be permanent residents in the building.

The proposal was located within a settlement limit there was a presumption in favour of development. As the proposal was replacing a building that was last used as a 12 bed residential care home with an 8 bed building for supported living it remained in the same Planning Use Class (Use Class C3). In terms of planning there was no intensification of use.

It was important to remember that the existing building on site could be refurbished and used for this purpose as it was.

Under the parking standards there was a requirement for three in-curtilage parking spaces for staff and those had been provided. DFI roads was content.

Environmental Health raised no concerns with regard to noise.

The design and scale of the proposed building was appropriate for the site and for the character of the surrounding area. Due to existing building on site, the proposal would not create any further impact on surrounding residents with regard to loss of light, dominance or overlooking. The proposal was also for a two storey building with a slight increase in ridge height from 7m to 8.8 to accommodate modern living standards and regulations for this type of accommodation. There was a 2m separation distance between the proposed building and no. 158. No.158 had a blank gable so would not suffer any loss of light, dominance or overlooking. Due to

the layout of both the proposal and No.158 no loss of light or overlooking would be suffered to the rear either. There were no buildings directly behind no.158.

With regard to the objections raised, there were no valid planning reasons that would support a refusal for this application. The Planning Department had no evidence that the proposal would create noise or anti-social behaviour and making this assumption would be prejudicial to the application. Given the points outlined approval was recommended.

The Chairman invited questions from Members.

The Chairman noted that when such applications were assessed DCAN 9 was considered and he questioned how much of that policy had been considered - including aspects such as siting, locality, traffic, amenity, design, layout and landscaping. He referred to the potential impact on residential amenity with the previous home being for elderly people.

The Planning Officer assured that the aspects had been thoroughly assessed. Environmental Health had been consulted with regards to noise and was content. There was no evidence submitted to demonstrate any issues.

The Chairman asked if the potential noise considered was that emanating from the building itself. He questioned what complex needs were being assessed, if the accommodation would be secure and the backgrounds of the residents. He felt those were matters that may affect the amenity. The Chairman used the example of a casino and when such was being assessed issues such as littering, people congregating etc. were considered in residential areas.

The Planning Officer highlighted that the considerations would be the same, the current building had been a residential care home and could be refurbished for supported living with 12 people residing from this health care need without planning permission. Advice within DCAN 9 was taken into account and Environmental Health had been consulted. The Officer reiterated that a material consideration was if planning permission was refused, the building could be repurposed for the same use.

The Chairman stated that the application was for the building to be demolished and a fresh building erected and therefore the application must be considered fresh. He noted the risk that if planning permission was refused; however, that should not preclude the Committee from assessing the application for a new residential development.

The Planning Officer stated that there was no evidence presented to suggest that there would be a noise impact. Environmental Health as the noise expert had expressed no objection. All other aspects had been thoroughly assessed. The accommodation would include three parking spaces as those residents in the accommodation would not drive. The accommodation needed to be close to the town centre to allow residents access to local amenities. Planners had not been presented with any evidence or information that would have led them to a refusal decision.

The Head of Planning added that the proposal was within a relatively high density housing area where there could be unlimited noise from properties within the vicinity. She highlighted that the whole thrust of guidelines and policy was to allow adults with learning disabilities to be integrated within existing communities which was what the proposal sought to do.

Proposed by Councillor Morgan, seconded by Councillor McLaren, that the recommendation be adopted and that planning permission be granted.

Speaking to her proposal, Councillor Morgan understood the concerns; however, the housing was much needed and she supported the proposal.

Councillor McLaren stated that there was nothing to suggest any contravention of planning policy. She noted the concerns surrounding anti-social behaviour and noise pollution, both of which she felt had been negated by the fact that only one caretaker was necessary to supervise the residents. Councillor McLaren welcomed the proposal.

FOR (8)	AGAINST (0)	ABSTAINED (2)	ABSENT (6)
Alderman		Alderman	Aldermen
Smith		McIlveen	Graham
Councillors		Councillor	McDowell
Creighton		Cathcart	Councillors
Kerr			Harbinson
McCollum			Martin
McRandal			McKee
McLaren			Woods
Morgan			
Wray			

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Morgan, seconded by Councillor McLaren, that the recommendation be adopted and that planning permission be granted.

5. UPDATE ON PLANNING APPEALS

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity providing the undernoted update:

Appeal Decisions

No appeal decisions had been received between the date of the last report (21 August 2023) and the date of this report.

New Appeals Lodged

The following appeal was lodged on 7 September 2023

PAC Ref	2023/A0055
Application ref	LA06/2020/1115/F
Appellant	Dr Howard Hastings

Subject of Appeal	Appeal against conditions: 2. The 'Macwall' block wall retaining structure and culvert shall be erected before the expiration of six months from the date of this permission and shall be retained in perpetuity thereafter; 3. All hard and soft landscape works shall be carried out in accordance with Drawing No. 08A and all new planting as indicated shall be undertaken during the first available planting season following the approval date of this application and retained in perpetuity
Location	27 Station Road, Holywood

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

(Councillor Morgan withdrew from the meeting – 10.05 pm)

The Head of Planning highlighted to Members that one new appeal had been lodged.

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

6. UPDATE ON CORRESPONDENCE REGARDING NIW COASTAL FENCE (Appendices VIII - IX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity attaching Response from NIW and Letter to NIW. The purpose of the report was to update Members on the response received to correspondence sent to the Department for Infrastructure (DFI) and Northern Ireland Water (NIW) in relation to the fence erected around Seacourt Pumping Station, Bangor.

Members would recall the Council at its meeting of 5 July 2023 resolved the following proposal:

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Councillor McRandal, that the Council and the general public remain dismayed at the erection of the fencing around Seacourt Pumping Station, regardless of its lawfulness under permitted development rights. The Council continues to consider that the fencing is detrimental to the coastal environment, and fails to maintain or enhance the quality of this coastal landscape, and urges NI Water to remove it. If NI Water consider that there is a need for health and safety risk mitigation infrastructure at the site then we ask that NI Water engage with Council with a view to identifying and agreeing solutions that are sympathetic to the area and the natural environment and capable of enjoying the support of the general public and elected representatives.

Furthermore Council notes with concern that the permitted development rights afforded to NI Water under Part 14 of the Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 effectively mean that there are no

constraints on the size and type of fence structure that NI Water could erect at Seacourt pumping station. Council will therefore write to Department for Infrastructure to highlight this legal loophole and to request urgent review of the law in order to nullify detrimental impacts that developments such as this fence could have on coastal landscapes and other protected landscapes.”

Since the date of the last report presented to members at 05 September Planning Committee meeting NIW had responded.

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

Councillor Cathcart felt NI Water needed to appreciate the concerns of the community in relation to the fence. He viewed the response from NI Water as abrupt and he felt the Committee needed to be in contact with NI Water again in a face to face capacity in order to highlight the concerns of the Committee, Elected Members and residents. There had been no attempt from NI Water to address any of the concerns to find a way forward.

(Councillor Morgan re-entered the meeting – 10.06 pm)

Proposed by Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Councillor Wray, that this Council notes the belated response and agrees to write to the Chief Executive of NI Water asking for a meeting to discuss the fence at Seacourt pumping station with a delegation of Councillors, one from each party and independent, plus the Mayor.

Speaking to his proposal, Councillor Cathcart stated that the matter had been ongoing for some time. He felt it would be useful to engage face to face with the Chief Executive of NI Water to express the frustration and encourage NI Water to engage and find a way forward.

Councillor Wray concurred, sending letters back and forth was going nowhere and he hoped a face to face meeting would resolve the issue.

Councillor McRandal stated that the Committee could not stand for this with it being no way to treat the coastline. Councillor McKee had suggested that the North Down MLAs should also send a letter to NI Water calling for a meeting.

Councillor Cathcart thanked Members for their support and hoped the meeting could be held to discuss the community's concerns and find a way forward.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Councillor Wray, that this Council notes the belated response and agrees to write to the Chief Executive of NI Water asking for a meeting to discuss the fence at Seacourt pumping station with a delegation of Councillors, one from each party and independent, plus the Mayor.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC/PRESS

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

(Councillor Creighton withdrew from the meeting – 10.10 pm)

7. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) - STRATEGIC APPROACH TO UNDEVELOPED COAST

(Appendices X, XI, XIII)

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

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

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

The recommendations contained within the report were agreed.

8. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) - TIMETABLE

(Appendix XIV)

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

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

SUMMARY

A report from the Director of Prosperity pertaining to issues arising and options for Members' consideration and agreement regards timetabling of the Local Development Plan (LDP).

The recommendations contained within the report were agreed.

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 10.49 pm.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Environment Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards and via Zoom, on Wednesday, 4th October 2023 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor Morgan

Aldermen: Armstrong-Cotter McAlpine (Zoom)
Cummings

Councillors: Blaney (Zoom) Kerr (Zoom 8pm)
Boyle Rossiter
Cathcart Smart
Harbinson Woods (Zoom)
Edmund Wray
Irwin

Officers: Director of Environment (D Lindsay), Head of Waste and Cleansing Services (N Martin - Zoom), Head of Assets and Property Services (P Caldwell), Licencing and Regulatory Services Manager (D Brown), Risk Manager (J Hunter) and Democratic Services Officer (R King)

1. APOLOGIES

An apology was received from Councillor Douglas and an apology for lateness was received from Councillor Kerr.

NOTED.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

NOTED.

3. DEPUTATION - KEEP RECYCLING LOCAL

(Appendix I)

Nicola Caruthers was invited to make her deputation and introduced herself to the Committee as a spokesperson for Keep Recycling Local, a campaign established by businesses and other organisations in Northern Ireland.

Her presentation was summarised as follows:

- KRL aimed were to see positive changes in the way recyclables were collected and ensure recyclable materials collected in NI were reprocessed in NI
- This would aid NI's circular economy supporting businesses and jobs and bring environmental benefits
- Separating recyclable materials before collections avoided contamination and maximised reprocessing in NI
- Co-mingled recycling by the majority of NI Councils meant that each year 91,000 tonnes of recyclables was exported around the globe
- This resulted in a massive cost to business, the NI economy and environment
- Local companies then had to import 'clean' recyclables
- Current Government policies inadvertently encouraged the export of poorly sorted recyclables
- Recycling was a key Council service
- Waste Management accounted for 4% of emissions
- Climate Change Act 2022 – net zero target 2050, 47% reduction by 2030, 70% waste to be recycled by 2030, DAERA currently consulting on first carbon budget,
- DfE draft circular economy strategy,
- DEFRA's EPR programme (producer pays)
- There was an imminent DAERA consultation on a single waste strategy for Northern Ireland – to improve recycling quality, ensure maximum value was extracted, ensure materials were kept in use for as long as possible and requirement of a minimum of 2 stream recycling
- KRL proposed a three-step solution to collect materials separately, to change legislation to incentivise local reprocessing and make information on end destinations of recycling more accessible
- If collected separately – over 80% of material reprocessed locally vs 10% currently due to co-mingled collections, £12m annual savings for local Councils, support for local job creation, lower carbon emissions and stop global export of poorly recycled waste
- Wales was the top recycler in the UK and 3rd in the world
- Antrim and Newtownabbey top recycler in NI – having adopted the three stream collections across 37,000 households
- Dry Recycling in three stream approach resulted in 80% reprocessed in NI vs 20% reprocessing in NI for co-mingled collections
- Glass recycling in three stream approach resulted in 100% reprocessed within NI vs 0% in NI for co-mingled collections
- KRL requested that Council supported the three-stream approach to recycling, support DAERA in its waste management strategy with inclusion of three stream approach and support the better need for public awareness and education

The Chair thanked Ms Caruthers for her presentation and invited questions from Members.

Councillor Smart welcomed the opportunity for this type of engagement which encouraged the Council to make the best use of its resources. He asked if it was felt that the three-stream approach was considered best practice and if it was adopted

by Belfast City Council. Ms Caruthers confirmed this was in place in parts of Belfast. KRL felt that it was indeed the best approach but in Belfast however, the recycling performance figures were let down in areas where that system was not in place. This included areas of terraced housing and student accommodation for example where large bins were shared by multiple households. That system brought the recycling figures down unfortunately for the Belfast council area as a whole.

Councillor Smart asked if it was felt there could be provision for Ards and North Down to adopt the three-stream system within its current framework. Ms Caruthers pointed to external funding opportunities through DAERA and the financial returns that the Council could expect to see over a 10-year term.

Councillor Woods asked how the £12million estimated savings had been calculated and Ms Caruthers advised this was based on forecasts made by Invest NI in 2017 and existing data taken from current adopters of the scheme. Antrim and Newtownabbey for example had forecast savings of £6m over 10 years.

Councillor Woods referred to the Council's current export arrangement for its cardboard, understanding that 250 tonnes of the 267 tonnes disposed of in Quarter 2 last year, had been shipped to countries in Asia and there were no statistics of the embodied carbon footprint of that in terms of the transportation and transformation processes used for the material.

She asked if this had ever been studied and Ms Caruthers advised that this was being looked at currently in the DAERA consultation process referred to but she explained that it was difficult to determine the transportation effects as the reported carbon emissions only related to the waste figures and this did not include any collection, driving or shipping impacts etc. KRL hoped that more of this information would be teased out in the DAERA consultation.

Councillor McKimm, while appreciating the value of recycling waste at the kerbside, was also aware of the access difficulties that could be created by having more receptacles on the pavements. He asked if there were models of good practice that could be adopted to avoid impedance. He raised a further question around plastics and believed that there was confusion about types of plastics. He asked if KRL was aware of good practice elsewhere in addressing this issue effectively.

In a final query he asked how the lack of a regional government had impeded the progression of the Climate Change Act which had thankfully passed before the collapse of the government but he understood there was frustration from Climate NI that objectives had not moved forward speedily.

Ms Caruthers was unable to comment on the effects of the collapse of government though admitted that the DAERA consultation had suffered some delay. It was unclear though whether that was a direct effect of having no government, but it was due to be published next month and she hoped that the outworking of that would not be affected.

In terms of plastics, she was aware that education was very popular and it was well received by the public who were generally very enthusiastic about recycling,

particularly when they were informed how the waste was recycled. She referred to a Northern Ireland based bottle manufacturer that was making 10 million bottles per day and was in an unfortunate position of adding a new furnace at its plant due to not being able to get enough glass to recycle. She felt more public information would help people realise the value of recycling. For a national awareness campaign, it was very difficult for DAERA to coordinate though due to the different recycling processes adopted by each Council. One system for all Councils would make information and awareness campaigns more effective she believed.

In terms of the accessibility concerns, Ms Caruthers explained that the three-box system was incorporated into a single bin and the dimensions were the same as the existing wheelie bins which was welcomed by KRL. She explained that another Council was currently considering providing its households with a commercial size bin for recycling and that was something that KRL were opposed to due to the additional size and potential for obstruction on pavements. This was in addition to KRL's concerns about mixed recyclables.

Noting its high-performance figures, Councillor Rossiter asked if Wales was an adopter of the three-stream system and Ms Caruthers confirmed it was used by all Councils throughout the country and that was indeed why its performance rates were high.

There were no further questions and Ms Caruthers left the meeting at 7.26pm.

NOTED.

4. DEPUTATION IN RESPECT OF AN ENTERTAINMENT LICENCE APPLICATION - THE NINES

(Appendix II - IV)

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

Premises: The Nines, 10 to 12 Seacliff Road, Bangor

Applicant : Damian Fusco, Downshire Court, Bangor

Proposed hours and days of use: Saturday 9pm to 12 midnight.

Type of entertainment: Dancing, singing and music.

Five letters of objection were received following the public advertising of this application (copies attached);

1. David and Pauline Flood, Apt 7, 8 Seacliff Road, Bangor
2. William & Lynn McAvoy, Apt 6, 8 Seacliff Road, Bangor
3. David Speers, Apt. 1, 8 Seacliff Road, Bangor
4. Eveline Galbreth, Apt 4, 8 Seacliff Road, Bangor
5. John Thompson, Apt. 2, 8 Seacliff Road, Bangor

Their main objections were stated as follows:

	Name	Objections
1.	David and Pauline Flood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entertainment was being proposed for every Saturday night, previous owner had put a limit on 11 events per year. • Previous events were for weddings and similar events only. • Previous owner gave prior notice of events to tenants. • Disturbance from patrons leaving premises shouting and slamming of doors, • Drinking up time means patrons would be leaving the premises until 1:00am. • Would suffer disturbance due to residence being near restaurant.
2.	William and Lynn McAvoy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns at the possibility of excessive noise from the premises. • Concerns about the possibility of anti-social behaviour. • Believes the quality of life would be impacted upon. • Detrimental impact on property values. • Opposed to the potential that events could be held every Saturday unlike previous owner limiting to 11 max.
3	David Speers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having already experienced noise from the premises by patrons and outside speakers believes that situation would be worsened if licenced. • Lives in very close proximity to the Nines and believes noise will be unacceptable. • Has previously had grandchildren staying who have had disrupted sleep due to patrons outside the premises.
4	Eveline Galbraith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The restaurant is situated in a residential area and not in an area predominantly for entertainment. • Has already experienced disturbance from patrons at and leaving the premises.

5	John Thomson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has previously experienced noise from patrons drinking outside of the premises and patrons leaving the premises. • Believes the granting of an entertainment licence may increase the volume of noise and frequency. • Advises that premises is located within a residential area of the town and not in an area predominantly frequented for drinking.
---	--------------	---

No objections had been received from the PSNI, NIFRS or Environmental Health.

Background

These premises were previously licensed as the Salty Dog and Council considered their application in October 2017.

At that time 8 letters of objection were received, and the Salty Dog employed a Noise Consultant to advise on ways of reducing noise to neighbouring properties. Environmental Health also carried out a sound test which indicated that music was not audible in the nearest adjoining residential bedroom.

The licence was granted with the following additional licence conditions attached:

Additional Entertainment Licence Conditions

1. *All windows to the ground floor shall be kept closed during entertainment.*
2. *All external doors to the ground floor shall be kept closed during entertainment.*
3. *The music shall only be sourced in the bar area.*
4. *A competent person shall be present during each entertainment event and he/she will have access to a sound meter device of not less than class 2 standard, in order to monitor the sound level of the band or entertainment. Readings will be taken mid floor circa 2m from the musicians in the ground floor bar at the beginning and thereafter at regular intervals during entertainment.*
5. *Results of monitoring shall be recorded using a log sheet. The sound levels should not exceed 85 dB(A). If the sound does exceed this level then the competent person must ensure that the entertainment provider reduces the noise level to the point where 85 dB(A) is no longer breached.*

6. *Externally the competent person shall periodically patrol the exterior of the premises and at the nearest dwellings will assess the overall sound levels. Specifically the bass levels shall be considered and if the sound and bass levels are distinctly audible and likely to cause disturbance then they will ensure that the entertainment providers lower the volume.*

If following monitoring of entertainment by the Council's Environmental Health Department, there appears to be unreasonable disturbance, the noise levels stated in Condition 5 above may be reduced or the licensee may be required to again engage a noise consultant to propose what further mitigation measures may be required. Any necessary mitigation measures shall be implemented to the satisfaction of the council officers.

There were no reports of noise disturbance received by Council Officers following the granting of the licence in 2017. Environmental Health had advised that they would consider that the licence should be issued with the above additional conditions applied.

Deputation

Objectors and the applicant had the right to be heard by the Members under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI Order) 1985. The 5 objectors would be represented by one of them (to be advised). The applicant Mr Damien Fusco would also make a representation.

Following the meeting Members could either:

- Determine the application.
- Request a full report to the Environment Committee in November.

RECOMMENDED that the Council hears the deputation.

The Director of Environment advised that neither party wished to make representation to the Committee and he referred Members to written statements that each had opted to submit instead. He suggested that if Members decided to request a report to allow further consideration of those statements, then a request for delegated authority be made at the October Council meeting for the Committee to determine the application at its November meeting.

Councillor Cathcart proposed, seconded by Councillor McKimm, that Council agrees to grant an entertainment licence.

The proposer Councillor Cathcart welcomed that there had been engagement between both the owner (applicant) and local residents (objectors) and welcomed that a relationship had been established.

He appreciated that residents were still concerned about any potential for noise in the future, though this did include noise that would fall outside the control of the owner or the entertainment licence remit, but he was satisfied that measures and options were available which included the Council's Environmental Health service along with limits and conditions attached to the entertainment licence itself.

In addition to that, there would be opportunity to review the entertainment licence and the objectors had asked to keep their objections on file for the purposes of future reviews. Given all of those factors, Councillor Cathcart did not feel there was any need to add any further conditions on to the licence or delay the decision. He was therefore happy to proceed with the granting of the licence.

The seconder Councillor McKimm concurred with those comments, adding that it was important to consider the community from two perspectives – one being the residents and the other being the business community that was responsible for growing the local economy. He agreed that the nature of the objections fell outside the entertainment licence remit and was content that the pattern of trade at the premises would not change. Customers would come and go at the same times and there would be no additional opening nights. If there were changes then residents would be able to come and talk to elected Members who would be able to follow up through the normal processes available. Therefore he did not feel anything would be achieved by delaying the process further.

Councillor Blaney expressed the same view and welcomed the investment that the applicant, a family business, had made into renovating the four-star hotel in the city centre. He believed that the applicant had listened to the concerns of residents and that was the key factor for him. This was a restaurant in a four-star hotel, not a night club, and therefore aimed at a quieter demographic. He was satisfied to support the granting of the licence and said he would be keeping the lines of communication open with the residents if they had any concerns in the future.

Alderman McAlpine felt that the Director had advised a sensible approach in bringing back a report that would consider both statements but the Director clarified that he had not brought that as a recommendation, it was only to advise that if the Committee wanted to request a further report it should also include a request for delegated authority to allow a decision to be finalised at the November Committee meeting.

Councillor Smart asked what procedure was available to residents if they wished to bring forward any concerns after a licence was issued. It was advised that the Council's Licencing unit would be the first point of contact and if necessary, officers would utilise the input of the Environmental Health service. The entertainment licence was renewed annually so there would be regular opportunity for review.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Councillor McKimm, that the entertainment licence be granted.

5. WRAP REVIEW OF KERBSIDE WASTE COLLECTION SERVICES – UPDATE

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that Members would be aware of Council's decision to undertake a review of our Kerbside Waste Collection services, facilitated by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP). WRAP was a Government funded charity which worked with businesses, individuals and communities (including local authorities) to achieve a

circular economy, by helping them reduce waste, develop sustainable products and use resources in an efficient way.

The key aims of the review were assisting with the achievement of future recycling targets and minimising the cost burden of waste disposal on local ratepayers.

Update

An all-Member workshop was held on 21 August, providing WRAP with the opportunity to lay out the challenges ahead of the Council, benchmarking our past and present performance on recycling and sustainable waste resource management against other UK Councils. The workshop was an opportunity to discuss examples of best practice elsewhere, looking at service models that have demonstrated beneficial recycling outcomes. Next steps would involve further exploration of potential new service models, including detailed financial and environmental evaluations of each.

As part of the outworking of this workshop, a desire for ongoing Elected Member involvement in the progress of the review process was expressed.

It was recommended that 11 Members were appointed to the group by D'Hondt plus 1 method which would provide cross Party representation. The membership would therefore be made up of 4 DUP, 4 Alliance, 2 UUP and 1 Independent or Member of the Green Party or SDLP.

The role of this Group would be to provide a key point of reference for WRAP and senior Council officers in relation to progress of the review process and in particular the evaluation of potential new service models. It was proposed that further steps in the review process, including reports and recommendations coming to the Environment Committee, would be informed and supported by input from the Working Group.

RECOMMENDED that Council agree to the formation of a Kerbside Waste Collection Task and Finish Working Group and agree to appoint membership of it using the D'hondt plus 1 method (4 DUP, 4 Alliance, 2 UUP and 1 Independent or Member of the Green Party or SDLP).

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

Alderman Cummings felt that the nature and the size of the issue justified the establishment of a working group and it would allow for the Environment Committee to then review the findings.

Councillor Wray added his support, commenting that the WRAP workshop he had attended had been extremely useful and he felt that Council could benefit from the information from that regardless of what decision it made in terms of kerbside recycling. He agreed that the working group was justified for this issue given the impacts of such a decision and it would enable Members to be ahead of the curve.

As a subsidiary point, Councillor McKimm felt that there was a disproportionate and negative impact upon the Chamber when using the D'hont system. As a result highly experienced individuals were being excluded from the discussions.

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

6. BUILDING (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2023 - PART E CONSULATION RESPONSE
(Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that Fire safety measures in buildings established through the local Building Regulations contributed significantly to maintaining life safety standards for occupants/residents and firefighters alike, not to mention the contribution they made in terms of property protection.

The proposed consultation contained amendments to uplift fire safety protection measures in a range of buildings. They were mainly focused on residential buildings and in particular domestic multi-residential buildings, to provide assurance and additional safety measures to residents. Some amendments were aimed at assisting the Fire and Rescue Service to ensure they could provide an effective operational response. The intended effect of the proposals was to reduce the consequences of fire through saving lives and preventing injuries.

The Grenfell tragedy and subsequent Phase 1 report to the Public Inquiry highlighted the potential benefits of some of the items proposed in this consultation - sprinkler usage, wayfinding signage, evacuation alert sounder systems, smoke ventilation systems and secure information boxes to improve resident safety. Sprinklers in particular had been proven to be very effective fire protective measures for saving lives in residential type buildings.

The Department was seeking views on these matters and the other amendments as proposed to the local Building Regulations through this consultation. Your views would help to inform the development of final policy proposals.

It was not compulsory to answer all of the questions, a response to the consultation could be provided even if a view was not expressed on all of the issues raised. The answers provided would inform the development of final policy proposals and legislation.

Consultation Response

Attached at Appendix 1 was a response prepared on behalf of the Council by the Building Control service. Some of the issues raised had not been responded to by the Council directly, but rather on a collected NI Council-wide basis through Building Control Northern Ireland (BCNI).

The closing date for the response was 25 September 2023 and the response had therefore been submitted to the Department comply with the timeframes.

RECOMMENDED that Council grant retrospective approval for submission to the Department of the consultation response detailed in Appendix 1 on behalf of the Council.

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

7. LICENSING SERVICE Q2 AND Q3 ACTIVITY REPORT (JULY TO DEC 2022)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that the information provided in this report covered, unless otherwise stated, the periods from 1 July to 31 December 2022. The aim of the report was to provide members with details of some of the key activities of the Licensing Service, the range of services it provided along with details of level of performance.

Applications Received

The Service dealt with a wide range of licensing functions which required the officers to consult with the PSNI, NIFRS and a range of other internal Council Sections in making their assessment of an application.

	Period of Report 1 July to 30 September 2022	Same quarter last 2021
Entertainment Licence	29	50
Cinema Licence	1	1
Amusement Permits	3	2
Marriage and Civil Partnership Place Approval	1	2
Pavement Café Licence	0	4
Street Trading Licence	1	1
Lottery Permits	2	0
Totals	37	60

	Period of Report 1 October to 31 December 2022	Same quarter last 2021
Entertainment Licence	75**	50
Cinema Licence	1	1

EC.04.10.23 PM

84

Amusement Permits	1	1
Marriage and Civil Partnership Place Approval	2	2
Pavement Café Licence	7	0
Street Trading Licence	0	4
Lottery Permits	1	6
Totals	87	64

Most of the licences issued were for renewals and hence the workload was fairly constant year on year. Renewing a licence still entailed considerable work to assess the application and consult with the other bodies.

*** Council Premises now had individual Licences / Applications when previously one generic Licence was issued.*

Regulatory Approvals

This was the number of licences, approvals and permits that had been processed and issued.

	Period of Report 1 July to 30 September 2022	Same quarter 2021
Entertainment Licence	37	37
Cinema Licence	1	0
Amusement Permits	3	3
Marriage and Civil Partnership Place Approval	1	1
Pavement Café Licence	0	0
Street Trading Licence	2	2
Lottery Permits	1	0
Totals	45	33

	Period of Report 1 October to 31 December 2022	Same quarter 2021
Entertainment Licence	28	71
Cinema Licence	1	1

EC.04.10.23 PM

85

Amusement Permits	2	1
Marriage and Civil Partnership Place Approval	1	2
Pavement Café Licence	8	0
Street Trading Licence	1	5
Lottery Permits	2	5
Totals	42	85

Off Street Car Parking

The car parking enforcement agreement with the Department for Infrastructure was managed by the Licensing Services Manager.

Below was the recorded income from car parking ticket sales for the period.

Table 1: Income from Ticket Sales

	Period of Report 1 July to 31 December 2022	Previous year
Income from ticket sales	£398,059	£394,481

Table 2: PCN's Issued

	Period of Report 1 July to 31 December 2022	Same period 2021
Bangor	768	667
Hollywood	735	488
Newtownards	644	745
Total	2147	1900

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

8. NOM REPORT – PROVISION OF SELF-HELP WINTER GRIT PILES

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that in February 2023 Council agreed the following Notice of Motion:

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

Officers had liaised with the local DfI section office/depot in relation to the provision of grit piles and a number of concerns had been identified with the proposal set out in the NOM.

- a. DfI Section Office had agreed in principle to providing grit to Council subject to availability, however we would have needed to collect it from their depot and arrangements/resources would need to be put in place to undertake this activity throughout the winter. Furthermore, DfI shared many of the concerns below that would need to be addressed before agreeing to supply grit.
- b. DfI had set criteria used to select the areas that were gritted (typically arterial routes only), or where grit boxes were supplied (typically steep hills only). It was unclear in which locations it was envisaged these grit piles would be used.
- c. If there was rain/snow after the grit had been tipped in an open area, for example a public car park, it binded together and solidifies. This made it very difficult to shovel by hand and greatly reduces the effectiveness of the grit, as the salt was washed away.
- d. The saltwater run-off from grit piles could create harmful environmental conditions in nearby watercourses. Whilst roads etc were gritted regularly, the grit was not usually deposited in such quantity and in such a concentrated space as to produce such a point source environmental risk.
- e. The grit piles were likely to be subject to misuse. There were anecdotal reports of individuals bagging up and reselling grit from grit boxes during times of prolonged ice and snow.
- f. In periods of prolonged ice and snow, DfI may have encountered difficulties with the supply of grit and the resources used to deploy it. Naturally their duty to grit the arterial routes would be prioritised over the supply to Council.
- g. To be effective on ice and snow grit, required the weight of vehicles to agitate and crush it, this was not as effective for pavements.
- h. The presence of grit piles in car parks was likely to be misleading, with users believing that the car parks themselves had been treated.
- i. A request for local gritting could be made to DfI via the NI Direct website, giving residents an opportunity to request it when appropriate.

RECOMMENDED that Council agree to not provide grit piles in Council car parks, but instead residents are directed to NI Direct where they can request gritting as required.

Councillor Cathcart proposed, seconded by Alderman Cummings that a report is brought back to committee on the potential use of Household Recycling Centres, community centres and other supervised Council facilities for self-help grit piles.

Outlining his alternative proposal, Councillor Cathcart explained that it was asking for something that other Councils provided and he referred to an acute issue last winter that had left many people stranded in their own houses without any access to grit. This had been occurring while other Councils had been able to provide grit piles for their own residents to self-help.

There would need to be consideration on where the grit piles would be located as it was recognised that the piles needed to be in supervised places. HRCs would have been a good option in the past but that arrangement would now be complicated by the new booking system that was in operation.

Continuing, Councillor Cathcart explained he did not want to see another winter where there was no help or support available. It had worked for other Council areas and he felt it could work here once those supervised locations were identified.

The seconder, Alderman Cummings agreed and felt that this would widen the scope for officers to allow ease of access when adverse weather conditions arose.

Adding his support, Councillor McKimm recalled that this was a top three issue reported to him on the doorsteps during previous engagement with local residents and he was therefore pleased to see this proposed action coming to the Committee.

Alderman McAlpine wondered if the proposal could go further to address some of the concerns listed by Dfl. This could have included containment of the grit to avoid the run-off and environmental issues referred to. She felt it would work very well if the service was linked to a community centre for example.

Councillor Woods believed this was a sensible proposal, particularly given that Dfl did not always adhere to all requests for grit boxes. She felt it was important that the grit piles be made available at Council owned buildings which allowed for pedestrian access. This would rule out HRC's despite her requests for pedestrian access in Hollywood.

Councillor Blaney did not want to abandon people to the elements and recalled some severe big freeze events where the ground did not thaw for days and had become steadily more treacherous over that period. This would be an important resource in those circumstances.

Councillor Edmund added his support, pointing to the added value this service would be providing along with peace of mind for constituents.

Councillor Smart recognised the challenge that the Council was facing in providing grit given it was ultimately the responsibility of central Government. He agreed that it was important for the Council to do what it could for residents and also businesses. The pavements in Newtownards town centre had become particularly treacherous due to the surface type, during icy conditions last year and traders had been keen to put salt down but were unable to acquire any.

Councillor Rossiter had been disappointed by some of the concerns provided by DfI, noting that problems such as run off and the grit binding together were risks that the Department already faced in the service it already provided. His understanding was that DfI had to apply for funding for gritting services in Northern Ireland annually and he felt that was something that needed to change.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Alderman Cummings, that a report is brought back to committee on the potential use of Household Recycling Centres, community centres and other supervised Council facilities for self-help grit piles.

9. NOM REPORT – BANKS LANE CAR PARK

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that at the Council meeting held on 5th July 2023 the following notice of motion was agreed:-

That this council requests officers to bring back a report with full costings and budgetary options outlining pragmatic solutions to tackling anti-social behaviour in the Bank's Lane car park, Ballyholme including the restricting of access to the car park at night. In addition, officers should clarify ownership of the Bank's Lane as part of the solution.

Background

The issue of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) at Banks Lane, had been ongoing with numerous reports made to the Community Safety Team from the public and via Elected Members.

There had been two different strands of issues reported.

The first strand was from members of the public/residents, complaining about ASB, young people consuming intoxicating substances and generally causing annoyance to residents, visitors, and legitimate users of the area.

The second strand came mainly from residents, complaining about vehicles. The complaints about the vehicles mainly happened after hours (2300hrs+). The users of said vehicles were congregating, leaving engines running, revving their engines, wheel spinning, playing loud music etc.

The Director of Environment, Director of Community and Wellbeing, Head of Assets and Property and Head of Community and Culture met with DEA members and residents on 6th June 2023 to discuss the issues in the area. Chief Inspector

Atkinson was also present at the meeting. At that meeting residents explained the various issues and the impact it was having on their daily lives.

Clarification of Ownership of Banks Lane

After extensive searches officers advised that Council did not currently hold title or have any information on ownership of the lane.

Officers had again asked our Solicitor to conduct searches, but this could be a lengthy process as we were dependent on law searches and 3rd party solicitors responding. Therefore, we were unable to give a completion date and had with no guarantee an owner would be found at the end of the exercise.

It would not have been advisable to carry out works on third party land as any interference with that land without express permission would have constituted to trespass and potentially criminal damage.

In summary, Council did not hold title to the lane, and it was not recommended to carry out any works on the lane itself in conjunction with the issues arising at the Council owned Banks Lane Car Park.

Design Considerations for Restricting Access to Car Park

The following constraints had been considered when determining a potential solution.

1. The solution must have sat within Council's area of ownership i.e. the car park boundary.
2. There was currently no resource available to open and close the car park manually, and doing so may have created a conflict situation for staff if large groups were gathering in the car park at the agreed closing time.
3. The car park was used as a muster point by emergency services, should there be an incident nearby within Belfast Lough. Therefore, the solution must be able to be opened quickly at short notice in the event of an emergency.
4. An appropriately sized turning head must be created at the bottom of the lane to avoid the need for cars to reverse back up the lane and onto the main road in the event of the car park being closed.
[Dimensions governed by the DFI standards set out in the "creating places" document]
5. Due to its proximity to the beach, sand was frequently blown into the car park so any technological solution must be designed for use within this environment.

Proposed Solution to Restrict Vehicular Access

After investigating a number of options, officers would propose that hydraulically operated bollards would be the most suitable solution to restrict vehicular access.

Manufacturers' systems vary but it was envisaged that the following specification would be used as our minimum requirements, should Council decide to proceed:

- Hydraulically operated so the pump and other technical components were housed in a nearby cabinet, with no moving components exposed to the sandy, salty environment.
- Bollards sit flush with the road at rest, rising to an approximate height of 600mm when activated.
- Constructed from minimum 200mm diameter heavy duty steel tube with a 5mm wall thickness for a strong, robust design.
- Hot dip galvanised and painted black, with a yellow reflective strip for a corrosion resistant, attractive, and conspicuous appearance.
- Raise time to be 3 to 4 seconds, with warning beacon.
- Clearly visible signage to warn users that the bollards will rise at a particular time of the evening and not be lowered again until the next morning.



Image 1: example of hydraulically operated bollards



*Image 2: Positioning of Bollards to create turning circle.
Movable bollards shown in green, fixed bollards in purple.*

Considerations

- The system required quite extensive installation works, including excavations, a concrete base, trenching of services, realigning kerbs etc. In addition, due to its proximity to the sea, certain measures needed to be in place to mitigate against a hydraulic oil spill making its

way to the water. The total estimated cost for the 4 bollards along with associated installation works was £80k. No budget currently existed for this work.

- Due to the harsh environment a robust maintenance regime would need to be in place (daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly checks), totalling approximately £10k per year. This would need to be added to future maintenance budgets.
- Whilst the bollards would be effective at preventing vehicles using the space, there was nothing to stop youths making their way there on foot and engaging in ASB that continues to impact nearby residents.
- Despite clear signage, it would be likely that some legitimate users would become "trapped" in the car park at some point, with no way to get their car out until the next morning. (Arguably the same was true for any multistorey car park).
- 3 spaces at the car park entrance would be lost.

Alternative Proposal

An alternative option would be to install new LED lighting and a HD CCTV system. Lighting and CCTV were both proven to reduce ASB. Modern CCTV systems would be able to read the number plates of any vehicles driving dangerously, which would then be passed to the PSNI.

It was estimated that lighting and CCTV could be installed for approximately £20k. Whilst no budget existed for this work, the £30k annual budget for Car Park resurfacing could be redirected to this project, should Council wish to proceed.

Naturally, if this budget was utilised in this way, no car parks would be resurfaced this year.

RECOMMENDED that Council decide which option they wish to proceed with:

1. To carry out no physical works at the car park, but rather to liaise with PSNI for more frequent patrols and monitoring of the cars/persons responsible for ASB.
2. Install hydraulically operated bollards at a cost of around £80k, with budget to be sourced from reserves a further paper to be brought back to committee on what other work would need to stop within the department in order to facilitate the funding of this.
3. To install LED lighting and CCTV at a cost of around £20k, utilising the Car Park resurfacing budget for this year.

As a matter of accuracy, the Director advised that a section about meeting the cost of the Option 2 recommendation from the Council reserves fund had been removed as this fell outside of the Council's Reserves Policy. He explained that this should have been removed before the report was issued.

Councillor Harbinson proposed, seconded by Councillor Cathcart, that the Council proceeds with Option 2, as stated above.

Speaking to his proposal, Councillor Harbinson thanked his predecessor, Karen Douglas for her role in bringing the matter forward along with Bangor Central DEA members. He recalled the antisocial behaviour issues that had been plaguing residents and was sure that Members would have seen the videos that had been shared which painted a depressing picture of nuisance noise from car horns and loud music. He felt that options for additional lighting and CCTV were not going to stop the matters and CCTV would require ongoing review but the bollards however would completely stop access at night and therefore prevent incidents of ASB occurring and take away the requirement of residents having to record, report incidents to the PSNI or endure incidents in the first place. The bollards were supported by the PSNI's Neighbourhood Policing Team lead officer as a clear way forward and he hoped Members could support his proposal which would give the long-suffering residents comfort and peace of mind.

(Councillor Kerr had joined the meeting remotely– 8pm)

Councillor Cathcart welcomed the proposer to what was his first meeting and emphasised that the motion had been brought collectively by all of the Bangor Central DEA members, and he hoped that all parties would continue to work together on addressing the ongoing issues. Whilst extremely welcomed though, this particular measure was only going to address the noise that came from vehicles – the revving of engines, loud horns, loud music – the video footage of such incidents was horrific. This was a serious concern and it required a serious solution and he felt that the bollards were the best approach. They would be operated after hours and would not affect responsible visitors to the facility. He queried the cost of the bollards which were twice the amount of what he had noted from previous discussions with officers.

The Head of Assets and Property Services explained that following the earlier discussions, officers had undertaken further research into the required specifications and due to the beach location an automated hydraulic system would need to include a holding tank and this had increased the estimated costs.

Councillor Cathcart felt that there were options that could be looked at to pay for this given it was a capital cost, but he was certain that residents would be delighted to see the Council taking action on this long-standing issue and he hoped Members could support it.

While sympathetic with residents, Councillor Boyle was against the Council committing to a project without clarity on how it would be paid for. He asked what the limits of the reserves policy were and it was advised that the use of reserves for this type of expenditure would go against Council policy.

Councillor Boyle referred to a £30,000 budget listed for car park resurfacing and asked if that could be reallocated to this project for example. It was advised that officers would weigh up various budgets and the resurfacing budget could be one suggestion that was brought forward.

Reflecting on that response, Councillor Boyle was still unable to give his support at this stage but would be willing to revisit if officers were able to show a clear way of funding it.

Councillor Woods welcomed the proposal and felt while it would not resolve all of the ASB problems in the area, it would fix a significant element. She asked if the Council had other bollards of this particular type in operation elsewhere in the Borough or if it had spoken to other Councils which operated them. It was confirmed that this Council did not have any others in operation and there had been no contact with other Councils. The contractor that officers had approached though had installed them elsewhere for another public authority.

Councillor Woods queried the necessity for daily checks and the Officer advised that this was to ensure that the bollards were not obstructed and were working freely. These daily checks would incur little expense as they would be incorporated into existing maintenance schedules when officers were already in the area. The most significant ongoing expense would be incurred for the servicing requirements at longer intervals as recommended by the manufacturer.

Councillor Smart recognised that this was a long-standing issue and much work had been undertaken in trying to find a solution.

He asked for clarity on what steps the Council would be taking by agreeing to this proposed option and if it was a commitment to delivering the project even if the funding was not available.

The Director confirmed that this would be a commitment to do the work and the decision to be taken thereafter would relate to the source of the funding. He suggested that it would be open to Members to consider building the cost of the work into the forthcoming estimates process for next year, with a view to competing the scheme at the beginning of the next financial year.

Even by restricting access to the car park, Councillor Smart was cautious that the ASB could just move into the lane. He also queried if a lower cost, low tech type of bollard could be installed and operated manually. His theory was that if the ASB was displaced for a long enough period of time it wouldn't come back, allowing the gates to be left open and unattended with the option to lock them again if needed.

The Director explained that that option had been explored in the past but it was not considered practical to meet the demands of opening and closing that car park manually at the required times, so the automatic system was therefore deemed necessary. Manual operation would be an onerous task and Council could not guarantee the reliability required. Furthermore, the staffing costs of that would eventually outweigh the cost of operating the bollards automatically.

On reflection, Councillor Smart felt uncomfortable supporting something of this value without knowing where the money was coming from. The same view was expressed by Councillor Wray who was sympathetic but would have rather made the decision once the suggested funding source had been established.

Referring to information from the PSNI, Councillor Rossiter noted that 90 reports had been made since March 2022 with many offences committed after 9pm and among the list of offences detected were drugs possession and driving while disqualified. He appreciated the cost of the proposed bollard system but there was also a cost of not doing anything, which included the cost of the continued Police response and also a wider cost to society and he therefore was supportive of Option 2.

Councillor McKimm recalled that this issue was the first he had been involved with when joining Council in 2019 and it had remained a constant issue since. He was well aware of the impacts this was having on residents, explaining with their consent, that one resident was undergoing mental health treatment as a result of the ongoing ASB issues. Two other people had now left the area since moving to what they thought would be their 'forever home'. When this was raised in the past in Council, the officer response was that this was not a 'gates Council' and Members were told that nothing could be done. He was delighted that it had been revisited and a solution had been found.

He felt that a broad-brush approach of not being a 'gates Council' was not helpful as each case needed to be dealt with on its own merit. He asked for clarity on the timings of operation of the bollards and it was advised that those would need to be confirmed if Council was in agreement of proceeding with Option 2. Lastly, Councillor McKimm wished to thank the PSNI for its ongoing support in responding to the reports over the years.

Alderman McAlpine asked how the bollards would be operated and the Head of Assts and Property Services explained that they would be programmed to open and close at set times which could change throughout the seasons if required.

Pointing to the costs of cleaning the car park, Alderman McAlpine wondered if those would be reduced as a result of the bollards and perhaps used to offset the installations costs.

Councillor Blaney recalled what had been a joined-up approach involving Bangor Central DEA Members, who had regularly met with residents and discussed various approaches in tackling the issues. He was minded to support the proposal, but he did not believe that closing a public car park was a successful outcome which would be blocking access to sensible and responsible people who used the facility.

Continuing, he could not agree with the praise that Councillor McKimm had given to the PSNI which he felt had actually failed on this matter and let down the residents, noting a lack of prosecutions for incidents he had seen on video which clearly identified people and the car registrations. It was disappointing therefore that the Council was having to resort to these measures of closing off a car park because the policing service had failed to tackle the problems. Given the distress though this had caused to residents, including the mental health issues referred to, he was supportive of the measures being proposed.

On being put to the meeting with 9 voting FOR, 0 voting against, 3 ABSTAINING and 4 ABSENT, the proposal was declared CARRIED.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Harbinson, seconded by Councillor Cathcart, that Council proceeds with Option 2 of the recommendation.

10. STOMA FRIENDLY TOILETS

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that Officers had recently had a number of representations requesting that Council toilets be adapted to become "Stoma friendly".

According to the Colostomy Association, "People with a stoma need to be able to change their 'stoma bag' in a way which is uncomplicated, clean and discrete. Most toilets in the UK do not have the facilities to enable someone with a stoma to be able to easily change their stoma bag.

The three main requirements for a 'stoma-friendly loo' were:

- A hook on the back of the door so that ostomates can hang their luggage and clothing;
- A shelf or surface space so they could spread out their stoma bags and accessories on a clean, hygienic surface; and
- A disposal bin in each cubicle so that ostomates did not have to dispose of their stoma bag in public view.

These changes were small, but they made a huge difference to people living with a stoma."

NISRA statistics showed that in 2021 approximately 24,550 residents had a long-term health problem or disability. Ards and North Down borough had the largest increase in the number of people aged 65 and over. This demographic rose from 27,692 (17.7%) in 2011 to 36,226 (22.1%) in 2021, demonstrating the scale of population change due to ageing. These results showed that Council policymaking should focus in particular upon our ageing population and health/disability issues.

Council provided 24 Public Toilets and 20 Community Centres with toilet facilities located throughout the Borough. Officers believed these would be the higher priority sites within the estate to make Stoma friendly. In addition, we had a further 36 buildings made up of Pavilions, Offices and Cemeteries.

Costs

Officers had calculated an average cost of £834 for the typical works required to make a toilet "Stoma Friendly".

Therefore, if Council were to proceed to adapt the 44 toilets across the accessible public toilets and community centres estate, it would cost in the region of £37k.

The Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding) had applied for £30k funding through Dept of Communities Access and Inclusion grant, with Council contributing 10% of the project (£3k). Therefore, if this funding application was successful, it

would cost Council £10k (£3k contribution to funding plus £7k additional) to make these 44 toilets 'stoma friendly'.

If agreed, the remainder of our toilets would be adapted to become stoma friendly during future planned refurbishment schemes carried out under our Maintenance Strategy, or sooner if additional funding became available.

RECOMMENDED that Council agree to add £10k to the Technical budget next year for stoma friendly adaptations. If the funding is successful, the additional £27k will be used to ensure all 44 public toilets and publicly accessible community centre toilets are adapted. If the funding is unsuccessful, only our 12 most well used public toilets will be adapted (to utilise the budgeted £10k).

Councillor Wray proposed, seconded by Councillor Smart, that Council adds £10k to the technical budget next year for stoma friendly adaptations. If the funding is successful, the additional £27k will be used to ensure all 44 public toilets and publicly accessible community centre toilets are adapted. In the case that this funding was unsuccessful, the issue would be brought back to committee to discuss future steps.

Explaining his alternative proposal, Councillor Wray felt that there was still a long way to go in making the Council's toilet facilities more accessible but this would be a big step forward. He was interested to see a breakdown of the £834 estimate to make each toilet Stoma friendly as he felt it was quite a lot for the hook, shelf and disposable bin required.

He felt that there needed to be a consistent approach to the provision of Stoma Friendly toilets and he did not like the idea of only adapting some of its facilities if the funding bid was unsuccessful. This would only be confusing and unfair not having the facilities available in all of the Borough's towns and villages. He clarified that in the event the bid was unsuccessful this was not a commitment to finding money from elsewhere, it was simply a request to bring it back for the Committee to look at.

Councillor Smart thanked officers for their efforts, appreciating the needs of those who required the facilities. He felt the proposal was apt because it allowed Council to review the situation rather than leave it to potluck as to whether the facilities were available.

Councillor McKimm had not intended to speak but he explained it was a personal matter. He spoke of many people in the community who had this 'hidden disability', who were embarrassed to ask for this help and he believed that many of those in the Chamber who were supporting this would be doing so on behalf of someone who was affected and found it difficult to ask.

Councillor Cathcart felt the amendment was sensible and he recalled an initiative he had brought in the past for signs that were placed in public toilets highlighting that not every disability was visible, referring to people with Chrones and Colitis, to ensure they were provided with dignity. This was another step forward for those that required a Stoma bag and he referred to a meeting the Mayor had held with a local

campaigner from Colostomy UK and he was hopeful that Council could move forward with the relatively minor work that could make a huge difference.

Councillor Rossiter was supportive and thanked officers for their work in bringing forward the funding application. He had seen the quality-of-life impacts from a close family perspective and he hoped the funding bid would be successful, but if not he welcomed the opportunity provided by the alternative proposal for Council to have a look at it.

Councillor Kerr attempted to contribute to the debate remotely but was unable to do so due to experiencing technical difficulties.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Smart, that Council adds £10k to the technical budget next year for stoma friendly adaptations. If the funding is successful, the additional £27k will be used to ensure all 44 public toilets and publicly accessible community centre toilets are adapted. In the case that this funding is unsuccessful, the issue will be brought back to committee to discuss future steps.

11. MARINE SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

(Appendix VI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that Members would recall that at the September Environment Committee a deputation was delivered by Kevin Baird, the Council's appointed "Designated Person" under the Port Marine Safety Code that applies in relation to the safety of our harbours.

Mr Baird referred to a Marine Safety Management System (MSMS) which aspired to ensure our harbours remained safe for all users. Our draft MSMS document was initially approved by Council in November 2019 and since then had been subject to ongoing consultation, audit and review.

Consultations had taken place with all concerned agencies and groups (listed within the attached document) to further refine this document and it was now ready for Council approval.

Within the original draft and in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of our MSMS, a series of objectives and KPI's were agreed, against which the "Designated Person" would assess our performance. These KPI's were fairly detailed and were specific to harbours; they therefore sat outside of the scope of the KPI's set out within the Service Plan for Assets and Property Services.

The agreed objectives were:

- To eliminate incidents so far as was reasonably practicable.
- To conserve the harbours and their approaches
- To ensure adequate procedures are in place in case of Emergency.
- To consult with harbour users
- To ensure Marine Personnel are appropriately trained

- To have adequate Audit and Review mechanisms in place

Our performance against these objectives was monitored by Mr Baird and would be reported to the Council next month.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the implementation of the Marine Safety Management System attached.

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

Councillor Edmund spoke to welcome the development of the strategy and was glad to see it was in place.

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

12. MARINE WATER SAFETY TRAINING SCHEME

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that Members may have recalled that in October 2021 it was agreed that income from the slipway permit system would be invested back into the community in the form of a Marine Safety Training Scheme (MSTS).

The concept of the scheme was to use income generated from slipway permits (approx. £2k per year) to fund various marine based activities that would help engage with users and improve safety in the waters around our marine facilities.

In order to ensure relevant and desirable activities were delivered, Harbours staff used information collected by berth holder surveys and general feedback from users.

This report aimed to update members on activities funded this year under the MSTS.

Scheme Update

In April this year we held an information session at Groomsport Harbour. In addition to Harbour staff there was Bangor Coastguard, Belfast Kayak Club, Ultimate SUP NI, Safer Waters and the RNLI in attendance, each bringing a different perspective of marine safety.

In order to encourage attendance, the Harbour team offered 2 prizes of life jackets; with all attendees who provided their details being entered into the draw.

A total of 35 people attended the event to listen to the safety briefs and discuss any concerns. Officers believe that this attendance, given the weather on the day, was reasonable but were keen to improve for future events.

One of the questions asked of attendees was their suggestions for any safety related training that they wished to receive.

This question was also asked to our berth holders as part of their annual survey.

Officers reviewed both sets of responses and there was a consensus that VHF Radio, Sea Survival and First Aid were in demand. A VHF Radio course was subsequently arranged with local training provider "Safer Waters" for October and the Marine Safety Training Scheme will heavily subsidise the fees, encouraging local berth holders and slipway users to attend.

Safer waters said "By completing the VHF radio course it vastly improves vessel safety at sea and minimises the number of bogus or ill-advised blue light call outs. It also helps ensure that the correct distress calls are made and in a timely manner."

A second strand of work to engage with users and improve marine safety was to offer subsidised Stand Up paddleboard lessons and "come and try" kayaking sessions within Donaghadee Recreational Area. The recreational area was set up by Council several years ago to give people a safe area to carry out their non-motorised recreational activities and keep clear of the inner harbour where vessels manoeuvre.

All attendees would be briefed on the safe use of the equipment, and any general marine safety tips, prior to commencing the session.

Unfortunately, those sessions had to be postponed twice due to poor weather, but officers would rearrange at the earliest opportunity.

The original scheme agreed in 2021 was to be reviewed to ensure it was fit for purpose. Officers were happy with the scheme and its outworking's so far and saw no reason to change it at this time.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the progress made on marine safety via the MSTS and approves its ongoing implementation as part of our Marine Safety Management System.

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

13. REINFORCED AUTOCLAVED AERATED CONCRETE (RAAC)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that RAAC was a lightweight form of precast concrete, frequently used in public sector buildings in the UK from the mid-1960s to the 1990s.

It was mainly found in roofs, occasionally in floors and walls. Visually, RAAC planks looked the same as pre-cast concrete, and could be hidden above false ceilings. It was less durable than traditional concrete and there had been problems as a result, which could have significant safety consequences. Research had shown that this material had a far lower structural loading capacity than other generic reinforced concrete products. Its condition deteriorated further if water was present, due to leaks from roofs etc, which could compromise the reinforcement bars contained within RAAC planks.

The lifespan of such planks had been estimated to be around 30 years. Recent reports in the media referencing closures of public sector buildings in GB due to fear of collapse, prompted officers to undertake an inspection of the relevant buildings within our Estate.

A majority of our estate was of traditional construction, being brick/block walls with timber floors and roofs. These buildings would not contain any RAAC products.

Several of our buildings were of the correct era and construction type to possibly contain RAAC products, so these buildings were inspected by Technical Officers.

Suspended ceilings were lifted and access panels removed, and no RAAC products were found within any of our buildings.

Whilst the inspections were not intrusive; (i.e., plaster ceilings were not broken to facilitate inspection) Officers were confident that the surveys were robust enough to reasonably conclude that no RAAC products were present. Officers would however look out for RAAC as part of our routine condition surveys, similar to the approach taken for asbestos.

At the time of writing this report, no RAAC had been identified within any public sector building in Northern Ireland. Officers believed that it may never have been produced or used here and would suggest that the surveys carried out to date were sufficient for now but would reassess the situation if RAAC was discovered elsewhere in the Northern Ireland Public Sector Estate.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the content of this report.

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

Councillor Cathcart had contacted Council officers at the time of the media reports and was pleased to see that reassurances provided at that time had now been confirmed in the report.

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

14. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

There were no items of Any Other Notified Business.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

15. FUNDING OF COUNCIL ANIMAL WELFARE SERVICE
(Appendices VII & VIII)

****IN CONFIDENCE****

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 5 – INFORMATION RELATING TO
A CLAIM TO LEGAL PROFESSIONAL PRIVILEGE**

A report on the funding of the Council's animal welfare enforcement service was considered and it was recommended that the Council continue to fund this service at financial risk pending the outcome of legal processes in this regard.

The recommendation was agreed.

**16. NOM REPORT – GRITTING OF TOWN CENTRE FOOTPATHS
AND CAR PARKS**

****IN CONFIDENCE****

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 5 – INFORMATION RELATING TO
A CLAIM TO LEGAL PROFESSIONAL PRIVILEGE**

A report relating to a Notice of Motion regarding the gritting of town centre car parks and footpaths was considered.

It was agreed that officers bring back a report detailing the legal advice that backs up the risk assessment and that this report is brought back to the Committee and a review is undertaken of other NI Council policies on Council owned car parks during freezing weather conditions. This should include analysis of how gritting of car parks and footpaths is delivered by any Councils that do so.

**17. EXTENSION OF CONTRACT FOR EXTERNAL CLEANING
SERVICES**

****IN CONFIDENCE****

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

A report relating to the extension of a contract for external cleaning services was considered.

It was agreed that the External Cleaning Services contract is extended until July 2024, in line with the terms set out in the original tender and subject to the increases indicated.

18. EXTENSION OF CONTRACT FOR MARINE SERVICES

****IN CONFIDENCE****

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

A report relating to the extension of a contract for marine services was considered.

It was agreed that the Marine Services contract is extended until October 24, in line with the terms set out in the original tender and subject to the increases indicated.

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 9.10pm.

ITEM 7.3

103

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Place & Prosperity Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards on Thursday 5 October 2023 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair:	Councillor Blaney	
Aldermen:	Adair (Zoom 7.37pm) Armstrong-Cotter (Zoom)	McDowell
Councillors:	Ashe Edmund (Zoom 7.39pm) Gilmour Hollywood Kennedy MacArthur	McCracken McCollum McKimm McLaren Rossiter Smart

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

1. APOLOGIES

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

No apologies had been received.

NOTED.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman sought any Declarations of Interest at this stage and none was made.

NOTED.

**3. CITY TOWN ADVISORY GROUPS MINUTES FOR NOTING
(Appendix I)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place, outlined as follows:

- 3.1 Bangor CAG Minutes – 15.8.23
- 3.2 Comber TAG Minutes – 10.8.23
- 3.3 Redacted Donaghadee TAG Minutes – 8.8.23
- 3.4 Holywood TAG Minutes – 9.8.23
- 3.5 Newtownards TAG Minutes – 29.8.23

RECOMMENDED that the minutes be noted.

Councillor McKimm proposed, seconded by Councillor Smart, that the minutes be noted.

Referring specifically to the Bangor CAG Minutes, the proposer, Councillor McKimm sought an update on any plans to increase youth interaction throughout the local community.

The Director of Place referred to an upcoming presentation on the Bangor Waterfront Project to be made the following week at SERC, adding that this would be the third public engagement on this particular project. As part of that a number of youth engagements had been undertaken and that would continue. She added that one to one meetings were also planned as well as consultation with the local Sports Forum and new communication material had also been produced including a flyer and updated website.

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

3.5.1 - Conway Square Covering (FILE RDP230)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity outlining that the Council appointed Hall McKnight Architects to undertake an economic appraisal of the proposed covering for Conway Square to ascertain the financial viability, economic benefits and fundability of a potential covering. There was a break clause in the contract that required a positive economic appraisal to be received before moving to a detailed design and planning application.

The Outline Business Case (OBC), previously presented to Council in June, outlined that whilst some benefits would be experienced from the project, they were outweighed by the risks and low economic return to Newtownards/the Borough, with the OBC clearly identifying several key constraints:

- Availability of capital funding from ANDBC or any other source.
- Availability of revenue funding and resources to manage the facility.
- The need to operate in a financially viable and sustainable manner.
- Obtaining planning permission could be pragmatic (although there has been engagement with Planning and HED)

In terms of the capital costs, this project investment (£798k) was not currently within the Council's capital budget nor was it included in the Council's capital projects prioritisation list. Also given the findings set out in the OBC it would be extremely unlikely that this project could attract external funding as a positive economic appraisal would be essential.

A further key issue was the management of the Square and its events. The Council currently did not have the funding or resources to manage and deliver events in the

Square. This extra budget/resource could be needed to animate the area should the project go ahead.

The project, under the economic evaluation, results in a Net Present Social cost and a Benefit Cost Ratio below 1:1 (a benchmark for value for money). Based on the limited data available, the project was not forecast to present a net economic benefit to the economy, although there would be non-monetary benefits, thus the OBC concluded that the project was not considered to represent Value for Money.

1. Update

As requested by Council, this was taken back to the Town Advisory Group on 29 August 2023. At the meeting it was suggested that the Chamber would be given further time to respond to the OBC, which they received on 27 April 2023. At the date of writing the report no response had been received.

The commission with Hall McKnight had ended and no budget was currently available for further work on this project. The results of the independently procured OBC were clear that no economic case existed to further progress this project.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the above.

Alderman McDowell proposed, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that the matter be deferred for further consideration by the Newtownards TAG.

The Head of Regeneration advised that the Newtownards Chamber of Trade was to bring further information in respect of the proposed canopy but as yet nothing had been received.

The proposer, Alderman McDowell, commented that this was a key priority for Newtownards and as such he wished to give it every opportunity to succeed. Continuing, he acknowledged that the Chamber did have some disagreements in respect of the Economic Appraisal but he was of the opinion there were lots of other options available. Alderman McDowell stated that Newtownards relied heavily upon local visitors rather than international visitors and as such he did not think that was the right way for the Council to consider the economic appraisal.

Councillor Gilmour sought clarity on when the matter was being deferred to and how much money had been spent on this project to date. She added that she believed what was being proposed was slightly too open ended.

The Head of Regeneration stated by way of background that the OBC had been considered in both April 2023 and May 2023 with no comments made on each occasion. Following a Committee meeting in June 2023 it went back to the TAG meeting on 29 August 2023 where a good discussion had taken place but nothing put forward in writing at that time. Consultation had taken place which had followed the appropriate guidance with spend to date totalling £30,000. The Head of Regeneration reiterated that the matter had been considered by the TAG on three separate occasions with no feedback received from the Chamber. If the OBC or an alternative solution were to be reconsidered a new contract would be required which in turn would require new funding. He further reiterated that the economist was clear

that domestic tourism could not be taken into consideration within the economic appraisal and for the Council to commit capital expenditure into the project and/or secure external funding, a robust OBC was required.

Thanking the officer for his comments, Councillor Smart sympathised with Alderman McDowell and his quest to effectively ensure the file on this matter was appropriately completed. As such he asked if there would be any negative implications if the matter was deferred back the TAG.

In response the Head of Regeneration stated that it was the gift of the Council whether it chose to keep the matter open or not. He reiterated that the current consultation was now complete and there was no further budget available.

Councillor Smart suggested that going forward arrangements should be put in place to ensure any revenue costs were included in projects such as this.

The Director of Place confirmed that Council Business Cases must take into consideration all costs, including any potential ongoing revenue/operational costs.

At this stage Alderman Armstrong-Cotter indicated that she had a number of questions after noting the officer's comments that there was no further funding available. As such she then assumed any new proposals would become a new project and asked if that was something the TAG could do at a future date.

In response the Head of Regeneration confirmed that any of the Council's TAGs or CAGs could ask for consideration to be given to new projects. He informed members that he was currently completing a new service plan for the incoming year as part of the Council's budget setting process. As such any new projects coming forward would need to be included within that for consideration. He added that a case would need to be made to secure additional funding for this project if it was to remain on the TAG Agenda but added that currently it was not economically viable.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter expressed her support for Newtownards Town Centre but added that in respect of what had been proposed she would need further clarity on how long the matter was being deferred for and for what ultimate goal.

Thanking officers for their work on this to date, Councillor Kennedy added that Alderman McDowell would be only too well aware of the enthusiasm he had for the regeneration of Newtownards Town Centre. As such he suggested that members should accept the findings of the Business Case and he added that he would also welcome clarity on the purpose of the proposed deferral.

By way of summing up, Alderman McDowell stated that the deferral would not cost the Council any money. He noted that at the August meeting of the TAG a full and frank discussion had taken place with the Chamber of Trade disagreeing with some issues included within the Economic Appraisal. As such he was keen to ensure that it was given a chance to respond. He noted that there had also been some disagreement amongst the members of the TAG about when they had received a copy of the report. Alderman McDowell reiterated that it would not cost anything to defer the matter back to the TAG.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman McDowell, seconded by Councillor McCollum, with 8 voting For, 5 voting Against and 1 Abstaining, that the matter be deferred for further consideration by the Newtownards TAG.

4. REVIEW OF CITY AND TOWN ADVISORY GROUPS (FILE RDP60)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity detailing that as members would be aware and following on from previous reports, each of the towns/city in the Borough have had Town/City Advisory Group for the last five years. The Steering Groups were derived from the original public realm Steering Groups and further developed over time.

As the remit of the new Town/City Advisory Groups had been broadened beyond the current regeneration functions to encompass wider Council services those were reformed to be more reflective of the wider community. In addition to DEA Councillors, the Advisory Groups now included Chamber of Commerce representatives, community representatives, regeneration group representatives and also faith and youth representations. The number of social partners was equal to the number of Elected Members for each respective DEA.

In order to remain independent from this process, the Regeneration Unit sought assistance from Community Development Section to develop and run a process to attract social partners (community, faith and youth). In instances where there was more than the prescribed number of representatives, social partners were rotated on a yearly basis as agreed by the Advisory Group.

Update

The current remit of the TAGs/CAG was:

"The Town/City Advisory Groups have been established to progress work in relation to Ards and North Down Borough Council developing a local approach to regeneration issues, Masterplanning/Place making, community planning, and other localised issues, defining outcomes and agreeing the processes and structures to support localised solutions. The minutes of the Town/City Advisory Groups will be circulated at the Place and Prosperity Committee of Ards and North Down Borough Council for noting. The Groups will also function to include proposals and objectives of other Council Departments."

Through the review of the Masterplans in consultation with the TAGs/CAG it had been agreed that whilst the TAGs/CAG were a valuable vehicle to raise localised regeneration issues and other pertinent town/city concerns, the current terms of reference were limiting. In order to make the TAGs/CAG more dynamic as partnerships, where collective solutions to problem solving for issues facing the towns/city, a review on how the TAGs/CAG were structured would be beneficial to further enhance this valuable work.

The current consultants, Paul Hogarth & Co had been at the forefront of those discussions and having been the successful tenderer for the review of the Masterplans was now best placed to undertake further work on the future functions of the TAGs/CAG. The appointment would be made in line with Procurement Policy subject to Council approval to undertake the work.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees to proceed to appoint Paul Hogarth & Co to undertake the review of the TAGs/CAG to the value of c£12K which can be met from existing budgets.

Councillor McCracken proposed, seconded by Councillor Hollywood, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer, Councillor McCracken noted the good work previously undertaken by Paul Hogarth & Co on previous Masterplans and as such he agreed that it made sense for it to take the lead with this next step. He sought clarity around the Council's Procurement Policy in respect of extensions to contracts.

In response the Head of Regeneration confirmed that extensions such as this were included within the Council's Procurement Policy.

Councillor Gilmour welcomed the review, particularly as it would be carried out by an external third party. She suggested that any such review should include the make-up, role and boundaries of each of the TAGs and CAGs. Councillor Gilmour also suggested that it would be useful for those elected members who did not sit on the TAGs and CAGs to be able to have sight of the Agendas in advance of meetings to enable them to lobby their party colleagues on any matters of interest.

The Head of Regeneration confirmed that all meetings were open, noting that they had become almost Council Committees rather than Working Groups.

In response to a query from Councillor MacArthur about engaging with Rural Groups, the Head of Regeneration confirmed that engagement was undertaken through a number of Village Groups with assistance from North Down Community Network. This engagement had worked well and been successful in getting the appropriate information out to those in rural areas. He added that this was something officers were currently working on with a report to potentially come to Committee in November for consideration. Councillor MacArthur welcomed the officer's comments adding that she looked forward to hearing further details about this in due course.

Councillor McCracken suggested that it may be useful to follow national policy on such matters particularly given that £20M had been awarded to a total 55 towns throughout the UK. As such he suggested that officers should liaise with the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) to establish if some of that funding could be redirected to Northern Ireland.

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

5. NOTIFICATION OF LAUNCH OF ENGAGEMENT RE EASTERN TRANSPORT PLAN 2035 (FORMERLY BELFAST METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT PLAN 2035) (FILE RDP69)
(Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity outlined that the Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) was currently preparing a new Transport Plan which would set the framework for making transport policy and investment decisions up until 2035. The Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035, previously known as the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP), covered five Council areas (including AND) and would also support the preparation of the Local Development Plans for those councils.

Detail

Council previously received notification that the Permanent Secretary of DFI had taken the decision to change the name of the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan to the Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035.

Elected members, the Chief Executive and senior officers were invited to an engagement event with presentation by DFI and Atkins on 31 July 2023.

DFI had written to the Chief Executive (letter attached) to advise that engagement on the ETP's proposed draft Vision and Objectives opened on 4 September 2023 for eight weeks.

Members should be advised that regular updates on the ETP Working Group were reported to Planning Committee as Steering Group for the Council's Local Development Plan.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

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

The proposer, Councillor McKimm, commented that everyone would be well aware of his promotion of access in society for all, particularly the elderly. As such he indicated that he would look forward to receiving the updates alluded to in the report in due course.

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

6. LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP UPDATE (FILE ED 123)
(Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity detailing that Ards and North Down established its Labour Market Partnership (LMP) in August 2021 when the Department for Communities (DfC) made funding available for the

establishment of Labour Market Partnerships within each of the 11 Councils in Northern Ireland.

The aim of Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership was to help improve employability outcomes and labour market conditions locally. The LMP worked through co-ordinated, collaborative, multi-agency partnerships to meet their regional objectives whilst being flexible to meet the needs presented by localised conditions and helping to connect employers with employees.

After having its budget withdrawn in May 2023, the Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership saw its funding reinstated by the Department for Communities after a successful case was made through an elaborate response to its Equality Impact Assessment.

The Letter of Offer from DfC then was received on the 28 July 2023 for the reduced budget figure of £300,413.81 (excluding operational costs) and was returned to the Department on the 4 August 2023.

Action Plan for 2023-24

The AND LMP 2023-24 Action Plan aimed to achieve the following:

Activities	No. of participants/attendees
Events	260
Participants in activities and programmes	207 (155 completers)
Employers engaged with across all programmes	55
Employment	74 to gain employment or to progress in better positions

The Customer Facing Action Plan for 2023-2024 had now been agreed with DfC and was attached to this report.

The Action Plan 2023-2024 for the reduced budget was currently being implemented by the ANDLMP. The offer for the full budget may still be made by DfC at some stage in the Autumn and if additional money was offered, it would be reported to the Council for information. As per the conditions of the Letter of Offer, all activities should be completed by the end of this financial year. It was however expected that, as the Letter of Offer was significantly delayed, some flexibility might be shown by the DfC and accruals allowed. This would need to be negotiated.

Current Activities are as follows:

A Transport Academy tender was published on the 24 August for the total value of £78,489. This was to recruit and train at least 45 candidates, the breakdown of which was: 30 candidates (basic HGV licence), 10 upskilling for HGV licences and five candidates to receive a PSV/ Coach Licence. This tender closed on the 14 September and was currently being evaluated.

The tender for a **Job Focused Academy** for People with Disabilities was published on the 18 September for the total value of £39,650. This was to recruit and develop suitable academies for up to 22 participants. This employer-led programme aimed to

offer people with disabilities an opportunity to gain a qualification and access sustainable employment where gaps had been identified.

An online **Information Session on the LMP** was held on Tuesday 19 September. This saw over 31 companies and business representatives registering and attending to find out more about the upcoming work of the LMP. It gave the attendees an opportunity to complete an Expression of Interest, should they be interested in quoting for any of the upcoming projects. This event also doubled up as an engagement session with our local businesses and organisations. It was a direct opportunity for the LMP to ask attendees where they saw the skills and employment gaps in the local market and how the Rapid Response Academies could address those needs through short and targeted initiatives.

A Careers Convention was planned for 7 February 2024 in Bangor Aurora Aquatic Centre to coincide with Apprenticeship week which would be from 5-9 February 2024. Further details on the Careers Convention would be reported to Council once agreed.

With assistance from DfC, a **Jobs Fair** was planned for March 2024, the date of which was yet to be confirmed. It was anticipated to be held in Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex. This would showcase employers within the Borough that had jobs available and were recruiting. Support agencies would also be in attendance to assist applicants where possible. Further details on the Job Fair would be reported to Council once agreed.

The LMP Action Plan document for 2023-2024 was attached in Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the content of this report.

Councillor McLaren proposed, seconded by Councillor Rossiter, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer, Councillor McLaren expressed her thanks to officers for the work which had been undertaken in respect of the LMP, particularly given its success. She noted what a fantastic initiative it was noting the statistics outlined in the report for those who had successfully gained employment and the number of events which had taken place to date. Continuing, she asked if the Council could potentially be selling itself short by not being ambitious enough through this Partnership.

(Alderman Adair joined the meeting at this stage on Zoom – 7.37pm)

In response, the Head of Economic Development advised that the Programme offered support at varying levels and as such not everyone would end up in employment as that would not be the right path for them. She added that some people would require awareness training and training to gain qualifications and as such she felt the employment target of 74 as set out in the report was a realistic target.

Continuing Councillor McLaren asked if the LMP should instead be encouraging people from unemployment into employment through the LMP rather than improving their status within existing employment.

(Councillor Edmund joined the meeting at this stage on Zoom – 7.39pm)

The Head of Economic Development commented that the LMP needed to address varying degrees of employment from those who were economically inactive to helping employers who were experiencing difficulties with recruitment. She added that there were many local vacancies currently within the Borough and as such there was a need to provide assistance through training to those local businesses affected. By doing this those people would be able to move into higher roles and feed into the economic cycle.

Councillor McLaren referred to the spend of £79,000 being spent on upskilling 45 candidates to obtain HGV licences and congratulated officers on such initiatives. One concern she did, however, have was if there was any guarantee those candidates who were successful would remain working within the Borough. The Head of Economic Development confirmed that the Council worked with those employers with vacancies and those tended to be locally based within the Borough.

At this stage Councillor Rossiter noted the funding provided for this initiative by DfC and welcomed that.

Thanking officers for the work which had been carried out in respect of the Partnership, Councillor McKimm reflected on what a journey it had been from the outset for the Partnership. Continuing he referred to Page 2 of the report which detailed current activities, particularly the Transport Academy and the Job Focus Academy, and referred to the very established pattern of engagement with young people primarily involving schools, technical colleges, and youth groups. He informed members that currently there were 711,000 young people who fell into the NETE (Not in Education or Employment) category with that amount set to rise and, as such, he sought clarification from officers in respect of a review of what action would be taken to engage those young people who were not currently engaging the services of the LMP.

In response the Head of Economic Development confirmed that there were varying levels of support currently available to everyone with a widened LMP net of interaction undertaken. Through the Jobs and Benefit Office mentors had been sought to work with a wide variety of people to bring them through the support programmes and increase their confidence. At this stage Councillor McKimm asked if officers had engaged with the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust where new posts had been created at GP practices for Health & Social Care officers in a sign posting capacity. In response the Head of Economic Development confirmed that it was hoped to widen the remit of the LMP however, it had been noted attendance from Trust staff may be difficult due to work time constraints and commitments. She added that she would welcome any recommendations of this nature which members may have.

Referring to the HGV training, Councillor MacArthur reported that recently many HGV trainers had left Northern Ireland as well trainers associated with industrial machinery. As such there appeared to be a skills gap there and she asked if this was something which officers could consider going forwards. Continuing she referred to the Career Convention and Jobs Fair and noted that for many young people literacy and numeracy were a barrier to employment. She added that at such events it was also good to have a wide spread of information on a variety of career paths to suit all. Councillor MacArthur then commented on engagement with SERC and schools adding that she hoped that was something which would continue.

In response the Head of Economic Development advised that part of the scheme involved a Bursary Scheme which would respond to the individual needs of businesses and provide money for them to upskill their staff. In respect of literacy and numeracy, officers would normally signpost to other interventions and members were reminded of funding, which was available from the Shared Prosperity Fund, called 'Multiply'. Members were then informed that SERC was a partner of the LMP as was the Education Authority. It was further noted that a total of 12 videos had been created on different career paths which had been sent to all schools to provide young people with a flavour of different career paths with local companies.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter stated that during the Covid19 pandemic Ards Community Development Network had obtained funding to enable them to put some of its members through HGV training. Given the ongoing shortage of HGV drivers she asked if officers would seek further funding to extend this particular programme to roll out to those members of local community groups. In response the Head of Economic Development advised that the HGV Academy was open to all and as such anyone was able to apply. In respect of budget availability officers were hopeful that DfC would be successful in being able to provide an additional allocation of funding. Alderman Armstrong-Cotter thanked the officer for her comments adding that she would be grateful if officers would consider offering the Scheme out to local community groups given that it could provide many young people with a route into gainful employment.

At this stage Councillor Hollywood commented that part of his work currently involved an employability project for those young people referred to earlier by Councillor McKimm. He acknowledged that many of them had complex issues of their own and as such had fallen through the employment net. Through schemes such as the LMP they were able to build on their confidence but regrettably there were no work experience opportunities for them and as such any work which could be done to remedy that would be most welcome.

Councillor Gilmour welcomed the report before then commenting that it was encouraging to see the amount of work which had gone into making this a success. Referring to the up and coming Careers Fair and Job Convention she stated that she would encourage consideration to be given to providing the free bus service to the event.

By way of summing up Councillor McLaren congratulated officers for challenging DfC on its withdrawal of funding adding that the work they had carried out to date had been invaluable. Continuing she stated that she would welcome any initiative which

would help with employability and assist those to further their career in existing roles. Councillor McLaren also particularly welcomed assistance for those with disabilities and vulnerabilities to engage in seeking employment.

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

7. RENEWED AMBITION COSTED PROPOSAL (FILE RDP196)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity detailing that the Council agreed a number of years ago to be a member of the Renewed Ambition Programme (RAP). This was a joint public/private sector led initiative that aimed to work collaboratively to showcase investment and development opportunities across Belfast City Region, seeking to deliver on shared ambitions for the city region as an exciting place to work, live, visit and invest. It was a five pillared programme focused on activities to ensure Belfast City Region was positioned to continue to attract investment and deliver on inclusive growth. The five pillars included:

- 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.
- Programme of Engagement and Advocacy to facilitate two-way conversations with policy makers and showcase real estate opportunities to the investor community. This aimed to position the Belfast City Region positively and seeks to identify and try to address barriers that investors, developers, and occupiers may face when they consider Belfast as a destination.
- Media and Stakeholder Engagement reinforcing positive messaging around the regions investment proposition through international marketing and communication campaigns targeting the national and international real estate investment and development community.
- A shared access repository which facilitated 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.
- Research aligned to the impact of real estate investment to inform the city proposition and narrative.

All five BRCD partner Councils had invested in RAP, in partnership with BCC, since 2019 and it had been an important forum to showcase the real estate investment potential for the wider Belfast City Region and forthcoming BRCD projects.

Benefits achieved through the 2022/2023 Programme

Through the previous RAP programme the Council had been able to promote opportunities within the Borough to investors and developers at events including:

- MIPIM March Cannes – this was the leading global property market event, with international real estate industry attending from around the world. Council previously attended in 2019 (event was postponed in 2020/21 due to Covid). Due to global economic situation officers/members did not attend the

2022 event in person, but the Borough was represented through RAP marketing materials on the stand.

- UKREiif May Leeds– UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum. The Chief Executive and Director of Place attended the event, which brought together over 7,000 attendees from across the public and private sectors involved in regeneration of the UK's city and regions including investors, funders, developers, housebuilders and government bodies. The Borough's investment sites were uploaded onto the UKREiif investment portal, which was accessible to all attendees. Officers also undertook one to one meetings with a number of potential investors including four potential hotel chains who were interested in learning more about the opportunities within the Borough.

All six Council RAP partners development sites were featured in joint marketing and sales collateral. A digital version of which was promoted on the Belfast Region stand at both MIPIM and UKREiif.

As previously reported to Council RAP also undertook and launched a 'Building Impact' report, which aimed to identify and demonstrate the positive social, economic and environmental impact that real estate and built environment projects could deliver when done well.

Renewed Ambition Programme 2023/24

The 2023/24 RAP Programme of activity would run from the 1 September 2023 to the 31 August 2024. This collaborative programme of activity would be delivered across the key pillars of Research, Events, Engagement and Advocacy and Communications. The programme would also include Belfast Region attendance at international real estate conferences - UKREiif 2024 and MIPIM 2024, to showcase the Belfast City Region to a global audience.

In 2024 the objectives were to:

- Continue to build collaboration and partnership in the city and wider region
- Continue to promote and market the Belfast region outside Northern Ireland
- Increased engagement and advocacy with all key stakeholders, in particular target investors and government.

The proposed programme of activity at MIPIM 2024 included Belfast Region delegation participation on the Department for International Trade stand, and investment showcase and networking opportunities. MIPIM was the world's leading built environment conference and exhibition, bringing together nearly 27,000 public and private sector built environment representatives from across the globe. It provided attendees with an opportunity to promote their city/region to a global audience and connect with potential partners and sources of investment required to unlock built environment regeneration and development, while supporting the built environment industry to bring forward sustainable development and help accelerate on the road to net zero.

The programme also included attendance at UKREiif in Leeds in May 2024. This event had grown from strength to strength over the last two years, with 7,000 plus attendees expected in 2024. Belfast Region stand would be located in its same prominent position as last year and a strong programme of events was anticipated including the opportunity for ANDBC to participate in a number of speaking events within the programme, as well as one to one meetings.

BRCD Council partners were again being offered a special package to include the activities outlined above for £15,000, as per previous years. The majority of funding for RAP came from the private sector and it was anticipated that all BRCD Council's would again partner with RAP. It should be noted that attendees were responsible for their own travel arrangements and costs. Based on previous years it was anticipated the cost to send up to two officers to both MIPIM and UKREiif in 2024 would be c£4,000 (to cover flights and accommodation).

Attracting investment into the Borough was an integral part of its Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy (ITRDS) and collaborating with the Renewed Ambition Programme would help AND's reach into wider markets and to achieve higher impact and leverage spend against any activity that could be undertaken alone.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves participation in the Renewed Ambition Programme at a cost of £15,000 for 2023-24, as well as attendance of up to two ANDBC officers at MIPIM and UKREiif 2024 at an estimated cost of c£4,000. These can be met from existing budgets.

Alderman McDowell proposed, seconded by Councillor McCracken, that the matter be deferred to enable a presentation to be made on the Renewed Ambition Programme (RAP).

The proposer, Alderman McDowell stated that he felt it was important for members to have the opportunity to find out more about RAP in order to have a clear strategy going forwards. He added that he would have concerns that such a trip to Cannes could be considered a 'jolly' and as such he felt it was important to have a clear rationale as to why the Council should attend this event. Continuing Alderman McDowell reminded members that it was the role of the Committee to ask questions, scrutinise and even put forward some alternative ideas for consideration. He added that he did not believe his proposal would hold anything up and reports from bodies such as this which were funded by Council would be welcomed to help understand what their role was.

At this stage the Director of Place apologised to members if the report tabled before them had not been detailed enough. She advised members that RAP was a Private Public Sector Partnership, driven by the private sector which had an annual budget of just over £500,000. This was an opportunity to include partner Councils within the Belfast Region City Deal into the activities and opportunities RAP presented and as such it was up to each of those Councils to decide if they each wished to pay sponsorship of £15,000 to become involved. She indicated that RAP could be asked to come along to make a presentation adding that the Council's Chief Executive was the current representative for the five regional Councils Working Group on the RAP

working group. It was noted that for the Council to go it alone tickets would cost thousands of pounds and the Council would not have its own stand.

Continuing the Director expressed the view, as outlined in previous reports to the Committee, that attendance at both events was worthwhile given the amount of people Council officials could interact with including many potential investors. It was noted that Council's investors were encouraged to attend and had indeed done so previously and it was felt that had been a worthwhile exercise. The Director indicated that she would be happy to provide members with further information on this in due course. Referring to the opportunity to have one to one meetings, she recalled on a previous trip the Council had successfully held 17 one to one meetings, resulting in five companies coming over with an interest in the Bangor Waterfront Scheme. Similarly she reported that following this year's UKREiif event she, along with the Chief Executive, had met with four hoteliers who were very interested in the Borough and as such those conversations were being followed up. In summary she indicated that a representative from RAP could be asked to come along and give a presentation to the Committee and bring a further detailed report outlining why it was felt the investment of £15,000 was worth it. Members could also be provided with literature including brochures and added that officers believed that UKREiif was a very important event for the Council to have a presence with many major investors in attendance.

The seconder, Councillor McCracken thanked the Director for her update commenting that it was important to use this as an opportunity to focus on the Borough. He believed that it was essential for the Council to go alongside the Belfast Region City Deal in partnership while still retaining a focus on carving out its own individual identity. Continuing he agreed that it was imperative for the Council to involve local developers such as Bangor Marine and carve out a clear marketing strategy. Councillor McCracken commented that it would also be useful to have some further information on what meetings the Director felt could be secured and what the objectives of those meetings would be. In summing up he stated that the message he and his colleague wished to get across was that, while they supported this and the opportunity to promote the Borough further, some further information would be useful to ensure that Council contributing to this would be beneficial.

Councillor McKimm expressed his support for the report and recommendation tabled before members and the officer team adding that he was in no doubt that that the trip would not be a 'jolly' as suggested by the proposer. Continuing he advised that he had spent most of his working life working in regeneration in the area of social capital and as such he recognised and acknowledged the capability of the Council's officer team. Continuing he advised that in preparation for the meeting he had been able to draw down previous reports on Decision Time relating to RAP which had previously been presented by officers to the Committee. As such he stated that he recognised the value of engaging with RAP, particularly given the ongoing challenges in Bangor with empty shop units. Councillor McKimm asked if the Council currently had a catalogue or inventory of the vacant premises and if so could that be made available to members. He added that he could not support the proposal which had been put forward by Alderman McDowell.

The Director of Place commented that the Department annually carried out a vacancy check/report and a member of the team continually reviewed and updated the list. It was noted that the Council also had a dedicated officer who looked after researching vacant spaces for businesses including plots of lands, industrial units and town centre shop units. At this stage the Director of Prosperity commented that she, along with the Head of Economic Development, had met with people who were looking for specific premises and provided them with the appropriate information about what was available in the Borough at any given time. She added that the officer regularly updated that information to ensure the most accurate details were available at all times. Councillor McKimm reiterated how useful it would be for members to have sight of that if possible.

Expressing his thanks to officers, Councillor Smart noted there was so much good going on throughout the Borough along with the return on investment and as such he acknowledged the importance of going out and selling it. He asked if there would be an opportunity to have a discussion around how best the Council could promote the Borough at such events. The Director of Place reminded members that a Borough Investment Proposition Strategy had previously been agreed by Council. At this stage members were advised that the RAP was one set price and she recalled that last year on bringing a report to Committee suggesting that it did not attend the MIPIM members had been extremely disappointed with that. As such she indicated that she would be happy to bring back a reporting providing the details of both shows for members to consider further.

(Councillor Gilmour left the meeting at this stage – 8.20pm)

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter recalled the discussions which had taken place the previous year on this very matter and how at that time the Committee had agreed that it would be beneficial for the Council to attend, so much so that a report was brought back which confirmed that to be the case. Continuing she expressed the view that the report tabled before them provided members with all of the information required, adding that such events were clearly a tool for the Council to promote the Borough rather than a 'jolly' as had been suggested earlier in the meeting. As such she indicated that she too was content with the report and recommendation which had been presented to members and could not support the proposal put forward by Alderman McDowell.

By way of summing up Alderman McDowell stated that he was not criticising officers but instead it was a case of elected members initiating their challenge function which ultimately they had been elected to do. He commented that the debate had been useful and as a result members had learnt a lot more, particularly as the impact would be Borough wide. Such matters, he suggested, should be considered thoroughly as a Committee to highlight those areas of weakness as well as give consideration to the update of the Council's message. He added that if the Council was ever challenged on this it could provide evidence that it was fully debated by the Committee. Alderman McDowell stated that for him personally he would like to have a better understanding of RAP to include who it was, what it did, what the Council's role and ambitions were and how it was proposed to achieve those. He urged the Committee to take the opportunity to review this important area to ensure that the

Council was confident that all matters had been concluded and the Committee had a clear understanding of the goals to be achieved.

(Councillor Gilmour rejoined the meeting at this stage via Zoom – 8.25pm)

At this stage the Chairman asked the Director to summarise what could potentially be missed if the Committee was minded to proceed with the proposal.

The Director of Place indicated that while all sponsors had been asked to confirm their intention, or not, to partner with RAP for 23/24, she suspected that if one Council had not provided that confirmation that RAP would go ahead and book the stand at MIPIM, as this was time sensitive. As such the main implication of deferring a decision on this would be the increased travel and accommodation costs, should Council then decide to partner/attend.

On being put to the meeting with 5 voting For and 10 voting Against, the proposal was declared LOST.

The Chairman sought a new proposal at this stage.

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

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

(Alderman Adair & Councillor Edmund left the meeting at this stage – 8.30pm)

8. 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 Smart, seconded by Councillor MacArthur, that the public/press be excluded during the discussion of the undernoted items of confidential business.

9. PILOT BOOKABLE EVENT SPACES (FILE TO/EV123)

(Appendix IV)

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

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

A report is being presented on how a pilot Events Space Booking Procedure may be developed and delivered once the redevelopment of the Waterfront Events Space is complete.

The report recommends Council approving an outline pilot procedure and for officers to return with a management plan and pricing structure in due course.

The recommendation was adopted.

10. GOVERNANCE ARRANGMENTS FOR MANAGEMENT OF COUNCIL HARBOURS – APPOINTMENT OF DUTY HOLDER (FILE RDP160) (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)

This report details the requirements for the Port Marine Safety code in regard to roles and responsibilities of individuals and Council.

The report recommends that the Place and Prosperity Committee continues its role as Duty Holder under the Port Marine Safety Code with ongoing delegated authority to make decisions relating to Harbour safety pertaining to Bangor Marina and Harbour if and when required.

The recommendation was adopted.

11. NORTHERN IRELAND ENTERPRISE SUPPORT SERVICE (FILE ED135)

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

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

A report being presented to update Members on the ongoing preparation of the 11-council NI Enterprise Support Service to replace the Go For It programme. The report includes detail of tender elements.

The report recommends that Council notes the report.

The recommendation was adopted.

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 8.58pm.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Corporate Services Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards and via Zoom, on Tuesday 10 October at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor Moore

Aldermen: Brooks Mcllveen (zoom)
Graham Smith
McAlpine

Councillors: Chambers (7.06 pm) Kennedy
Gilmour McCracken
Irvine, S (zoom) MacArthur
Irvine, W McRandal
Irwin

Officers: Director of Corporate Services (M Steele), Head of Administration (A Curtis), Head of Strategic Capital Development (A Dadley) and Democratic Services Officer (J Glasgow)

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

In light of the ongoing violence in Israel and Gaza, the Council had opened a book of condolence to recognise the victims of the Saturday 7th October attack on Israel, the subsequent innocent victims and the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas.

As this was the first Committee meeting since the tragic events, the Chair asked the Committee to stand for a minute's silence and reflection.

Members stood for one minute silence.

Alderman Smith welcomed the book of condolence having been set-up for the many victims of Hamas's terror attacks against Israel as well as the innocent victims of the ongoing conflict. He remarked that General Shermin in the American Civil War said that 'war is hell' and unfortunately today's technology brought the hell of a war to anyone with access to the internet. The posting of videos showed the aftermath of Hamas's incursion into Israel displayed the barbarity of the violence, the murder, the rape and the hostage taking over the internet. For Alderman Smith, one video summed up the horrors of the attacks, showing a poor young woman who had been kidnapped and brought to Gaza, being hauled from a jeep by the hair by Hamas gunmen, her hands were bound and bleeding, she had been badly assaulted and raped. Her eyes showed the fear in her eyes, it was obvious that she had accepted her fate, that was truly heartbreaking.

(Councillor Chambers entered the meeting – 7.06 pm)

That was just one example from many, the death count continued to rise with over 900 people dead in Israel and nearly 1000 people in Gaza. The suffering was on both sides, a video he had viewed showed a Palestinian man carrying his dead young daughter from the rubble. Alderman Smith felt it was important for the Borough to provide support and offer condolences to the families of those killed and injured and pray for the safe return of the hostages.

Councillor McRandal extended love to the Israeli and Palestinian communities in Ards and North Down and across Northern Ireland who he was sure were incredibly fearful and distressed at this time. He offered condolences to every Palestinian and Israeli victim. He could not begin to fathom the levels of grief, trauma and destruction. Especially, he thought of every child that had been killed and the families and homes that had been ripped apart over night with deep fear on what was still come. The Alliance Party unequivocally condemned Hamas as a terrorist organisation, their actions were horrifying and unjustifiable. Rockets, kidnaping, rape and executions constituted clear war crimes. He remarked specifically of the 200 Israeli people who were killed while enjoying a music festival and those who had been held hostage. There was no legitimacy or excuses. There was profound concern about the bloodshed that had already resulted and would only escalate as a result of Hamas's actions. Under International Law countries had the right to self-defence that must be proportional to the armed attack and necessary to respond. That meant the force must not be greater than the force necessary to end the attack or remove the threat. The seize of Gaza and the indiscriminate bombings of civilians went well beyond self-defence. There was a need for an urgent ceasefire to prevent further tragedy and destruction, a humanitarian corridor for people to leave Gaza, immediate release of hostages by Hamas and an international community led peace process. Councillor McRandal felt a two-state solution as set out in international law was the only sustainable way forward.

Alderman Graham stated that the Council should utterly and absolutely must always condemn terrorism. The people responsible were effectively deciding what morality was, what they could do but had no democratic mandate for their actions. He recognised the sorrow in Gaza amongst all and noted the reality of how helpless people were in such situations. Alderman Graham spoke of the need to stand with the victims of terrorism and that the defence should be done in a strategic and measured way. Revenge was no solution to any problem and would only escalate the situation. Alderman Graham prayed for the hand of God to intervene in the situation.

The Chair thanked the Mayor for opening a book of condolence.

1. APOLOGIES

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

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman sought declarations of interest at this stage.

No declarations of interest were notified.

3. DEPUTATION – PRESENTATION FROM DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE ROADS REPORT, 2022/23

(Appendices I – II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of report from DfI Roads.

The Chairman invited Mark McPeake (Divisional Roads Manager), Colin Woods (Deputy Secretary), and Stephen Gardiner (Section Engineer) to the meeting and invited them to present their report.

Mr McPeake advised that in June 2023, the Secretary of State provided all of the Northern Ireland government departments with their budgets for 2023/24 years. Regrettably DfI Roads were facing a challenging year with a reduction of 14% in the resource budget. Despite every effort to reduce spend a significant funding gap remained. That was impacting on DfI Roads ability to cover costs on day-to-day road maintenance work e.g. fixing potholes, traffic lights, road markings, gully cleaning etc. However, he explained that they were still continuing with their limited-service policy which meant only the highest priority defects were being repaired that being the deepest potholes and the roads carrying the most traffic. Mr McPeake wished to be clear that DfI Roads was not following that policy because they wanted to or because it was good engineering practice it was solely because the money was not available to do more. For a number of years funding for road maintenance was far below the level required to maintain the structural integrity of the road network. Since 2014, the investment gap on essential road maintenance was approximately £1bn and as a result of the underfunding roads were deteriorating. In 2023/24 the opening capital budget for structural maintenance was £85m and whilst that was welcomed it still fell short of the annual requirement of £143m which in today's prices rose to a £200m requirement to maintain the road network in a reasonable condition.

Due to legal challenges, DfI Roads had been without a re-surfacing contract since late 2021. However, in March 2023 a new contract was awarded for the Council area which meant progress could be made to deliver much needed resurfacing. Every opportunity would be taken to bid for capital funding in year that may arise to maximise the use of the contract.

There was a capital budget available for local transport safety measures which allowed for a programme of improvements to be delivered including collision remedial measures, traffic calming and pedestrian crossings. However, the capacity to deliver that programme was less than DfI Roads would like therefore the schemes needed to be prioritised to those in the most need.

DfI hoped to publish a Transport Strategy later in the year that would inform the planning and delivery of transport infrastructure across Northern Ireland to 2035. That strategy would aim to align transport infrastructure with the requirements of Climate Change and the legal obligations to deliver net zero by 2050. That approach would describe how active travel and improved public transport could enhance the function of the transport network. The requirement of the Climate Change Act 2022 had facilitated the provision of capital funding to invest in active travel schemes to encourage walking and cycling. The Department had commissioned a Northern

Ireland wide active travel delivery plan which was due for consultation in 2024 which, when complete, would provide the basis for the prioritisation of active travel schemes.

Mr McPeake highlighted that the winter period was approaching and gritting would commence in October and extend to April. In the Ards and North Down Council area there was a fleet of 6 gritters to salt 430km of main roads. Each gritting action took 3 hours to complete which was a complex and logistical exercise.

DfI Roads was keen to engage with elected representatives however Mr McPeake highlighted that they were facing significant staffing pressures. Focus needed to be given to the delivery of key services and public safety issues in the first instance. Contact details for each of the teams was contained within the report and to maximise effectiveness, he encouraged road defects to be reported using the online service.

The Chair invited questions from Members.

Alderman Smith appreciating the difficult position DfI Roads was facing with a £1bn under investment in the past decade, 14% revenue cuts and half the capital required to keep the roads at a reasonable standard. In relation to Ards and North Down, there was a perception that the Borough was not getting a fair deal. Referring to the figures in the report, Alderman Smith noted that 5% of the network had been re-surfaced over the past two years, assuming the life span of a road it therefore would take approximately 40 years not taking into the account the already deteriorated roads. The further complexity was the need to invest in decarbonisation and active travel which was especially challenging for a rural and disperse population across Northern Ireland. Alderman Smith questioned how to stop the road network deteriorating to a level where public confidence was affected and a crisis was avoided.

Mr Woods noted that Alderman Smith had rightly identified that £1bn of a funding gap could not be easily overcome. There was no option not to invest in an asset. The DfI Roads had the responsibility to maintain over 27,000 km of road across Northern Ireland and with the expected life span of that road and the pace of maintenance did not add up. Unfortunately that meant the network would continue to deteriorate. It was difficult to identify a solution that people would like and be acceptable. Mr Woods stated that if the pace was not kept maintaining the deterioration of roads, certain roads such as rural, low traffic roads would fall into a worse and worse condition with the money not being available to bring them back to an acceptable standard. Mr Woods stated that was not a situation that they would like to be in however that was the reality of the current situation.

In response to a further question from Alderman Smith, Mr Woods stated that the quality of the road network would reflect what was invested in it. There were difficult choices across Northern Ireland on what to spend the allocated budget on.

Councillor W Irvine referred to the public liability claims with 371 claims made and asked if that was an increase particularly with regards the state of the roads. He highlighted the importance for road users to be safe and not incurring unnecessary

expenditure for damage to vehicles due to road unworthiness. Mr McPeake stated that public liability claims were increasing, the number of defects were increasing and with that there was risk of public liability claims increasing further. The department tested those claims to ascertain if a payment was due to be settled or a claim rejected. Therefore, although there were a number of claims not all of those were successful.

Councillor W Irvine asked if there were prioritised areas for maintaining weeds and grass. There were areas that were particularly bad with moss being quite slippery for pedestrians.

(Councillor MacArthur withdrew from the meeting – 7.27 pm)

Mr McPeake explained that the current policy was to comply with the limited-service policy which was to address the highest priority defects which were generally on higher class, higher speed roads which were potentially more at risk to the public. The limited-service policy contained a range of aspects; roads defects, grass cutting, road marketing, weed spraying etc.

Councillor McRandal was disappointed that the number of resurfacing projects had dropped. From the projects that were in last year's report he questioned how many of those had not yet been completed. Mr McPeake stated that he was unsure of that exact number. As detailed the resurfacing contract finished in November 2021, that could not be renewed due to a legal challenge. A new contract was established in March 2023, two resurfacing schemes were undertaken at the end of the previous financial year. He explained that since then they had been able to accelerate through a programme of resurfacing schemes based on the current budget allocation. There were a bank of other schemes that needed to be carried out however funding needed to be sought before committing to those.

Councillor McRandal referred to Holywood High Street which was due to be resurfaced for many years. Given the current concerning position, he sought an update in that regard.

(Councillor MacArthur re-entered the meeting – 7.30 pm)

Mr Gardiner advised that he came into post in March 2023 and noted that Holywood High Street was on the list and he had critically analysed that list. The issue with carrying out the works on Holywood High Street was timing. There were two schemes to consider, one full scheme, right to the carriageway with the roads closed for 7-8 weeks or they were looking at the potential of an overlay scheme which would be the fraction of the price, the lifespan of the road would be less at 15 years however the impact on the High Street would be 2-3 weeks. Mr Gardiner undertook to update Councillor McRandal directly.

As a cyclist Alderman Brooks stated that he had watched the deterioration of the local roads particularly on the Portaferry Road. He also remarked on the positive improvements that had been made to C class roads. Referring to Donaghadee, he referred to the area of road beyond Bow Street that had completely deteriorated right down to the foundations. Alderman Brooks questioned the criteria for prioritisation.

Mr McPeake explained that there many aspects to consider as engineers when determining the priority for resurfacing. All those aspects were taken into account when determining the worst conditioned roads. It therefore was determined on engineering experience and using the current design standards to make that determination.

The Mayor noted that a scheme for Clandeboye Road was detailed to be undertaken in 2024/25 for planning pedestrian measures. The scheme was meant to have taken place in 2019 and was delayed due to a number of factors. She stated that there was also an area due to be resurfaced. Councillor Gilmour sought assurances that the scheme would take place.

Mr McPeake explained that DfI had two contracts that would be awarded later this year. A small-scale contract to deliver such programmes as pedestrian crossings however there were a lot of schemes to be delivered within that contract during this financial year. The second contract was for minor works, which was higher value schemes and was due to be awarded in January 2024 and again it was not feasible to push all the schemes through before the end of the financial year.

Mr Gardiner confirmed that the resurfacing and the pedestrian element on the Clandeboye Road would be carried out during July/August 2024.

In terms of schemes to be delivered in future years, Mr Woods highlighted that budget allocations were unknown and prioritisation needed to occur.

Alderman Graham questioned if DfI had seen a rise in the cost of materials used for roadworks and questioned the impact of the abandonment of red diesel. Mr Woods stated that prices had doubled from 2018 and therefore purchasing power had halved as the budget had declined. Previously the fleet benefited from the rebate in relation to red diesel. Furthermore, he highlighted that energy costs for street lighting had fluctuated a lot over the past number of years.

The Chair thanked the representatives for their attendance and they withdrew from the meeting.

NOTED.

4. BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT – AUGUST 2023 (Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Corporate Services attaching budgetary control, payroll, income and goods and services report. The covering report covered the 5-month period 1 April to 31 August 2023.

The Revenue Budgetary Control Report by Directorate was set out and showed an overall surplus of £181k.

Explanation of Variance

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

Report	Type	Variance	Page
Report 2	Payroll	£292k favourable	5
Report 3	Goods & Services	£146k adverse	6
Report 4	Income	£35k favourable	7
	Total	£181k favourable	

Explanation of Variance

The Council's overall variance could be summarised by the following table (variances over £25k):

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Payroll Expenditure	(292)	Vacancies- (£327k) - Currently approx. 50 vacant FTE posts. Overtime - £108k Other Payroll – (£73k)
Goods & Services Expenditure		
Community & Culture	40	Advice Services and Dispersal Grants. Offset by additional income – see below.
Parks & Cemeteries	71	Parks & Cemeteries operating costs – partially offset by increased cemeteries income.
Leisure	59	New leisure system implementation - £40k . Leisure consultancy - £10k Aurora – contractor site visit re. pool floors - £23k .
Waste & Cleansing	(81)	Waste disposal costs for main waste streams (£103k): - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landfill down 205T plus lower gate fee than budget (£8.01 per tonne). • Blue bin waste up 45T plus lower gate fee than budget (£2.77 per tonne). • Garden waste up 17T plus gate fee higher than budget (£2.76 per tonne). • Food waste up 37T plus gate fee higher than budget (£3.32).
Assets & Property	(71)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electricity – (£152k) – significantly lower cost per kwh against budget. • Gas – £17k. Aurora??

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vehicle fuel – (£114k) price per litre fallen since end of 2022 though starting to increase again. Vehicle maintenance - £22k Technical Services – £130k – statutory work £59k; other work £72k.
Regeneration	38	Covid Small Settlements Scheme £21k – offset by grant income.
Administration	88	Insurance Premiums - £60k
Income – Services		
Community & Culture	(55)	Additional income for Advice Services and Dispersal Grants – offsets additional spend (see above).
Parks & Cemeteries	(36)	Cemeteries income (£48k).
Leisure	(26)	Mainly Leisure Centre and LDP income.
Regulatory Services	139	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Car Park income £79k. Licensing income £12k. NET – fine income £41k.
Planning	149	Planning application income - £154k. No major applications received. General reduction in number of applications in NI.
Finance	(127)	Investment income. Higher interest rates.
Non-Service Income	(10)	LPS are now estimating a small positive 23/24 rates finalisation based on latest data. In addition, DfC are estimating small positive 23/24 de-rating grant finalisation.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

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

In respect of Page 2; Assets and Property; The Mayor referred to the £17k gas amount for Aurora and noted the question mark on that figure. The Director confirmed that the £17k related to Aurora.

In respect of Page 2: Payroll expenditure; The Mayor also referred to the variance in overtime expenditure of £108k and asked if there was a rationale for that variance and if measures were being taken to control that expenditure. The Director explained that overall the cost of staff was under spent in the current year. He recalled that

back in January, management had undertaken a vacancy control scheme in order to look at every vacancy closely and ascertain if that vacancy needed to be filled at that time. That was carried out on the basis of the challenging budget that was just about to be set at that time. That vacancy control was lifted in September and roles were now being recruited. The Director explained that during the intervening period there would have been an increase in the use of overtime with certain posts and service areas. He did not expect that to be the trajectory over the rest of the financial year.

In respect of Page 2; Assets and Property; The Mayor referred to the variance for Technical Services in relation to statutory and other work and questioned what were the works that were not budgeted for. The Director did not have that specific information available and undertook to report back to the Mayor.

In respect of the overall outcome, Alderman Smith noted that was currently sitting at £181k favourable and questioned how that differed from the previous month. The Director advised that the budget had been favourable for most of the financial year. A special Corporate Services Committee meeting would be held in November to discuss the expected outturn for the year. Whilst the current budget was favourable that was not an indication of the year's position.

In response to a further question from Alderman Smith, the Director expected that the Council would be at a surplus at the year-end although there were significant amount of risks to consider. There were concerns regarding income and the long-term trajectory around car parking income and planning income. A major cost was payroll and an outcome of the pay review was still awaited with no agreed outcome from NJC. The forecast position would be discussed further at the Special Corporate Services Committee meeting in November.

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

5. EXTENSION TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT REMOTE MEETING LEGISLATION
(Appendix IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Corporate Services attaching letter to Chief Executive from the Department of Communities. The report detailed that a letter had been received from the Department of Communities confirming that section 78 (Local Authority Meetings) of the Coronavirus Act 2020 had been extended to 24 March 2024 thus allowing Councils to offer remote/hybrid facilities for meetings.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the letter from the Department of Communities.

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

6. REQUEST FOR CIVIC RECEPTION - MILLISLE AND BALLYCOPELAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services detailing that a letter had been received from Alderman Robert Adair, Councillor David Kerr, Councillor Janice MacArthur, Councillor James Cochrane and Councillor Nigel Edmund requesting that Millisle and Ballycopeland Presbyterian Church be considered for a civic reception to acknowledge its 250th anniversary.

The church contributed not only to the religious and spiritual wellbeing of the community but also to general community life in the village of Millisle and the wider rural area. The Church was at the heart of the village, its volunteers provide services for children, toddlers, young people and the elderly. The Church involved itself with the local Community Group regularly volunteering for food bank, beach cleans and In Bloom. The Church also maintained the Amy Carmichael Memorial Garden in the village.

Council Policy on Civic Receptions

The Council's Policy for Civic Receptions required requests to be submitted in writing to the Chief Executive and signed by at least three Elected Members. The request, once received, was assessed against set criteria and an officer's report, with an appropriate recommendation, was prepared for consideration by the Corporate Services Committee.

Assessment Criteria

The subject of requests needs one of the two criteria outlined below: -

1. Demonstrate exceptional service to the Borough/Local Community and have a significant anniversary (the exceptional service should be in the areas of voluntary or charitable work. The Anniversary should be a milestone of 25, 50 or 100 years.)

OR

2. Mark a very significant or unique achievement. (Defined as an achievement which would be recognised throughout Northern Ireland and beyond and the recipient had a strong association within the Borough).

This request had been submitted in line with the agreed procedures and while it did not meet the criteria for a civic reception as stated in point 1 above – milestone of 25, 50 or 100 years – 250 years was considered to be very significant and therefore the view would be that the request should be acceded to. The cost could be met from the 2022/23 civic budget.

RECOMMENDED that the Council proceeds to offer Millisle and Ballycopeland Presbyterian Church a Civic Reception to acknowledge 250 years since the formation of the Church and, should the offer be accepted, proceeds to arrange same on a date to be agreed by relevant parties.

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

Councillor MacArthur welcomed the recommendation acknowledging 250 years since the formation of Millisle and Ballycopeland Presbyterian Church. She also

remarked that Shore Street Presbyterian Church, Donaghadee, had celebrated its 200th anniversary and she was sure that Members would join her in sending best wishes on reaching the milestone.

Alderman McAlpine welcomed the contribution of the Church and its celebration and she extended her best wishes to the Church.

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

7. SOLACE NI (Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive attaching SOLACE NI Evaluation Report 2022-23. The report detailed that the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) was the professional body for local authority Chief Executives and Directors and was a national body under the name, SOLACE UK. SOLACE was the leading network for local government and public sector professionals in the UK.

SOLACE UK offer services including personal and organisational development, events and interim and executive recruitment through its commercial arm, SOLACE in Business. There was an active policy team who influenced debate around the future of public services to ensure that policy and legislation were informed by the experience and expertise of its members.

Solace worked alongside sector partners and central government to positively influence the future policy direction of Government. Membership of SOLACE was an opportunity to support the improvement of the sector as a whole, enabling Councils and the senior people working in them to be the best they could be in their leadership roles.

SOLACE was organised as part of a parent body SOLACE UK and then had a branch network in the Devolved Nations and Regions. SOLACE NI was one of the branches.

Membership of SOLACE NI was made up of the 11 Council Chief Executives and all Directors across Northern Ireland. The average annual contribution per Council was currently £1,280. It should be noted that this cost covered the Membership of 6 members of staff in this Council: 5 Directors and the Chief Executive. Those funds supported the core operations of the NI branch.

SOLACE NI had a number of designated roles including Chair and Vice Chair (rotates annually), Secretary and Treasurer. SOLACE NI meets on a monthly basis and considers current issues that impact local government as well as issues that have implications on a cross Council basis. SOLACE NI meets quarterly with the NI Civil Service Permanent Secretaries Group to discuss areas of mutual benefit.

Following the reorganisation of Local Government, civil contingencies resilience, Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic response and recovery, the growing demand on

SOLACE resulted in the need for a Policy/Executive Officer role at a more senior level, allowing the role to independently support the work of the group and the releasing some of the pressure on the Chair/Officers.

At its meeting in February 2022, Council considered the request and agreed that £5,000 be reassigned from existing budgets to an increased membership contribution to SOLACE NI for one financial year as a pilot project. It was agreed that the arrangements would be reviewed after one year. That was to create a full time Policy Officer post and part time Administrator post.

Since the posts had been created, the Policy/Executive Officer had become the key point of contact for government departments and Local Government, streamlining communication and engagement and reinforcing the collective voice, role and impact of Local Government within the NI governance structure. Much work had been done this year to strengthen the SOLACE NI branch and position local government as an integral part of the public sector in Northern Ireland. An Evaluation report for 2022-23 of the work of SOLACE NI had been included in the Appendix for information.

The request was now put to each Council to renew the agreement, with all eleven Council's contributing £4,600 towards the SOLACE NI employee positions for the 2023-24 financial year.

By way of understanding the importance of SOLACE NI to Local Government, a meeting in February 2023, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council considered a wider review, *An Independent Review of Governance Arrangements in Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council*, in which the report noted it was rare for a Council to not have a membership of SOLACE NI, and that the rationale for non-participation was unclear, given the benefits of being part of the wider CEO group, including participation in topical events. That Council had since renewed their membership of SOLACE NI and rejoined.

The Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) was the council led representative body for local authorities in Northern Ireland. The Association was supported by Elected Members and works in partnership with other key regional bodies and stakeholders to support and represent the interests of Local Government, on regional bodies and within the Local Government Group of Associations in the UK, ROI and in Europe.

NILGA promoted, develops and champions local government through Member development, collective lobbying, policy formulation, best practice events and campaigns, all aimed at improving democracy and public services.

NILGA and SOLACE NI were distinct organisations, but they work closely together and on behalf of Local Government generally. They support each other and work through the Partnership Panel and other structures for more effective and collaborative working on behalf of better Local Government.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the contribution of £4,600 towards the SOLACE NI branch for the 2023-24 financial year from within existing budgets.

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

8. RESPONSE TO NOTICES OF MOTION

- (a) **Response to Notice of Motion 179 – Future Provision of Urgent and Emergency Care Services in ANDBC area**
(Appendix VI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Corporate Services attaching letters from the Permanent Secretary Department of Health. The report detailed that a Notice of Motion was debated at Corporate Committee in February 2023 and subsequently ratified by Council which stated:

“That 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 reopen 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.”

A letter was sent from the Chief Executive on 2 May 2023 after April Council formally agreed the wording.

It was subsequently agreed at Council on 26 July 2023 that Council should write to Mr Peter May, Permanent Secretary for the Department of Health expressing disappointment at the Trusts decision to recommend the closure of Bangor and Ards minor injury units and called for no decision to be made on the matter until the Northern Ireland Assembly was restored. Furthermore, that clarity be sought from the Permanent Secretary regarding who legally makes the decision in respect of the closure. A letter was sent from the Chief Executive to the Permanent Secretary for the Department of Health and 2 replies were received on 31 August 2023 and 7 September 2023.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the responses to the Notice of Motion.

Proposed by Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Irwin, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor W Irvine expressed his disappointment with the response yet he was not surprised that the Secretary of State had agreed with the decision to close the Minor Injury Units in Bangor and Newtownards. There was no Urgent Care Centre in place, the Department had detailed that would be in place at the end of 2024 however that was dependent on budget arrangements at that time. A lot of Members had felt that the consultation process had been flawed and would not lead to better outcomes for patients. He noted that there would be a judicial review undertaken with regards the decision and he looked forward to that progressing.

Councillor Irwin welcomed the response, the MIU at the Ulster Hospital had been opened and she had heard positive feedback. Noting there were ongoing issues regarding opening hours, public transport and car parking. She paid tribute to the work of the staff working within the MIU.

Councillor MacArthur noted her extreme disappointment with the response. The Department had promised a greater flow of patients from the Emergency Department to the MIU. She reported that she had been contacted by residents who had experienced significant waiting times, 15 hours or more. Councillor MacArthur purported that on 11 September 2023, the Department reported the highest increase of patients in the emergency department at 473 patients. That was with no disrespect to the staff, who were doing an amazing job in difficult circumstances. Unfortunately, without the Urgent Care Centre in place the movement of patients as promised did not appear to have happened. Councillor MacArthur stated that she would like to see results on what had been promised before she could speak positively.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Irwin, that the recommendation be adopted.

9. NOTICES OF MOTION

(a) Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Moore and Councillor Creighton

This Council believes:

- Education should be accessible to all who seek it and embedding a culture of lifelong learning in our society is essential to enabling people to realise their potential.
- Part-time flexible learning is crucial to meeting the skills needed to build a modern, inclusive and green economy.
- Part-time students are a unique demographic, they are more likely to have disabilities, come from disadvantaged backgrounds, have caring responsibilities, such as children or elderly relatives, and in general, be part of a 'hard to reach' group who missed out on full-time study.
- Lifelong learning, including non-formal education, addresses social issues, strengthens communities and builds civic engagement. It is the most effective tool for meeting social policy objectives and creating positive social change.
- Recognises that lifelong learning must become a meaningful and developed policy area with tangible actions and outcomes, underpinned by the wealth of best practice and innovation from across the UK and Ireland.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- To work with the Lifelong Learning Alliance to develop a Lifelong Learning campaign, to inform and raise public awareness of how lifelong learning transforms lives and communities.
- Engage with MLAs and MPs to prioritise funding for formal and informal part-time education when the Executive is formed.

- Encourage MLAs to form an All-Party Group on Lifelong Learning to support and evidence and best-practice informed approach to policy making, in collaboration with adult education bodies to form a voice for Lifelong Learning in the Assembly when an Executive is formed.

Councillor Moore vacated the Chair and Councillor MacArthur as Vice-Chair took the position.

Proposed by Councillor Moore, seconded by Alderman McAlpine, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Councillor Moore stated that she felt very passionately about lifelong learning. The power of lifelong learning was transformative and for many formal education was something that may have fallen short or their interest in learning did not peak until later years. The benefits of lifelong learning could be tangible including increased employability for residents, benefiting the whole Borough. Furthermore, they could be less tangible including helping mental health, connectedness, keeping brains healthy and key to effective lifelong learning was participation. She felt Council should maximise its education with community partners to engage people. Some people may feel uncomfortable initially travelling outside their own area however work could occur to introduce people to the joy of lifelong learning. Those that were harder to engage were often those that would benefit most. Young parents could engage in education through local playgroups, those parents would benefit directly but also help create a culture of lifelong learning for their children.

Councillor Moore highlighted that generationally it was something she experienced with her mother having gone to Queen's when she was 3 years old, which was uncommon at that time and going on to undertake a range of studies to enhance her career. The lifelong learning alliance included the organisations; Open University, Forum for Adult Learning in Northern Ireland, Open College Network and AONTAS. Councillor Moore also remarked that her husband had completed a sociology degree at the age of 47, in his early 40's he discovered he was autistic which partly explained why his compulsory education was not a happy experience. It was hugely important to prove to himself and others that he was curious, capable and academic. Key to lifelong learning was progression, by giving participants credit for the learning they would be encouraged to progress and create access routes. There was a lot within the gift of local Councils to support lifelong learning. As the motion stated, the Council could work with the lifelong learning alliance raising awareness and develop a lifelong learning campaign. Lobbying needed to occur at every level to recognise the value of part-time informal and formal education. She encouraged MLAs to create an all-party group on lifelong learning when an Executive was formed.

Lifelong learning contributed to a more stable, cohesive and more tolerant society. Its benefits were economic, it built social cohesion and created better educated citizens. It removed barriers of disability, gender or class which was a shared vision for the kind of Borough which she was sure everyone would like to live in.

Alderman McAlpine summed up lifelong learning as something that provided the opportunity of getting an education that may not have been achieved growing up. Lifelong learning was a way of getting an education and progressing a career.

Lifelong learning was vital, it created prosperity and a sense of community.

The Mayor wished to amend the second part of the motion.

Proposed by the Mayor, Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Alderman Graham, as an amendment, that this Council resolves to:

- To assist in the promotion, through the dissemination of material in support of a Lifelong Learning campaign, to inform and raise public awareness of how lifelong learning transforms lives and communities.
- Write to Strangford and North Down MLAs and MPs to prioritise funding for formal and informal part-time education when the Executive is formed.
- Encourage Strangford and North Down MLAs to form an All-Party Group on Lifelong Learning to support and evidence and best-practice informed approach to policy making, in collaboration with adult education bodies and other stakeholders to form a voice for Lifelong Learning in the Assembly when an Executive is formed.
- To write to other Councils in Northern Ireland to take similar action and to write to MPs and MLAs for their respective areas in a similar manner.

The Mayor stated that she no issue with the intended ethos of the original motion however wished to add a few elements. She was not shying away from the Council's responsibilities through community planning and stakeholder partners however there were finite resources and there were things that could be done such as the disseminating of information. The original motion referred to the lifelong learning alliance however there were many other stakeholders within that campaign. She highlighted that report indicated that low skills outcomes in adults correlated with absenteeism in Primary School, the percentage of working adults and low-level qualifications. The Mayor highlighted the work that Sure Start carried out in early intervention. She purported an OECD recommendation to strengthen childcare subsidies for lower skilled learners to mitigate the impact of childcare responsibilities which was identified as something which the DfE would have a key role in. Another point raised was the consideration of compensatory mechanisms for training leave to increase the uptake for learning among adults who reported being too busy at work. She felt if there was an all-party working group set up those elements could be focused on. Her final point was to write to other Councils in Northern Ireland to take similar action to write to MPs and MLAs for their respective areas in a similar manner and she felt that action would hold more weight and gather more momentum of a campaign.

Alderman Graham agreed with the concept and the issue could be promoted in many ways.

Councillor McRandal stated that he was not seeing a lot of difference between the original motion and the amendment and therefore he was happy to support.

Alderman Smith agreed that there was little between the motion and the amendment. Strategically there was a skills issue in Northern Ireland and in the Borough. He referred to NISRA statistics and noted that there were places in the Peninsula that had over 40% of adults with no qualifications. There was a major skills issue within

the Borough and the Council should be supportive of anything that could be done to increase skills and education.

On summing up, Councillor Moore was happy to accept the amendment stating Lifelong Learning had huge impact for the skills and economic development in the area.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, that this Council believes:

- **Education should be accessible to all who seek it and embedding a culture of lifelong learning in our society is essential to enabling people to realise their potential.**
- **Part-time flexible learning is crucial to meeting the skills needed to build a modern, inclusive and green economy.**
- **Part-time students are a unique demographic, they are more likely to have disabilities, come from disadvantaged backgrounds, have caring responsibilities, such as children or elderly relatives, and in general, be part of a 'hard to reach' group who missed out on full-time study.**
- **Lifelong learning, including non-formal education, addresses social issues, strengthens communities and builds civic engagement. It is the most effective tool for meeting social policy objectives and creating positive social change.**
- **Recognises that lifelong learning must become a meaningful and developed policy area with tangible actions and outcomes, underpinned by the wealth of best practice and innovation from across the UK and Ireland.**

This Council therefore resolves to:

- **To assist in the promotion, through the dissemination of material in support of a Lifelong Learning campaign, to inform and raise public awareness of how lifelong learning transforms lives and communities.**
- **Write to Strangford and North Down MLAs and MPs to prioritise funding for formal and informal part-time education when the Executive is formed.**
- **Encourage Strangford and North Down MLAs to form an All-Party Group on Lifelong Learning to support and evidence and best-practice informed approach to policy making, in collaboration with adult education bodies and other stakeholders to form a voice for Lifelong Learning in the Assembly when an Executive is formed.**
- **To write to other Councils in Northern Ireland to take similar action and to write to MPs and MLAs for their respective areas in a similar manner.**

Councillor Moore resumed the Chair.

(b) Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Woods and Councillor McKee

That this Council, recognising its commitment as a responsible employer, and that staff are paid the current Living Wage, tasks officers to explore becoming 'Living Wage' accredited with the UK Living Wage Foundation, as well as ensuring any regularly contracted employees and workers, including those who are employed

externally to deliver Council services, are paid the living wage hourly rate. It also explores becoming Living Hours and Living Pensions accredited too.

(The Mayor withdrew from the meeting – 8.15 pm)

Councillor McKee and Councillor Woods were admitted to the meeting via zoom.

Proposed by Councillor McKee, seconded by Councillor Woods, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Councillor McKee stated that the motion was brought forward for the Council to explore the accreditation as a real wage employer with the Living Wage Foundation. The Governments minimum wage rate was separate to the living wage rate which was calculated by the Living Wage Foundation. He did not believe any Council employees or anyone who provided a service to the Council should be paid a wage below one that provided a decent standard for living, as a minimum. The Council's lowest paid workers were already paid a real living wage which was great news.

(The Mayor re-entered the meeting 8.15 pm)

However, the accreditation was being sought to keep wages fair year on year by increasing the wage amount as required. The real living wage rate was calculated annually by the Resolution Foundation and overseen by the Living Wage Commission based on the best available evidence of living standards within the UK. Even though Council employees earned above the real living wage, that could slip in the future and the accreditation could help ensure that the Council continued to be a good employer and retain a commitment to social responsibility for those on the lowest pay.

Councillor Woods outlined the detail of living pensions and living hours elements of the motion. The living hours standard called on employers to provide the right and decent notice period for shifts (4 weeks notice), guaranteed payment of shifts, shifts cancelled within a notice period, a right to a contract to reflect actual hours worked and guaranteed hours of 16 hours per week unless the worker requested otherwise. The living pension was another accreditation which was a voluntary savings target for employers that would help employees build up a pension pot that would provide enough income to cover basic every day needs in retirement. That was independently calculated and was based on the real cost of living, based on 12% of a living wage salary. It provided assurances and given the cost-of-living crisis being experienced was something that people should be giving thought to which could potentially help avoid future poverty. According to the Living Wage Foundation those on low pay were being hardest hit and that was worrying for the future. Councillor Woods welcomed the matter being explored further and the Council becoming accredited. There was real opportunity for parity of pay for workers who provided a service to the Council but were not directly employed by the Council. There were benefits for the Council potentially making the Council a more attractive employer in a very difficult job market and demonstrate to all employees connected to the Council that they deserved a minimum and fair wage. The Council had a corporate and social responsibility and she believed the motion would assist the Council now and into the future.

Councillor Irwin added her support to the motion ensuring employees had a liveable wage to ensure a good standard of life. Everyone was acutely aware that there was a cost-of-living crisis occurring, it therefore was acutely relevant now but was important at all times not just when there was economic distress at play. If the motion was to be agreed it would show that the Council was committed to the concept of a living wage. She appreciated that there would be implications and the report suggested could explore those further.

Alderman Smith felt that Council employees met all the criteria in particular he referred to the NILGOSC scheme which was a good pension scheme. He stated that he did have concerns regarding the notice period required for shifts and he knew it could be difficult to provide 4 weeks' notice for shifts. Also, the potential implications for agency staff.

Councillor MacArthur stated that it was encouraging that staff already did get the living wage. She referred to the element of a living wage for those that provided Council services and she would like that aspect explored further within the report and how that would affect service delivery within the Council.

Alderman Graham appreciated the sentiments behind the motion though reminded Members that it was the ratepayers of the Borough that met the wage bill. There were two factors which impacted people's spending power; the amount you earned and the amount of tax paid. Those taxes included the Council rates and therefore there was the need to ensure balance. He was of the understanding that the Council was already a living wage employer. The NILGOSC pension scheme was an excellent scheme and the Council already did a lot for its employees. To start to dictate to service providers, he believed was a step to far.

To sum up Councillor McKee highlighted that the report could explore the aspects further. There was a lot of information within the Living Wage Foundation website. He believed the matter brought benefits to the worker and Council. The motion sought to assure that a fair provision was provided to everyone.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor McKee, seconded by Councillor Woods, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

10. ANDBC CORPORATE PLAN TIMELINE (Appendix VII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services attaching ANDBC Corporate Plan Timeline. The report detailed that the current Corporate Plan Towards 2024 would come to an end in March 2024. In the interim period, Officers were drafting a new Corporate Plan (2024-2028) for Member's consideration and approval.

That would set out the Council's strategy for the next four years, in the context of the Big Plan (Community Plan) and Council resources.

Attached was a timeline of activities scheduled to take place from now until April 2024 to ensure all activities (including Member engagement, staff and public consultation and feedback) were undertaken in a timely manner to enable the new Corporate Plan to be published in April next year.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this timeline.

(Councillor Irwin withdrew from the meeting – 8.29 pm)

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Kennedy, that the recommendation be adopted.

11. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

There were no items of any other notified business.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

12. ITEM WITHDRAWN

13. MINUTES OF SPFG MEETING DATED 26 SEPTEMBER (Appendix VIII)

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

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

A meeting of the Strategic Policy and Finance Group took place and strategic matters relating to the current and future operations of the Council took place.

The recommendation was AGREED.

14. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REGIONAL RESILIENCE UPDATE 2023

*****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)) 6B. EXEMPTION: ORDER OR DIRECTION UNDER ANY STATUTORY PROVISION

In January 2019 Council agreed a Local Government Resourcing Model for the Civil Contingencies Function. Council was asked to approve this update on the Local Government Regional Resilience Function and reviewed Service Level Agreement.

The recommendation was AGREED.

15. GREENWAY – ACQUISITION OF LAND (FILE LP)

*****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)) 6B. EXEMPTION: ORDER OR DIRECTION UNDER ANY STATUTORY PROVISION

Planning Permission has been granted and funding is in place for the Floodgates to Green Road section of the Newtownards to Green Road Greenway. Council was asked to agree proposals in relation to land acquisition in order that the project may be progressed.

The recommendation was AGREED.

16. WHITESPOTS - ACQUISITION OF LAND

*****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)) 6B. EXEMPTION: ORDER OR DIRECTION UNDER ANY STATUTORY PROVISION

Work is ongoing to develop Whitespots Country Park and funding has been awarded to Council to deliver this. Council was asked to agree proposals in relation to land acquisition in order that the project may be progressed.

The recommendation was AGREED.

17. LAND ACQUISITION (Appendices IX - 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)) 6B. EXEMPTION: ORDER OR DIRECTION UNDER ANY STATUTORY PROVISION

An offer to dispose of land had been made to Council. Council was asked to agree to acquire the land.

The recommendation was AGREED.

18. REQUEST FOR CONSENT TO AN EASEMENT

(Appendix XI)

*****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)) 6B. EXEMPTION: ORDER OR DIRECTION UNDER ANY STATUTORY PROVISION

The Council had received a request to consent to an easement over land on which Council has a charge registered. Council was asked to agree to the request subject to the terms and conditions set out in the report.

The recommendation was AGREED.

19. REQUEST FROM NI WATER FOR AN EASEMENT AND TO LAY A CONDUIT AT AVONLEA PARK, BANGOR

(Appendix XII)

*****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)) 6B. EXEMPTION: ORDER OR DIRECTION UNDER ANY STATUTORY PROVISION

The Council had received a request from NI Water to lay a conduit and for an easement over Council land at Avonlea Park, Bangor as they intend to fit a monitor within the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) to the east of Clandeboye Play Park in the grass area. This will measure the frequency of discharges to watercourses/culverts which occur when the sewer reaches capacity during heavy rainfall. Council was asked to agree to the request and grant a licence to carry out the works and an Easement to NI Water subject to the terms and conditions as listed in the report.

The recommendation was AGREED.

20. RENEWAL OF LICENCE – HELENS BAY PLAYERS, STORAGE CONTAINER AT FORT ROAD

(Appendix XIII)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)) 6B. EXEMPTION: ORDER OR DIRECTION UNDER ANY STATUTORY PROVISION

The Helens Bay Players have a licence to place and occupy a storage container adjacent to the Helens Bay Tennis Pavilion at Fort Road, Helens Bay. A request had been received to extend the licence for a further period when the current licence expires. Council was asked to agree to the request subject to the terms and conditions set out in the report.

The recommendation was AGREED.

22. RENEWAL OF LEASE TO COPELANDS MARINA LIMITED OF THE BOATYARD AT MARINE DRIVE, DONAGHADEE
(Appendices XV, XVI)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)) 6B. EXEMPTION: ORDER OR DIRECTION UNDER ANY STATUTORY PROVISION

Council was asked to agree a lease renewal subject to the terms and conditions set out in the report.

The recommendation was AGREED.

23. PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY UPDATE
(Appendix XVI, XVII)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – Information which reveals that the council proposes (a) to give under any statutory provision a notice by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction under any statutory provision.

Article 3 of The Access to the Countryside (Northern Ireland) Order 1983 places each Council under a duty to assert, protect and keep open any public right of way and to compile and preserve maps of the public rights of way in its area. The report provided an update on the digitisation of PROW files, mapping now available on the Council's website (<https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/resident/public-rights-of-way>), maintenance obligations and progress on three public rights of way investigations. Council was asked to note the updates and agree that the Council policy regarding asserted public rights of way maintenance in which landowners are responsible for maintenance will be adhered to, except where the Council has a legal obligation to carry out such maintenance.

The recommendation was AGREED.

24. ALLEGED PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY BETWEEN SEAHILL AND THE COUNCIL LAND AT HUNT'S PARK WALKWAY, DONAGHADEE (PROW AD)
(Appendix XVIII)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – Information which reveals that the council proposes (a)to give under any statutory provision a notice by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or (b)to make an order or direction under any statutory provision.

Council was provided with a summary of an investigation into an alleged public right of way at Seahill, Donaghadee to the boundary of the Council land at Hunt's Park walkway, Donaghadee. It was recommended that Council asserted the public right of way, authorised the execution of an Assertion Statement, and recorded that maintenance of the asserted public right of way is to be the sole responsibility of the landowner.

The recommendation was AGREED.

25. ALLEGED PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY ON MCCUTCHEON'S LANE, CREIGHTONS GREEN ROAD TO BALLYMISCAW ROAD, HOLYWOOD
(Appendix XIX)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – Information which reveals that the council proposes (a)to give under any statutory provision a notice by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or (b)to make an order or direction under any statutory provision.

Council was provided with a summary of an investigation into an alleged public right between Creightons Green Road and Ballymiscaw Road, Holywood (McCutcheon's Lane). It was recommended that for the reasons outlined in the report provided, Council did not agree to assert the public right of way.

The recommendation was AGREED.

**26. ALLEGED PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY ON CUSHIES LANE,
BALLYMACORMICK ROAD TO SPRINGWELL ROAD, BANGOR
(FILE PROW 48)**
(Appendix XX)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – Information which reveals that the council proposes (a)to give under any statutory provision a notice by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or (b)to make an order or direction under any statutory provision.

Council was provided with a summary of an investigation into an alleged public right from Ballymacormick Road to Springwell Road, (Cushies Lane), Bangor. It was recommended that for the reasons outlined in the report provided, Council did not agree to assert the public right of way.

The recommendation was AGREED.

**27. EXTENSION OF CONTRACT FOR PROVISION OF CORPORATE
UNIFORM, CASUAL UNIFORM, LEISURE UNIFORM AND
PROTECTIVE WORKWEAR (FILE PRC100)**

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION. Exemption 3: relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person

Summary:

Council was asked to approve the extension of the contract for the Provision of Corporate Uniform, Casual Uniform, Leisure Uniform and Protective Workwear.

The recommendation was AGREED

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 9.32 pm.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Hybrid Meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee was held on Wednesday 11 October 2023 at 7:00 pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor Martin

Aldermen: Adair Cummings
Brooks

Councillors: Ashe Irwin
Boyle S Irvine
Chambers W Irvine
Creighton Moore
Douglas Woods

Officers: Director of Community and Wellbeing (G Bannister), Head of Community & Culture (N Dorrian), 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 (H Loebnau)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Councillor Cochrane and Councillor Holywood.

NOTED.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman asked for any Declarations of Interest and none were made.

NOTED.

3. DEPUTATIONS

3.1 Consulate General for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (Appendix I)

The Chair welcomed Dr Christopher Stange, Consul General, and Mr Will Gilpin, Chair, North Down Softball Club to the meeting and invited them to make their presentation.

Dr Stange set out the background to baseball and softball which were internationally recognised sports and in fact were ranked as among the top eight sports in the world. Currently those were minority sports in Northern Ireland but they were growing rapidly in popularity and had the benefit of being considered neutral and

cross community in interest. The facilities available for the sports in Northern Ireland were few and the fall back of that was that the sports could not be played at a very high level. There had been a facility developed close to Lisburn in partnership with the Council there and that facility was considered to be the best on the island of Ireland.

The Deputation was bringing the proposal that facilities should be developed at Ward Park, Bangor and it was calling on the Council to support that. The benefits would be increased enjoyment in sport by the local population, increased levels of health and wellbeing, promotion of a sport that was fully inclusive along with the tourism potential that could arise from that investment.

A relatively low level of investment would be needed by the Council and the structures necessary were outlined which included a metal fence backstop and a simple structure to protect the ground for the pitching bases that would be needed. The structure could be placed at the corner of Ward Park and would not be an obstruction to other users of the area. It was intended that this would be a shared space to be used by all residents through a new sport offering, to further increase Ward Park's usage, exposure, player development and visitor numbers to the Borough, for an extremely small investment.

Councillor W Irvine thanked the presenters and asked if there had been any consultation with the local community such as with the Ward Park Residents Association to get community buy-in. He recognised that the sport had been using the area regularly through regular practices and games on a weekly basis.

Councillor Chambers thought the presentation had been interesting and it oozed positivity and the benefits of the proposal were clear. He asked was another facility used in addition to Ward Park and was informed that in the Winter months indoor facilities were required and those were booked at Aurora but it was intended to have both indoor and outdoor facilities going forward. The Member also asked if the required backstop was capable of being removed and he was informed that it was fixed but did not pose a hazard being built into the ground as well as being a tall metal fence like structure. Councillor Chambers believed that this was something that he could support.

Councillor Boyle stated that he lived in Portaferry and had never heard about these sports being played in his area but thanked the Deputation for the professional presentation and was pleased that much could be achieved for a relatively small cost. He informed them that he was Chair of Ards and North Down Sports Forum and believed that that Forum might be able to provide some financial assistance to the emerging sports locally. The Deputation sat on the Forum and were seeking assistance where it was available. Councillor Boyle stated that as a Borough Ards and North Down was passionate about developing sport locally and he would be very much in support of the initiative.

Following a question from Councillor Douglas the committee was informed that membership of these sports locally were from Little League right up to national competition level.

The Deputation was thanked for the information and left the meeting at 7.33 pm

NOTED.

3.2 National Trust

(Appendix II)

The Chair welcomed the Deputation from the National Trust including; Neil Watt, Property Curator, Mount Stewart, Mike Buffin, Head Gardener, Mount Stewart, who were presenting to the Committee and they were supported by Jon Kerr, General Manager East Down and Victoria Magreehan, External Affairs Consultant.

Members were informed that while the National Trust worked across the United Kingdom the focus would be on the ongoing work in Northern Ireland and particularly with the Ards and North Down Borough. Members were always welcome to visit the National Trust to view the work in practice at any other time.

The National Trust was a conservation charity which looked after and provided access to local history sites and nature resources. It looked after significant buildings, and their contents and Mount Stewart was an internationally important site. In Northern Ireland 5% of the population were members of the National Trust and a huge contribution was made to the Trust through the volunteering of thousands of people. Tackling the climate crisis and reaching net zero carbon emissions was a short-term goal as was tree planting across Northern Ireland, young trees coming from the Mount Stewart nursery.

Mount Stewart supported conservation across the local East Down area and it was a jewel in the National Trust's crown and was recognised as an important garden of the world. The home itself had been designated as a Treasure House within the National Trust portfolio and was the only one recognised within Northern Ireland. The National Trust wished to form partnerships with bodies such as Councils and museums as well as working with others to address climate change. The natural environment was also significant with a number of important migratory breeding populations which came to the shores of Strangford Lough. The Trust also had a vital role in managing much of the coastline of Northern Ireland on behalf of everyone forever.

The threat posed by Climate Change was real and would impact lives in the future. Mount Stewart was the National Trust's most threatened garden and it was working on ways to mitigate those impacts.

Councillor W Irvine thanked the National Trust for the information and asked what the biggest challenge facing the charity was and how the Trust planned to overcome that. In response Members were informed that that was a timely question since the

Trust was in a strategy planning phase but by far the greatest threat was a change in the climate and what that would bring to land and buildings while continuing access to the public and protecting vulnerable coastlines.

Councillor Woods referred to the slide on what the Council could do and believed that targets in the planning system were fundamental. She informed the Deputation that the Council was working on its Local Development Plan and wondered if there was any advice on what it could do to make the plans 'greener' or more sustainable.

In response the External Affairs Consultation of the National Trust stated that it carried out work across Northern Ireland and got to see best practice in areas such as Belfast and Londonderry. Planning also looked at the collapse of nature and she encouraged increased capacity in Biodiversity Officers looking at climate resilience and change. Decision making should be informed by the climate and weather patterns. She said that many solutions to those problems were already known.

Councillor Adair considered that good things had come out of collaborative working with the National Trust and Council such as the enhancement of facilities that existed in the Borough and referred to improvements at Greyabbey Car Park and Nugents Wood. He asked if there were other plans in place to enhance facilities locally and in response was informed that the National Trust owned a number of very attractive sites and had a rich and diverse offering across the Peninsula which it would be developing with the Council, such as Glastry Clay Pits.

The Chair thanked the Deputation and they left the meeting at 8.05 pm.

NOTED.

4. ARDS AND NORTH DOWN SPORTS FORUM GRANTS (Appendices III – VIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members will be aware that on the 26th August 2015 the Council delegated authority to the Ards and North Down Sports Forum, in order to allow it to administer sports grants funding on behalf of the Council. £45,000 had been allocated within the 2023/2024 revenue budget for that 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 August 2023, the Forum received a total of 32 applications: 1 Coaching, 3 Goldcard, 6 Equipment, 1 Seeding and 21 Travel/Accommodation. A summary of the **31** successful applications was detailed in the attached Successful Coaching, Successful Goldcard, Successful Equipment, Successful Seeding and Successful Travel & Accommodation Appendices.

For information, the annual budget and spend to date on grant categories was as followed:

	Annual Budget	Funding Awarded August 2023	Remaining Budget
Anniversary	£1,000	£0	£250
Coaching	£3,000	*£500	£1,603.75
Equipment	£14,000	*£4,155.70	£5,893.04
Events	£6,000	£0	£968.00
Seeding	£500	*£250	£55.01
Travel and Accommodation	£14,500	*£3,022.80	-£314.51
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	£1,000
Schools/Sports Club Pathway	£5,000	£0	£4,500

*Goldcards proposed during the period August 2023 is 3 (14 Goldcards in total during 2023/24).

*The proposed remaining budget for Coaching was **£1,603.75** and was based on a proposed award of £500 – for Approval. *The proposed remaining budget for Equipment of **£5,893.04** was based on a proposed award of £4,155.70 – for Approval and Reclaimed costs of £241.50. *The proposed remaining budget for Seeding was **£55.01** and was based on a proposed award of £250 – for Approval. *The proposed remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of **-£314.51** was based on a proposed award of £3,022.80 – for Noting and Reclaimed/Withdrawn costs of £950.

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

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

and that Further;

'That this Council writes to Rhys McClenaghan congratulating him on his recent back to back Gold Medal achievement at the World Artistic Gymnastics Championships, Antwerp, Belgium and sealing his Olympic qualification for Paris ' 24'.

Congratulations were also offered to North Down Softball Club on its recent success.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Boyle, seconded by Councillor S Irvine, that the Council approves the attached applications for financial assistance for sporting purposes valued at above £250, and notes the applications approved by the Forum (valued at below £250) and further writes to Rhys McClenaghan congratulating him on his recent back to back Gold Medal achievement at the World Artistic Gymnastics Championships, Antwerp, Belgium and sealing his Olympic qualification for Paris '24.

5. CONTROL OF GREY SQUIRRELS UPDATE

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the purpose of the report was to update Members on the progress made by Officers on the recommendations approved from the report in September 2022 regarding the Control of Grey Squirrels and the promotion of indigenous species on Council land:

- Commencing with the Castle Park colony and in order to monitor the numbers within the park, a feeder and camera would be placed on site.
- Once numbers were established and the feeder attracting individual Grey Squirrels, a trap would be placed by the feeder to catch the animals.
- The trap would be inspected each morning by the group and any animals removed from site in accordance with the control protocols.
- Further monitoring would continue and, where appropriate, the control programme would be rolled out to other sites where colonies had been identified.
- In proposing the above interventions, it was critical that there were positive explanatory communications around the issue and Officers would be working with the groups to ensure that the public were made aware of the rationale behind the control programme.
- In finalising the revised Local Biodiversity Action Plan, the Red Squirrel and Pine Martin species had been identified as priority species and targets would be in place to protect those.
- The Biodiversity Officer would be working alongside local groups regarding the installation of appropriate boxes based on survey outcomes.
- Native tree planting had commenced in line with the Council's Tree and Woodland Strategy and in the past year 15,000 native trees had been planted at various locations across the Borough.

Actions and Results

At the beginning of November 2022 two monitoring locations were set up within The Walled Garden, Bangor, for a period of 4 weeks. Those monitoring points consisted of a food hopper and trail camera fixed to the wall of the Garden. The food hopper was filled with peanuts, mixed nuts and sunflower seeds. Because the food hoppers were located on the inside the walled garden, volunteers needed to attract squirrels to those locations. Exploiting the squirrel's keen sense of smell, volunteers strategically smeared small amounts of peanut butter in probable approaches to each of the monitoring points. Over the period of 4 weeks volunteers from the

NDRSPMG visited the park regularly to monitor the use of the food hoppers using footage from the fixed trail cameras. Trapping began when grey squirrels were seen to be visiting the food hopper via the trail camera. Volunteers closed the food hopper, then baited and set the trap in the morning, returned to check the trap in the evening and carried out dispatch. Trapping was carried out daily when volunteers were available, until no more squirrels were detected on the camera. When activity was reduced the trap was closed and its back to checking cameras regularly and topping up the food hopper until activity had increased.

During the trapping process the trap was partially covered in black plastic to ensure that the squirrel was not exposed to the open surrounding environment and gave the squirrel a place to retreat. Food was provided in the trap. The dispatch device (Kania Trap) was applied to the cage trap immediately to minimise the amount of time the squirrel was exposed to humans. The dispatcher then retreated to a position out of sight of the trap. Once the dispatch device was triggered the dead squirrel was removed by the dispatcher wearing suitable gloves to protect them against the transfer of disease from the squirrel. It was then put in a biodegradable bag and sealed. Trapping in The Walled Garden began at the end of November 2022. Over the period of the last 8 months, to the end of July, a total number of 16 grey squirrels were trapped and dispatched. That included an equal number of male and female squirrels.

Further Scheduled Work

ANDBC was working in partnership with the NDRSPMG and other partner organisations, to deliver a Red Squirrel Event at a key location in the Borough in September 2023 that would be supported with a Red Squirrel Awareness campaign on social media.

Resource Commitments

Financial

Resources provided over the last year by the NDRSPMG included insurance, food hoppers, bait, traps, travel costs and volunteer time. The costs for training the volunteers had been provided by Ulster Wildlife.

Human Resources

ANDBC Officer time associated with ongoing update meetings and engaging with the NDRSPMG.

Volunteer time for grey squirrel control operations at Castle Park was provided by NDRSPMG.

Assets

ANDBC had supplied two trail cameras to NDRSPMG for monitoring purposes in The Walled Garden. Materials and construction costs required to secure the trapping area in The Walled Garden was also provided by ANDBC.

RECOMMENDED that the Council

- Continues to support the work of the North Down Red Squirrel and Pine Marten Group including by providing financial support to cover insurance costs.
- Continues with the grey squirrel control programme at Castle Park, Bangor.
- Continues to provide all equipment required for grey squirrel control programme on Council owned land.
- Work with Ulster Wildlife and NDRSPMG to identify, expand and implement the number of targeted grey squirrel control sites on all Council owned land.

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

Councillor W Irvine noted the good work of the local North Down Red Squirrel and Pine Marten Group and asked in terms of the debate had there been any developments in terms of methods used to control the grey squirrels since some Members had been uncomfortable at the time with what was being proposed. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries explained that the trap used was the most humane, being very quick and was done sympathetically, but that they were always looking out for any new methods available.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor S Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

6. HERBICIDE REDUCTION POLICY UPDATE

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the purpose of the report, was to update Members on the Herbicide Reduction Policy agreed by Council in October 2021.

The policy aimed to address the concerns and impacts of herbicide use, the policy set out the basis for using alternative methods of vegetation management within the Parks and Cemeteries of the Borough.

Weed control within parks, cemeteries, play parks and other urban landscapes was currently achieved through a range of techniques which in most UK Councils were based on the use of herbicide application, particularly Glyphosate products. However, public and political interest for reducing herbicide for weed control in amenity areas was increasing due to recent concerns about safety of Glyphosate for human health and environmental safety.

The future of weed control should be based on weed prevention to enable long-term, fewer herbicide applications, and laborious weed control and surface repairs.

The policy aimed to reduce the reliance on herbicides by:

- Applying a proactive approach in the design of new projects and facilities to remove the need for herbicide use.
- Designating herbicide free zones.
- Implementing alternative control methods, that included, but was not limited to hand weeding, burning, steam treatments, grubbing etc.
- Creating 'wild' areas where appropriate.
- Developing a communication campaign to raise awareness and encourage acceptance of alternative management techniques.
- Supporting resident/community groups carrying out clean ups in local areas.
- Promoting of the importance of pollinator insects; developing and promoting pollinator friendly areas and maintenance techniques.

Where those alternative measures were adopted, they may not be as effective as conventional herbicide application therefore there would be a greater need to begin educating communities on acceptance of weed levels and a shift in perceived acceptability and cleanliness of the public realm.

In managing sites for Green Flag Awards and Ulster in Bloom, there was an emphasis on reduced herbicide usage. By working within this policy statement, Council could demonstrate its commitment to a sustainable management approach. That approach was also supported within the Councils 'Roadmap to Sustainability'.

Upon the inception of the policy, there were two sites in the Borough which were managed herbicide free. Those were Kiltonga Wildlife Reserve and Hunts Park. In adopting a management regime free from herbicide, the following techniques were trialled:

- Identify areas left uncut to encourage natural vegetation
- Reduced cutting frequencies
- The use of mechanical brushes
- Manual weed removal

Following the creation of an Herbicide Reduction Task and Finish Group consisting of Parks and Cemeteries operational staff from all levels of the Service, the effectiveness of the above techniques on the herbicide free sites was evaluated in terms of control success and also public perception. Each site had differing levels of success. Kiltonga experienced no negative impact and indeed benefited greatly from that approach. In the case of Hunts Park, the ageing infrastructure reduced the effectiveness of the alternative methods. That was being reviewed and a project for path refurbishment and repurposing was being developed for budget consideration for 2024/25. That would enable a more sustainable herbicide free approach to the site.

The Task and Finished Group identified a number of key areas for the further reduction in the use of herbicide. Those included:

- The cessation of treating kerb lines and mature tree bases as appropriate.
- Allowing boundary edges to naturalise.
- Increased used of weed suppressant mulching
- Localised herbicide free zones within selected areas.

Overall, the above measures had led to a 30% reduction in chemical weed control since 2021.

Going forward and to reduce the use of herbicide further, the following techniques were being explored and trialled:

- Additional mechanical sweeping equipment deployed across the teams.
- Non herbicide-based products trialled for use on hard surfaces.
- Explore Electrical Weed Control - eWeeding

It was important to note that this Policy Statement would not apply to the management of Invasive Species, sports pitches, fine turf areas such as bowling greens, where chemical control was the most appropriate control option currently available.

RECOMMENDED that the Council note the progress achieved by the application of the Herbicide Reduction Policy as outlined in the report.

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

Councillor Woods welcomed the report and asked if there was any indication that the Council would be pesticide free in the short term. She also wondered if there were plans or public events to encourage other bodies and residents to follow suit. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries stated that all the elements could not yet be fulfilled as there was sometimes lot of criticism from residents who wanted public areas to be pristine and weed free. The Council hoped to strike a good balance between those aims but eventually it would need to stop using Glyphosate and would have to invest in more environmentally friendly methods. Councillor Woods was encouraged that this chemical was being phased out and capital projects were being designed differently to try to ensure a problem was not created in the first place. Progress was being made and that would continue.

Seconding the recommendation Councillor Creighton endorsed the view held by Councillor Woods and was delighted that there were other measures to deal with the problem of weeds such as hand pulling, electrical devices and inert foam.

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

7. PARKS AND CEMETERIES MACHINERY REPLACEMENT AND UTILISATION STRATEGY
(Appendices IX - XI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the purpose of the report was to seek approval from Elected Members to agree the enclosed Parks and Cemeteries Replacement and Utilisation Strategy which set out the procedure for replacing plant, equipment and other mobile mechanical assets (appendix) that allowed for better financial forecasting and control.

In December 2019, Council approved the original Parks & Cemeteries Replacement and Utilisation Strategy, in order that the Parks and Cemeteries Service could deliver a planned programme of replacement of its plant and machinery. That ensured that the Service could run an up to date efficient and innovated fleet of machinery in the delivery of the service. The replacement strategy also enabled the capital expenditure for new and replacement equipment to be estimated in line with the Council's Capital Investment plans.

Since the implementation of the strategy in 2019, large areas of the plant and machinery assets had been modernised. That had a direct effect on staff by reducing the level of noise they were exposed to and reducing the impact of vibration. The engine standards of the new machinery had reduced the emissions output and provided increased benefit to our environment, wildlife and the physical health of open spaces users, helping to ensure everyone had access to clean air and a well-managed environment. Parks and Cemeteries had transitioned the machinery used to service bowling greens and Bangor Castle Walled Garden to fully electric and had started working towards that standard across other areas. The new strategy would look to add momentum to the process through adaptations to the strategy objectives.

Parks and Cemeteries staff had been placed at the heart of decision making through the Plant and Machinery Task and Finish Group. That group included members from across the service, who discussed replacement and adaptations for the fleet. Those staff were core and competent operators who provided a comprehensive picture of the operational requirements for each item, helping to ensure good spend. The group had also contributed the proposed strategy update, replacement process and plan regularly for a move to a more sustainable, environmentally friendly fleet.

Relevant Background Information

The Parks & Cemeteries Service delivered a well-maintained parks, cemeteries, and open space service across the Borough. To carry that out the Service had a fleet of plant and equipment that differed in age and condition. The aim of the Strategy was to:

- To ensure a reliable fleet of plant and equipment that was fit for purpose.
- To evenly distribute the capital expenditure on new plant and equipment to avoid "spikes" in capital demand.
- To enable the appropriate types of plant and equipment to be purchased considering modern day innovations, safety standards and exposure levels.
- Challenge the status quo by critically evaluating the plant and equipment used and ensure fleet reflects the service provided today and in the future.
- Reduce the adverse environmental impact of our activities, including air, land and water pollution and noise. In addition, meet our services obligations under ISO 14001.
- To transition appropriate types of plant and equipment towards Ultra Low Emission's (ULEs) engines through increased use of electrification or other renewable energy sources.
- Increase customer satisfaction with reduced complaints regarding the quality of open spaces.

Key Issues / Points

There were many different techniques that could be used to calculate replacement cycles, with advantages and disadvantages associated with each.

There could also be non-economic factors involved that may influence or even dictate replacement cycles, for example meeting air quality standards to reduce emissions or exchanging plant and equipment due to a change in operational service delivery requirements.

The key to a successful Strategy would involve judgment, prediction, forecasts, and assumptions on one hand, and analysis of available empirical data on the other. It was for that reason that Officers would use a two-stage process in addressing the issue of plant and equipment replacement. The first stage involved automatically scheduling equipment and plant for replacement based solely on their age. Once the list was generated for plant and equipment scheduled for replacement based on age, Parks Management would implement stage two and analyse relevant information on each plant item to build a picture of its overall condition and identify the possibility of extending its service life where possible.

The replacement assessment had been strengthened to ensure more detail was provided when a request for replacement was made, further strengthening the opportunity for critic, before investment was authorised. In addition to the criteria outlined above, Officers would further be required to research and consider if the item being replaced could be transitioned to an alternative, renewable fuel source, through electrification for example.

Implications for Council

The current fleet had improved significantly since the introduction of the Strategy agreed in 2019 but still had an element of historical catch-up and that would require an annual investment requirement of circa £225,000 to rectify within five years. While the investments had increased the performance, condition and suitability of plant and machinery in recent years there was still a requirement to replace items which were in poor condition and beyond economical repair.

In the early period of the previous strategy life, expenditure more than the annual requirement was incurred. That initial anomaly had been corrected and the normal replacement protocol set out in this Strategy was now the norm. Plant and equipment replacement expenditure had levelled out and was becoming relatively consistent year on year. In addition, this Strategy set out the procedure for replacing plant, equipment and other mobile mechanical assets that allowed for better financial forecasting and control.

Failure to appropriately forecast and schedule the replacement of the fleet could result in a number of issues including service delivery implications from plant and equipment being unavailable due to increased down time; an uneven spread of capital expenditure on new plant and equipment putting strain on the capital purse; an increased maintenance costs of plant and equipment and unsustainable impact on staff; plus, an adverse environmental impact using older and more polluting equipment. That environmental responsibility had become clearer following the passing of The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (Act). The Act set a target of an at least 100% reduction in net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050 (i.e., net zero emissions by 2050) for Northern Ireland.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approve the attached updated Parks & Cemeteries Replacement & Utilisation Strategy (v2) which set out the procedure for replacing plant, equipment and other mobile mechanical assets allowing for continued sustainable financial forecasting, equipment reliability, increased environmental benefits and procedural control for Council.

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

Alderman Cummings asked about the management of the fleet and was the machinery used for other areas of the Council's work. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries stated that it would be used in all locations that parks and cemeteries managed across the whole Borough but within their own budget area.

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

8. COMMUNITY TREE NURSERY (Appendices XII & XIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the purpose of this report was to follow-up on the Community

Tree Nurseries proposal, which formed part of an action of the Council's Tree & Woodland Strategy. Engaging local people could take many forms with events and local community planting schemes being an essential mechanism to ensure wide community buy-in for the Council's Tree and Woodland Strategy which included the **STAND4TREES** initiative. During the summer months Parks Officers had been engaging with local groups to discuss development of a network of Community Tree Nurseries and Community Seed Gathering projects.

What is a Community Tree Nursery

Community tree nurseries allowed the local community to come together and gather local tree seeds, plant them and care for them to become young trees. Locally sourced trees were vitally important and the act of growing a tree could help create a link to nature for many people. It was also an initiative open to all ages and abilities and with limited space.

A tree nursery was a controlled environment where young trees were propagated from seeds, cuttings, or saplings. It offered optimal conditions, such as suitable soil, adequate sunlight, water, and protection from adverse weather, to foster healthy growth. The primary purpose of a tree nursery was to provide a nurturing environment for those young plants until they reached a stage suitable for transplantation.

Benefits of a Community Tree Nursery

Developing a community tree nursery offered a range of benefits for both the local community and the environment, including:

Reforestation and Habitat Restoration: Community tree nurseries provided a steady supply of healthy seedlings, enabling large-scale reforestation efforts. By replanting trees in degraded areas, communities could restore habitats, protect biodiversity, and improve ecosystem health.

Carbon Sequestration and Climate Change Mitigation: Trees were effective in sequestering carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas responsible for climate change. Community tree nurseries contributed to climate change mitigation by enabling the planting of a diverse range of tree species, thereby increasing carbon storage, and promoting sustainable land use practices.

Community Engagement and Empowerment: Involving local community groups and schools in tree nursery development fostered a sense of ownership and pride. It empowered community members to take an active role in environmental conservation, leading to stronger community bonds and increased environmental stewardship.

Environmental Education and Awareness: Tree nurseries served as educational platforms to raise awareness about the importance of trees, ecological conservation, and sustainable land management. They provided opportunities for schools,

community organisations, and individuals to learn about environmental stewardship and inspire future generations.

Importance in Landscaping Projects: In addition to their environmental significance, tree nurseries also catered to landscaping projects in urban and suburban areas. Nurseries supplied a wide variety of ornamental trees and shrubs that enhanced the aesthetic appeal of parks, gardens, streetscapes, and residential areas. The controlled cultivation in nurseries ensured that plants were well-suited for the local climate and site conditions, increasing their chances of survival and long-term growth.

Seed Gathering Events

The process of tree seed gathering and highlighting the benefits of developing Community Tree Nurseries. Gathering tree seeds involved the collection of seeds from a variety of tree species for propagation and subsequent planting. The process typically included the following steps:

1. **Identification and Selection:** Experienced individuals or teams identified suitable tree species based on the desired ecological outcomes and specific local conditions.
2. **Collection:** Mature seeds were collected during the appropriate season, ensuring they were fully developed and free from diseases or pests. Proper techniques and tools were used to minimize damage to the seeds.
3. **Processing:** Collected seeds were cleaned, sorted, and stored under controlled conditions to maintain their viability until they were ready for planting.

By actively engaging in the activities above, local communities and schools could contribute to sustainable park and woodland management, address ecological challenges, and create a greener, healthier future for generations to come. Council was committed to ensuring improved tree cover within the Borough, and to promote the importance of trees to ensure a number of Corporate and Community Plan objectives were met.

Council Support

Council would aim to develop and support five community tree nurseries throughout the Borough by providing groups with expert guidance and information on the development of the tree nursery. Council Officers would work alongside each group to help organise seed gathering and tree planting events. Each community tree nursery would require initial funding, with the maximum amount of funding coming to £500 per tree nursery. Budgets were allowed for in the existing tree budgets and that support could go towards purchasing startup essentials such as:

- Compost/soil

- Pots
- Water systems
- Raised beds
- Digging shapes and forks
- Weeding tools

Groups from across the Borough would be invited to apply to join the initiative using the short application form (enclosed in the information pack), with three being chosen per year by a panel of Council Officers.

RECOMMENDED that the Council support the development of Community Tree Nursery Network and Seed Gathering Projects.

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

Councillor Irwin fully supported the scheme and its aims combined with the importance of planting trees and having community involvement was very important. She referred to the areas quoted, and the Head of Parks and Cemeteries indicated that there were three areas set apart for tree nurseries, but the intention was for that to be each year and that the initiative would be rolled out further across the Borough.

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

9. PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON PLAY PROVISION IN HOLYWOOD AND KIRCUBBIN

(Appendices XIV - XVII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the Ards and North Down, Play Strategy 2021-2032, made recommendations for each settlement in the Borough. Hollywood was identified as having the highest proportion of teenagers in the Borough and therefore in need of a facility for older children, at present it did not have any provision for older children.

Kircubbin had two play parks, The Green and Parsonage Road. It was proposed within the Play Strategy, that if the play Park at the Green was upgraded to a Tier 1 then the one at Parsonage Road could be closed. The Play Strategy proposed that consultations take place to determine what options the residents in Hollywood and Kircubbin preferred.

Hollywood

A preliminary consultation was carried out in early 2022 with the Hollywood Children and Young People's Network via a Teams meeting online. They then spoke to their members and then submitted a response to the Outdoor Recreation Officer. The suggestions included:

- Including Ballymenoch Park to the site options (in addition to Seapark and Praegar's Field)
- Add a rain shelter/youth shelter
- Provide lighting at the facility
- Make sure it was in an open location
- Not locked

The Holywood Family Trust through its youth club, then conducted a poll of their members in June 2022. A total of 76 responses were received from the young people attending the Youth Club and the majority wanted to see a Multi-Use Games area delivered at Seapark. Due to the need to conduct another consultation required as a priority in another part of the Borough in late 2022 and without the support of a Play Development Officer, it was not possible to conduct the full public consultation for Holywood until September 2023.

The online survey commenced on Monday 11th September 2023, and that was advertised on the Council's social media channels. Posters were also placed at each of the four play parks (Seapark, Johnny the Jig, Ballymenoch and Redburn). A public drop-in session was held on Monday 11th September in Redburn Community Centre, hard copies of the survey were available as well as maps of the locations and images of the facility types. Details of the survey were issued via email to the Redburn and Loughview Community Forum, the Holywood Children and Young People's Network, the Holywood Family Trust, the Holywood Steet Pastors and Ards and North Down Street Pastors via the Council's Community Development Team. Details of the survey were also issued to all Elected Members. The survey closed on 1st October and the results were as follows:

Total responses received: 57

- **Preferred location: Seapark 43.86%**
- **Preferred facility type: Multi Use Games Area 36.84%**

It would now need to be established if planning permission was required in order to deliver the facility. If it was deemed necessary, then a planning application would be submitted and the facility would be delivered once that process had been completed. If a planning application was not deemed necessary, then the facility could be delivered before the end of March 2024. There was capital budget available to deliver it.

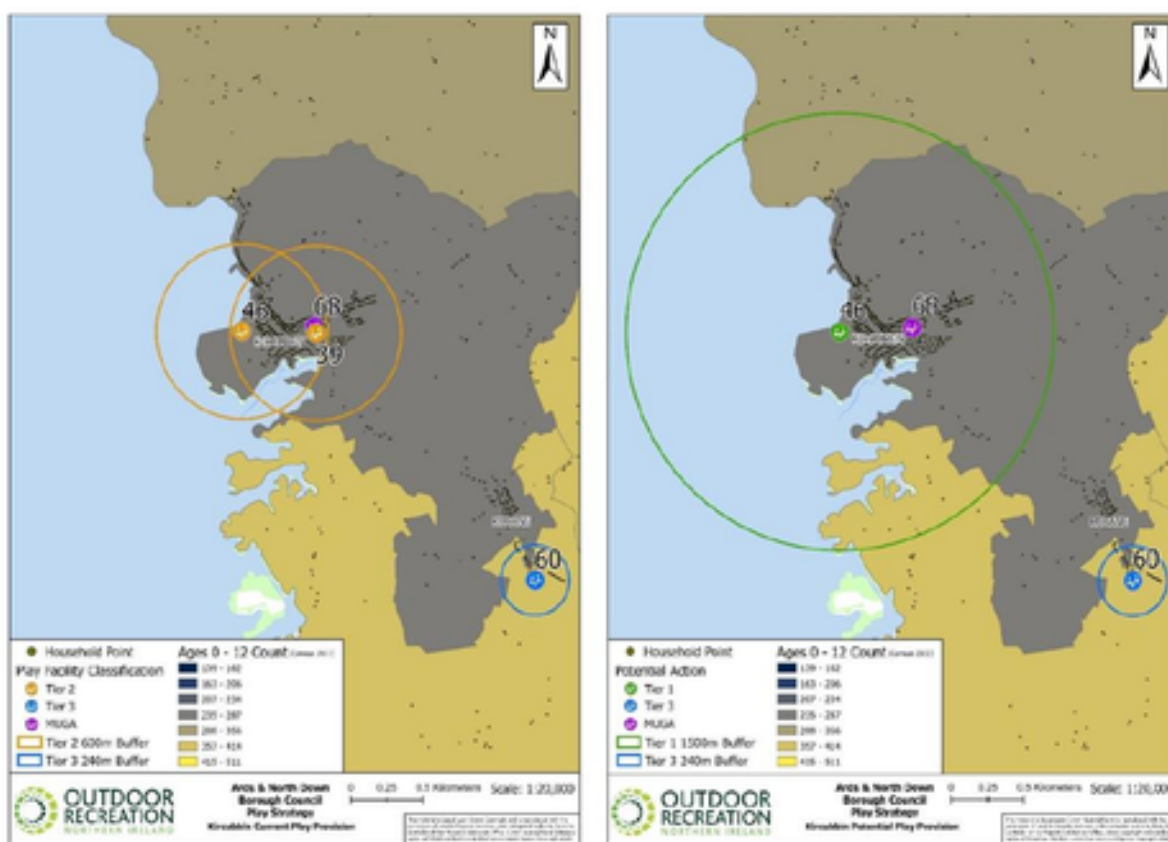
Kircubbin

The play park at Parsonage Road, which was a Teir 2 play park, was identified as being in need of refurbishment by the annual Independent Inspectors Assessment. It should be noted that the play park at The Green (shore) also a Teir 2.

The Play Strategy stated the following in relation to Kircubbin:

In Kircubbin, The Green has the potential to be upgraded to a Tier 1 facility to serve the entire settlement and to increase the tourism potential of the area. The upgrade will consolidate and improve the play provision offer in the settlement. The upgrade of the site at The Green will be dependent on the removal of the smaller facility at Parsonage Road as it will be considered surplus. Similarly, the MUGA at Parsonage Road could be upgraded to a full MUGA (the playground will need to be removed to accommodate this). Alternatively, the MUGA (or similar facility) could be relocated to The Green as it would be considered to be a better location for this type of facility in terms of visibility and access. (Please note No. 60 on the maps relates to Rubane which is dealt with separately).

(Tier 1 example Castle Park, Portaferry or Cloughey)
 (Tier 2 example Aurora (Bangor) or Conlig or Helens Bay).



The online survey commenced on Monday 11th September 2023, and that was advertised on the Council’s social media channels. Posters were also placed at each of the play parks in Kircubbin, Parsonage Road and The Green. A public drop-in session was held on Tuesday 12th October in the Kircubbin Community Centre, where hard copies of the survey were available as well as images of the facility types for older children provision and example drawings/images of Teir 1 and Tier 2 play parks. Details of the survey were issued via email to the Ards and North Down Street Pastors, St Josephs GAA Ballycran, St Mary’s Primary School Kircubbin and

the County Down Rural Community Network via the Council's Community Development Team. Details of the survey were also issued to all Elected Members.

The survey closed on 1st October and the results were as follows:

Total responses received: 227

Preferred Option: A 76.21%.

(Option A: Close Parsonage Road which is currently at Tier 2 and upgrade The Green (shore) which is currently a Tier 2 to a Tier 1).

Preferred facility type: Multi Use Games Area 46.26%

Alternative use for Parsonage Road: Parking/drop off area to serve the school.

(149 (69%) out of the total 227 respondents answered the question, and out of those that answered 30.8% wanted to see the area used for car parking/school drop off, see attached Kircubbin Consultation Comments document).

It would now need to be established if planning permission was required to deliver the older children's facility at The Green. If it was deemed necessary, then a planning application would be submitted, and the facility would be delivered once that process had been completed. If a planning application was not deemed necessary, then the facility could be delivered in the 2024/2025 Financial Year. Discussions would also need to be had with planning in relation to the alternative use of Parsonage Road.

The play park at The Green could be refurbished/upgraded in situ (that could be completed before the end of March 2024).

While an online survey and public event was the normal model of consultation employed by the Council for public consultations on a range of matters, it was acknowledged that more targeted and extensive consultation could have been carried out. However, with limited resources, constraints on time and no dedicated Play Development Officer to be able to facilitate that additional consultation, only the minimum standard of consultation could be undertaken.

RECOMMENDED that the Council proceed with the following:

- The delivery of a Multi-Use Games Areas at Seapark, Holywood.
- The delivery of the upgrade the play park at The Green Kircubbin (shore)
- Close Parsonage Road and explore the alternative uses as suggested by the consultation
- The delivery of a Multi Use Games Area at The Green Kircubbin.

Proposed by Alderman Adair , an alternative proposal seconded by Alderman Cummings to keep points 1, 2 and 4 but for point 3...

'that Council, in closing Parsonage Road task officers to bring forward a report on the possibility of turning the site into a sensory garden for the Ards Peninsula.'

He went on to say that many people had engaged with the consultation and wanted to see investment in their local area. He, and they, were encouraged by and welcomed the recommendation for a playpark and multi-use facility in their area since there was not a facility like that on the Ards Peninsula. However, there was a need for a sensory garden for those with additional needs. However, play and facilities for all were a good news story and he asked Members to support his amendment. He had spoken to Councillor Boyle prior to the meeting and was aware of his support for the amendment.

Seconding the amendment Alderman Cummings was aware from his own area of Comber that it had benefitted greatly from the pump track there and knew that the facilities would be used extensively. He encouraged the Council to utilise the closed site well in the future.

Councillor Woods proposed an amendment to point 1, which would not change the sentiment of what Alderman Adair had proposed since she was referring to the proposal at Holywood, that...

'Council should not proceed with delivery of a Multi-Use Games Area in Holywood at this time. Instead, Council will explore other options for location of a suitable facility, including at locations not currently owned or managed by Council. Council will also undertake further consultation with young people in Holywood, including engagement with local schools, in order to ascertain desirable facilities and desirable locations.

Councillor Irwin seconded that amendment. Councillor Woods stated her amendment related to Holywood only and was calling for a pause to the progress of the Muga at Seapark in order to have further consultation with residents of Holywood. Provision for older children was greatly needed at Holywood and she called for consultation within the youth centres, schools and churches. Seapark was some distance from the town centre and would require transport or walking on possibly dark paths at night. Young people had simply asked for shelters with lights and somewhere warm and safe to hang out. She believed that the young people themselves should be engaging to make decisions which were ultimately for their benefit.

Councillor Boyle believed that this was a lesson to the Council not to put two differing communities and their individual needs in one report. The two areas could not be compared one being rural and the other urban and Members did not know the challenges of each if they did not represent the area. He knew little about Holywood but could speak for his own area.

Councillor Adair in summing up supported Councillor Woods' amendment adding that he agreed with Councillor Boyle and that the Ards Peninsula would stand alone in its own right. He urged the Council to proceed with the work in Kircubbin.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Alderman Cummings, that the recommendation be adopted and that Council proceed with:

- The delivery of the upgrade to the play park at The Green Kircubbin (shore)
- Close Parsonage Road and explore the alternative uses as suggested by the consultation and the possibility of turning the site into a sensory garden for the Ards Peninsula.
- The delivery of a Multi Use Games Area at The Green Kircubbin.
- and that Council should not proceed with delivery of a Multi Use Games Area in Holywood at this time. Instead, Council will explore other options for location of a suitable facility, including at locations not currently owned or managed by Council. Council will also undertake further consultation with young people in Holywood, including engagement with local schools, in order to ascertain desirable facilities and desirable locations.

10. COMMEMORATIVE TREE PLANTING

(Appendix XVIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would be aware that the Council had facilitated the planting of commemorative trees on Council land in conjunction with local groups and organisations in accordance with its approved policy.

The policy set out the following criteria :-

1. A request would be approved if it met the following essential criteria
 - a) The request was being made by a properly constituted organisation.
 - b) The request was submitted in writing in the approved form at least 8 weeks in advance of the requested planting date.
 - c) The tree would become the property of Council and maintained as such. The species and variety would be at the discretion of the Council and align with the Council's Tree and Woodland Strategy.
 - d) Applications would be considered on a date received priority should there be a conflict in dates requested. (Officers would liaise with those making a request to accommodate where required).
 - e) Applications must include details of any commemorative plaque to be considered for approval.
 - f) The request was satisfactorily equality screened.
 - g) The request was deemed to be eligible (See section 2 below)
2. Eligible requests would be as followed:
 - a) To raise awareness of charities nominated by the Mayor
 - b) To highlight events directly organised by the Council
 - c) To mark a significant sporting event in the Borough.

- d) To commemorate a significant anniversary of, or an event organised by a charity or community organisation which had a significant connection to the Borough.
 - e) To commemorate a major national event or anniversary.
3. In addition to failing to meet at least one of the above criteria, a request would be deemed ineligible if it fell into any of the following categories
- a) An application which in officers' opinion was only promoting a commercial interest
 - b) The promotion of an ethos, activity or organisation which was not deemed in the context of communities to be shared, neutral or promoting good relations.
 - c) A copy of the policy and application form were attached as appendices to this report.

Members were advised that the Commemorative Tree Planting Policy did not apply to or replace the memorial tree planting which took place in Council cemeteries.

In recent weeks there had been one request for commemorative tree planting. That had been received from: -

- **RNLI – 200 anniversary trees. Planting of 200 oak trees approval requested for Castle Park, Bangor.**

Officers could confirm that the request complied with the criteria in the policy.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the RNLI Commemorative Tree Planting request as outlined in the report.

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

Alderman Cummings understood that this was one of the Mayor's charities this year and believed that it was important that the Council commemorate this centenary year. Councillor W Irvine was in agreement stating this would make a great contribution to Castle Park.

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

11. WALKING FOR ALL PROJECT TO PEACEPLUS (Appendix IXX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the Council had been approached by Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) who were currently working towards applying to the Peace Plus funding programme, more specifically Theme 4 – Healthy and Inclusive Communities, Investment Area 4.2 – Rural Regeneration and Social Inclusion. Peace Plus was

administered by SEUPB. The Council had been asked to support that bid as outlined below.

The proposed project, Walking for All (WFA) was to use led walks as the conduit to contributing to the creation of healthy communities in rural areas whilst also tackling social isolation and promoting enhanced social inclusion. The project would also create opportunities for sustained, meaningful and purposeful contact between people and groups of different backgrounds, and in so doing would seek to make a direct contribution to peace and prosperity. The project specifically delivered on:

- contributing to the creation of healthy communities (including individuals and entire communities) in rural areas through a health and well-being focused solution.
- providing the opportunities for communities to grow together – economically, socially and culturally.
- helping communities become empowered to address social exclusion ensuring all people had access to quality services and therefore achieving a better quality of life for all.
- encouraging participants to socialise, gain confidence, build relationships in their local communities, interact reducing rural isolation and exclusion and contributing to more peaceful and prosperous rural areas.
- building community networks both cross community and cross border resulting in vibrant, inclusive and sustainable rural communities throughout Northern Ireland and the border counties.
- fostering a culture of volunteering – with the project focused on training Volunteer Community Walk Leaders, the project would help build the capacity of rural communities to develop and ultimately sustain activities in their own area.
- supporting rural enterprises e.g. coffee shops and supported partnership and collaboration effort at all levels and between all stakeholders involved e.g. NGOs, County Council, County LSP and Local Communities.

The project differed from other existing Council walking initiatives with the focus on training up Volunteer Community Walk Leaders. The Walk Leaders would set up, lead and sustain their own walking groups across the Council area. Those Walk Leaders would be supported at every step by Walking For All Coordinators (see below for more detail).

The proposed project was cross border. Confirmed partners in the Republic of Ireland included Sport Ireland and the Local Sports Partnerships of Counties Louth, Monaghan, Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim and Cavan. Work was progressing with all Councils in Northern Ireland (except Belfast City Council) to receive partnership support.

The proposed model for the project included a core staff team of Project Manager, Finance Officer, Training and Communication Officer and three Regional WFA Managers. Those positions would be employed by ORNI as the lead partner in the

project. In addition, key to the success of the project was employing a local WFA Coordinator in each of the Council areas in Northern Ireland and in each of the Local Sports Partnerships in the Republic of Ireland.

The role of the coordinator included:

- undertaking an audit of all community groups in the widest sense across the Council area
- (e.g sporting clubs, Mother and Toddlers groups, Age Friendly clubs, Men's Shed, Church groups).
- proactively engaging with those groups to recruit Volunteer Community Walk Leaders.
- delivering WFA training courses to new Volunteer Community Walk Leaders.
- initially leading walks with the new Walk Leaders to build their confidence and ensure quality control.
- providing ongoing support to Community Walk Leaders to maintain a weekly regular walk as a minimum.
- seeking to integrate existing walking groups (Walking In Your Community and Walking for Health) into WFA and providing the necessary refresher training.
- organising and hosting local networking walks and events for walking groups.
- identifying and delivering 'peace and reconciliation' interventions in specific communities.
- feeding walking group data and case studies to the Training and Communication Officer to populate the WFA website.
- keeping records for monitoring and evaluation purposes and preparing reports for the Regional WFA Managers.
- collectively reporting monthly to the Regional WFA Manager on targets and outputs.
- reporting to the Project Working Group when required.

Given the overall size of the project (c.£6.5 million over 3 years), ORNI had advised that it was not possible for them to act as the employing body for the 16 Local Coordinators. Consequently, the model proposed was that the Walking for All (WFA) Coordinators were employed by the individual Councils and Local Sport Partnerships, but all work programmes and outputs would be line managed by ORNI, as the project's lead partner. Coordinators would be in post for three years on a three-year fixed term contract.

The Coordinator post had been evaluated independently at SO1 (Staff Officer) level by Steve Traynor STAHRs, a job evaluation specialist used by many Councils across Northern Ireland. Funding for all elements of the project was funded 100% through the grant application, with no cost to the Council. Funding covered salary, national insurance, pension contribution, essential car users' allowance and statutory redundancy pay.

All Coordinators across the project would have the same Job Description provided by ORNI. Whilst the Council would be responsible for undertaking the recruitment

process, ORNI was willing to sit on shortlisting panels/interview panels as an observer, if so desired by the Council.

Councils would also be given a flat rate of 15% towards administration and 7% towards the Coordinator's travel and subsistence. In addition, each Officer would be given a small programme budget to manage each year towards training costs, materials etc.

It was anticipated that the Council would submit a quarterly financial claim to ORNI who would then claim back the funding from Peace Plus and reimburse the Council as quickly as possible.

It was anticipated that the call for applications to the Programme would be made in September/October 2023 with a closing date of December 2023. A 6–9-month assessment period was expected, so it was not anticipated that the Coordinator posts would be in place before January 2025.

Costs in the application were based on a starting date of April 2025. ORNI had sought the assistance of an economist to calculate projected costs for the period April 2025 – end of March 2028 cognisant of increases in inflation during this period and spine point increases on the SO1 scale.

There was no expectation that after the three years Councils would have to retain the Coordinator and finance the post from their own existing budgets. However, it was hoped that the outputs of the project would have had such a positive impact on the work of the Council, that some Councils would consider extending the role post-Peace funding. In addition, during the duration of the project, the Project Manager would be tasked with seeking Executive funding to extend the life of the project through negotiations with the Dept of Health, DAERA, DFC and other relevant Departments.

As part of SEUPB's requirement, it was proposed that a Service Level Agreement/Partnership Agreement would be put in place between ORNI as lead partner and the Council.

The WFA project would also help contribute to the Council's strategic outcomes as outlined of The Big Plan:

All people in Ards and North Down would:

- Enjoy good health and wellbeing
- Live in communities where they were respected, were safe and felt secure
- Benefit from a prosperous economy
- Feel pride as they had access to a well-managed sustainable environment.

The objectives of the project aligned with the vision of the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024 - "Ards and North Down is a vibrant, connected, healthy, safe and prosperous place".

With specific reference to the following outcomes:

- All people in Ards and North Down will enjoy good health and wellbeing
- Live in communities where they were respected were safe and felt secure
- Feel pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment.

The project would also support the placemaking theme within the Council's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy 2018-2030: Key placemaking principles for the Borough were:

- Accentuating an area's unique Sense of Place to attract visitors and investment
- Animating public spaces through the creative management of uses, events and artworks.

The project would help build positive relationships from people of differing backgrounds by facilitating activities and events which were open to all and where there was respect and no fear of religious diversity. It was thought more integration was essential to building a more reconciled society and change attitudes and behaviours. The activities and events would be free to use for all who wished to use them.

The proposed project also contributed to the overarching cross cutting ambition of the Council's Big Plan:

- To have empowered resilient individuals and communities
- To reduce inequality
- To promote good relations and sustainability
- To improve the accessibility of all public services.

RECOMMENDED that the Council:

1. Formally support the project by being a named partner in the forthcoming application to Peace Plus.
2. Agreeing to act as the employing authority for a WFA Local Coordinator.
3. Providing office space and administrative support as required throughout the length of the project.
4. Offering Officer support throughout the project when required to assist the Coordinator.

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

Alderman Adair welcomed the recommendation believing it to be wonderful that more funding was being provided to develop walks and encourage the further rediscovery of the great outdoors post Covid. He thanked the officers for the work they had undertaken and as seconder Councillor Boyle was in agreement.

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

12. WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH TO OBESITY UPDATE

(Appendix XX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing explaining that The Big Plan Part II - Our Big Priorities, identified taking a Whole System Approach to Obesity as a key workstream under the Big Plan's Health Equity priority. In late 2022, the Public Health Agency (PHA) wrote to Councils asking for expressions of interest to be considered an early adopter site to implement a whole system approach to obesity.

Following Council approval earlier in 2023, Council officers submitted an expression of interest on behalf of the Community Planning Partnership. Following a further discussion with PHA, it was agreed that Ards and North Down would be the first early adopter site in Northern Ireland. That was due to the Council's 'state of readiness' as it had already made a commitment via its Strategic Community Planning Partnership and already had an existing workstream group in place.

Progress to Date

A leadership group was formed that included Council, PHA and the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust. The role of the Leadership Group was to understand the theory and evidence base and translate that into activities to be undertaken and decisions to be made by a workstream group. The Leadership Group provided a coordinated approach to the project and the work activities were divided among members.

The Workstream Group followed the structures used within the Community Planning Partnership and involved a wider group of partners from across statutory organisations as well as the community and voluntary sector. Creating a whole system approach required sustainable support from stakeholders with a range of expertise. The purpose of the group was to support the Leadership Group via sharing of expertise, experiences, and capacity. Members of this group provided advice, and support; enabling the whole system approach to have long-term commitment from stakeholders. They would oversee and advocate the whole system approach; develop, feedback, and implement actions plans; secure budgets; establish and support governance; and monitor impact.

Reporting of progress would be to WSA Regional Structures as well as Ards and North Down's Strategic Community Planning Partnership and Ards and North Down Borough Council.

Building the Local Picture

The first aspect of undertaking a Whole System Approach was to build the local picture. That was necessary to understand the problem within Ards and North Down and agree with Community Planning Partners a geographical location and the aspect of the system that the early adopter site should focus on.

That had involved reviewing and gathering available data, collating information on existing interventions and their success levels and balancing that with local knowledge and intelligence on what the sub-system of the early adopter site should focus on.

An evidence base report was included within the appendix outlining the reasons for the identification of the sub-system and the geographical location in which the first early adopter site project would focus.

After reviewing the evidence available the Workstream Group agreed that the focus of the sub-system should be the years between year 1 and year 8. The evidence showed an increase in the numbers of overweight and obese pupils between those age groups. While AND did not indicate greater levels of obesity/overweight children entering year 1, there was a noticeable jump in recorded levels at year 8. It was agreed that a whole systems approach meant that while we focus on those intermediate years, work and activities would still be needed prior to year 1 and after year 8. It was also agreed that the sub-system needed to be located within an agree geographical area.

It was agreed that to identify a geographical local for the sub-system a decision-making matrix should be used to consider the following:

1. Deprivation (small area data).
2. Data available at small area including obesity figures, dental extraction, diabetes etc...
3. Type of location (can it be easily defined).
4. Presence of a Surestart and Homestart.
5. Local assets e.g., health, leisure, and community facilities.
6. Potential for low-cost interventions to be introduced.
7. Potential to engage with an active community group.
8. Other locally based support services.

It was agreed that the initial sub-system could be considered as the initial test site.

The 10 Small Areas within Ards and North Down Areas featuring in the Deprivation Report were discussed along with the pros and cons of focusing the project within each using the eight criteria.

Using this information within the decision-making matrix, it was agreed that the sub-system for Ards and North Down's WSA Project was the transition between year 1 and year 8 within the Glen Estate and West Winds Estate in Newtownards including

areas of the Newtownards DEA, plus Glen Ward, West Winds Ward, and Conway Square Ward.

While Newtownards was the initial focus of the project, it was anticipated that some interventions within the action plan could be transferred borough wide at a future stage.

The detailed report had explained the selection of the demographic and geographical area, and was provided within the appendix of the report.

Next steps

A detailed and complex causal map would be created. That would look at the sub-system within the geographical area and consider all the potential influences over the demographics weight. PHA was exploring the procurement of software that would assist with this stage of the project. It was likely that that would look at poverty, housing, assets, lifestyle, deprivation, infrastructure, and education. The work would then be used to help develop an action plan. Members of the Community Planning Partnership would need to work together to ensure the action plan was resourced so all negative influences with the sub-system could be addressed.

RECOMMENDED that the Council note progress with the project and continue to support its development as detailed as it progressed.

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

Councillor W Irvine considered this to be a very important project focusing on the health and wellbeing of all residents and praised the connectivity within the project to get people more active more often. The Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development reported that there had been a lot of work around the partnership approach regarding physical activity, healthy eating and connections with poverty. The initiative would not work without the partnership engagement.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Moore, that the recommendation be adopted.

13. OPSS CONSULTATIONS ON THE UK PRODUCT SAFETY REVIEW AND UK FURNITURE AND FURNISHINGS FIRE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

(Appendices XXI – XXII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the Office of Product Safety and Standards had opened two

new product safety consultations as part of the UK Government's latest package of smarter regulation, namely:

- Product Safety Review
- Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulation

Both consultations were regarding legislation that was applicable to the United Kingdom only.

Product Safety Review

The aim of the Product Safety Review was to protect consumers, ease business burdens and grow the economy.

The Product Safety Review would reform the UK's product safety framework so that the system was more accountable and proportionate and also helped businesses to innovate, grow and create more jobs.

From online marketplaces to internet connected devices, the way we bought products and the products themselves had undergone huge changes in recent years. But the UK's product safety framework had developed piecemeal, resulting in a mix of complex legislation, technical requirements, and guidance. That could be burdensome for businesses to understand and could stifle innovation and new entrants to the market.

The Review included proposals to put clearer responsibilities on online marketplaces so that shopping online was as safe as on the high street, as well as specific digital proposals on e-labelling.

There were also proposals that would see more flexible obligations on businesses that were proportionate to the product's risk and the creation of a more agile and responsive regulatory framework.

The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations

The new approach would replace the Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 (FFRs) to ensure safety requirements reflected furniture in the modern home, reduced chemical flame retardants in domestic upholstered furniture and encouraged innovation.

The Furniture and Furnishings (Fire) (Safety) Regulations 1988 were UK only regulations that were introduced to protect consumers from injury and death resulting from highly flammable upholstered furniture. Important changes were required to take account of modern-day hazards and risks. The consultation sought views from a wide range of stakeholders on the proposed new approach to the fire safety of domestic upholstered furniture, in particular.

The new approach was based on safety outcomes that would be underpinned by a set of essential safety requirements which all products in scope of the regulations must meet in order to be placed on the market. It would maintain and improve fire safety for consumers by better representing the safety of the product as it appeared in their homes, while facilitating manufacturing innovation and a reduction in the use of chemical flame retardants.

Council officers had reviewed the consultations and provided the feedback detailed in the attached documents.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the submission of the attached draft Consultation responses.

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

The matter being put to the vote resulted in 13 for and 1 against. The recommendation was agreed.

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

14. ARTS AND HERITAGE ANNUAL SUMMARY
(Appendix XXIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the Arts and Heritage Service had prepared an Annual Summary for 2022-2023 that offered an overview of all the activity that took place and highlighted key successes throughout the year.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Irwin, that the recommendation be adopted.

15. ARTS PROJECT GRANTS

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the Arts Project Grants for 2023-2024 opened for applications on Thursday 24 August 2023, with a deadline of Thursday 21 September 2023. The grants were advertised in the press and on the Council's website.

An assessment panel met on Friday 22 September to assess 11 applications received by the closing date. The panel comprised of the following members of the Arts & Heritage Panel and Arts & North Down Council Officers:

- Pandora Butterfield
- Anna Smyth
- Amy McKelvey

A maximum of £1,000 could be applied for per application.

The total available budget was £4,040.

Applications totaled £10,549.

Pass mark was agreed at 60%.

Table 1 below provided a summary of the applications and the recommended awards.

Name of Organisation	Requested Amount	Project	Score	Amount Awarded
Donaghadee Community Dev Assoc	£1,000	Writing for wellbeing (creative writing course)	87	£1,000
Bangor Speech Festival	£1,000	Festival 24	87	£1,000
Valhalla Street Theatre	£885	Historical Walking Tour of Movilla Abbey Cemetery	85	£885
Hollywood Shared Town	£1,000	Music Social	66	£577.50
Kilcooley Women's Centre	£1,000	SNAP (Supporting Networking through Arts & Photography)	66	£577.50
Bangor Ladies Choir	£1,000	Choral Workshop	55	0
Boom!	£1,000	New Year Sketch Book Project	52	0
Ladybirds Childrens Services	£1,000	Apple Project Mural	52	0
St Patrick's Community Centre	£814	Seasonal Crafts	42	0
Lisbarnett and Lisbane Com Assoc.	£1,000	Tutor for Art Club	41	0
Camphill Community Glencraig	£850	Drama Workshops	0	0
Total	£10,549			£4,040

Five organisations scored above the pass mark. The three highest scoring applications were awarded the full amount that they had applied for.

The next two applications scored equally and so the panel decided to split the remaining budget between those two organisations awarding them £577.50 each. That took the total spend to £4,040.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the five successful applications and awards detailed in table 1, totalling £4,040. The next round of funding would be released in January 2024.

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

Councillor Irwin had a question in terms of the Holywood Shared Town and Kilcooley Women's Centre where the funding was split due to them having similar scores. The Head of Community and Culture did not have the information to hand but agreed to refer back to the Member directly.

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

16. GOOD RELATIONS ACTION PLAN 2023-2024
(Appendix XXIV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would recall that the Council's District Good Relations Action Plan was agreed at the Council meeting held on 22nd February 2023.

Normally funding for the Council's Good Relations Programme was provided by The Executive Office (75%) and match funded by the Council (25%). The award was made based on an assessment of an annual Action Plan which reflected the needs and priorities of the Borough, detailed in the Council's approved Good Relations Strategy (2022-25).

Following submission of the Plan the Council was notified that The Executive Office budget for 2023 – 2024 had been reduced and that that would impact funding to Councils. Subsequently and an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) was undertaken by the Department and Council responded to the consultation in relation to that. Council indicated that it was not supportive of any proposed cuts to the Good Relations grant.

On conclusion of the consultation process however, a letter of offer for 2023 – 2024 was received totalling £90,128.36 which equated to 53% of the budget, instead of 75%.

Therefore, the District Good Relations Action Plan 2023 – 2024 had to be amended to take into account the reduction in funding and therefore programmes delivered.

In discussion with TEO that had impacted in a reduction in funding of activities such as cultural expressions festivals, and cancelation, for this year, of the schools visit to the world war battlefields in Europe. Council officers would be pursuing a reinstatement of all funding for next year.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the attached updated Ards and North Down District Good Relations Action Plan 2023 – 2024.

Proposed by Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Irwin, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor W Irvine praised the important role played by Good Relations in keeping harmony across the Borough. He asked the Head of Community and Culture how she felt that the summer had gone in terms of the Cultural Expressions work being affected by the Northern Ireland Protocol and the Windsor Framework and how that influenced the views of the people in communities. The officer stated that the summer, in so far as it related to her teams work on cultural expressions, had been quiet. There had been a reduction in funding to groups but the frustration of that was directed to Stormont and not to the Council. Councillor W Irvine found that to be positive and encouraging.

Councillor Irwin had been disappointed that the budget was reduced and hoped when the Assembly was back functioning the situation would improve. She was happy to second the recommendation.

Councillor Adair congratulated the new Head of Community and Culture and wished her well. She also thanked the former officer and wished them both well for the future. Councillor Boyle offered the same sentiments and had heard that the Executive Office may be further reducing funding next year. Funding had been agreed last year but it had all be spent within the community.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Irwin, that the recommendation be adopted.

17. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

17.1. Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Adair, Councillor Douglas and Alderman McIlveen

That Council notes the increasing complaints regarding the poor condition and appearance of our cemeteries across the Borough and tasks officers to bring back a report on options to improve the maintenance of our cemeteries which are places of special significance to those who have lost loved ones.

Proposed by Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor Douglas, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Councillor Adair said that it was with some regret that he was bringing the Notice of Motion. He said that grief and death touched everyone at some point in their lives. The poor condition of cemeteries was a long-standing issue in his view. He received frequent complaints about the cemeteries at Kirkistown, Kircubbin and Greyabbey, where tyre marks were seen on the grass, grass was lying all over the graves and on headstones. That was very upsetting and officers had contributed to the grief and upset being felt. He believed that up until recently his pleas had fallen on deaf ears but the Head of Parks and Cemeteries had taken his concerns on board and for that he thanked him publicly.

He referred to two issues on the Ards Peninsula where he had received 167 complaints that constituents had never seen the cemetery looking worse. A contractor had been brought in at one stage and the situation had improved dramatically. He had visited Kirkistown cemetery during August and had spoken with constituents, some visibly upset and in tears at how the graveyard had been desecrated and he felt that was unacceptable. Graveyards were sacred places to be treated with dignity and respect but instead, for some, they had become a place of torment. Ornaments were being damaged too and people spent a lot of money on those. He was pleading with the Council to treat those areas with respect and care. He had heard from Members who represented other electoral areas and had heard similar stories from across the Borough about graveyards.

Councillor Douglas was grateful for the opportunity to second the Motion and thought that cemeteries should be places of solace but people were reporting that visits only increased their sadness with many areas looking like ploughed fields and baskets filled with empty beer bottles. She called for a report highlighting how the situation could be improved.

Councillor S Irvine wholeheartedly agreed and did not wish to 'bad mouth' those working in cemeteries, but that cost cutting should not be applied to those places. He referred also to a car being parked over a grave, and sometimes cemeteries not being opened on time.

Councillor Boyle agreed that it was a serious situation and reported that in St Patrick's parish in Portaferry people were paid to maintain those graveyards and the area looked like a bowling green. The Council was referring to the resting place of former ratepayers and they deserved to be treated with the same respect.

RECESS 9.00 pm

RECOMMENCED 9.10 pm

(Councillor Creighton left the meeting at 9.00 pm)

Councillor Ashe said that this was a much-needed Motion and that there seemed to be a systemic issue at play here and she hoped that the problem could be addressed. Alderman Cummings wanted to express his appreciation to staff who

responded well to issues when raised. He said it was swift and effective. But he also rose to support the Motion and agreed that the problem seemed to be systemic.

Councillor Adair thanked Members for their comments and believed that churches and parishes could manage cemeteries and that the Council should also be able to learn from that example. Finally, he mentioned that some graves at Kirkiston cemetery were sunken and needed to be topped up with soil, but the message was clear that cemeteries were special places.

AGREED.

18. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

(a) Update on the current position concerning what, if any, progress has been made on the re-opening of the Portaferry Sports Centre.

Councillor Boyle sought an update on the above matter.

The Head of Leisure Services said that Members would be aware that there was a problem in the main sports hall which was used by the Council and was shared with the local school who used it during the day and the Council ran courses in the evenings. When the problem was identified the facilities were closed and members of the facility were given the opportunity to use Ards Blair Mayne or facilities at Comber. Two weeks ago, the Council's estates department commissioned a visual inspection to see if concerns were real. The report was positive, and it suggested that the rest of the building was safe, and that the gym could reopen while the remaining issues would be dealt with by the school who owned the building. The Council would reopen its facilities on 16 October with reduced hours due to the problem of staff recruitment. Recruitment drives had taken place on four occasions and the Council had been unable to appoint a suitable member of staff in Portaferry.

Alderman Adair thanked the Director for his work and suggested that we progress the matter of the Market House with the community of St Molua. He asked if officers could pursue grants to help with the costs of repairing the floor. The Head of Leisure Services welcomed that suggestion and asked if the Member could advise of any contact details for such support to be provided.

Councillor Woods asked a number of questions concerning the process regarding potential outsourcing of leisure services including the Portaferry Sports Centre's involvement. The Director advised that as previously reported the Portaferry Sports Centre was one of the facilities under consideration and reminded the Members of the 'in confidence' nature of the details of the matter which were still under discussion. The current intention was to bring a report to a meeting of Council in November.

NOTED.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman Cummings, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the public/press be excluded from the meeting.

19. PEACEPLUS PARTNERSHIP MINUTES

(Appendix XXV)

****IN CONFIDENCE****

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 3 – Exemption relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.

A report presented to Community & Wellbeing detailing the confidential minutes of the PEACEPLUS Partnership meeting on 3rd August 2023
The report recommended that Council note the minutes.

The recommendation was agreed.

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

20. PCSP MINUTES

(Appendices XXVI & XXVII)

****IN CONFIDENCE****

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 3 – Exemption relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.

A report presented to Community & Wellbeing detailing the confidential minutes of the Ards and North Down Policing and Community Partnership held in private in Londonderry Park, Newtownards on 24th April 2023 and 19th June 2023.

The report recommended that Council note the minutes.

The recommendation was agreed.

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

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 9.33pm

Unclassified

185

ITEM 8.1**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	25 October 2023
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	12 October 2023
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Northern Ireland Economic Conference 2023
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Correspondence from Agenda NI Appendix 2 - Brochure

An invitation has been received from Agenda NI for Council representation at its Northern Ireland Economic Conference 2023.

The 2023 event is taking place on Wednesday 6th December at Hilton Templepatrick. The Conference is aimed at key decision makers and those across business and government as well as those who interact with the public sector in both policy advisory and service delivery or advocacy roles. The Conference is Northern Ireland's only economic analysis event that takes a high-level look at the performance of, and prospects for the local economy.

Speakers at the event include representatives from the Department for the Economy; the Nevin Economic Research Institute; Ulster University Economic Policy Centre; the Financial Times; the London School of Economics and Queen's University Belfast.

Not Applicable

186

Delegate fees are £165 + VAT per person with discounts for group bookings of three (10%), five (15%) and eight (20%) or more delegates.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council considers whether it wishes to nominate a Member(s) to attend the Northern Ireland Economic Conference.

From: Hope Graham
Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 2:34 PM
To: Services, Democratic <member.services@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk>
Subject: Your group booking at Northern Ireland Economic Conference 2023

Hi,

Hope you are well!

In previous years, Ards North and Down Borough Council has sent a group booking to the **Northern Ireland Economic Conference**.

The 2023 event is taking place on **Wednesday 6th December** at **Hilton Templepatrick**. Please see the website <https://www.nieconomic.agendani.com/> or attached brochure for further information.

The Northern Ireland Economic Conference is Northern Ireland's only economic analysis event that takes a high-level look at the performance of, and prospects for the local economy. The expert panel of speakers will have representatives from the Department for the Economy; the Nevin Economic Research Institute; Ulster University Economic Policy Centre; the Financial Times; the London School of Economics and Queen's University Belfast.

I wanted to check to see if you were planning to send any delegates this year?

The special discounted rate available to councils is **£165 + VAT = £198.00** total per person.

We also have group discounts available on top of this special rate, as follows:

3 or more attendees: 10% discount

5 or more attendees: 15% discount

8 or more attendees: 20% discount

Let me know if you would like any places reserved at the 2023 event.

Kind Regards,
Hope Graham
She/her

agendaNi

Digital | Events | Print

19a Maghaberry Road, Maghaberry, Co. Antrim, BT67 0JE

T: +44 (0)28 9261 9933

E: hope.graham@agendani.com

W: www.agendani.com



Annual Northern Ireland Economic Conference 2023



Wednesday 6th December
Hilton Hotel Templepatrick

Host local authority



An agendaNi event

agendaNi

Digital | Events | Print

@agendaNi #NIEconomic

Northern Ireland's economic summit

The Northern Ireland Economic Conference, now in its 28th year, is Northern Ireland's premier economic analysis event and is unique in being the only forum that takes a high level look at the performance of, and prospects for the local economy. It is firmly established as the annual summit for Northern Ireland's economic community, including policy makers and business leaders.

Conference overview

This year's conference takes place against a difficult economic and political backdrop. With no devolved administration the local economy faces economic headwinds on several fronts. High inflation still persists and the energy crisis is expected to continue well into the winter months, which has put a squeeze on living standards. Budgetary pressures mean that spending is constrained, at a time when Northern Ireland's economy aims to address long-standing issues such as being a laggard in terms of productivity, and having the highest rates of working age economic inactivity of any UK region. The response to these economic headwinds has been the 10X Economy strategy, targeting future high growth sectors of the economy. Expert speakers will discuss all the key issues and share their thoughts on the economic prospects for Northern Ireland.



Why attend?

- ✓ Expert local and visiting speakers
- ✓ Major economic summit
- ✓ Economic outlook and forecast
- ✓ Unique information presented
- ✓ Not-to-be-missed annual conference
- ✓ All sectors represented — government, business, third sector

Key issues to be addressed at the conference

- 01 **UK and global** economic outlook
- 02 Medium term economic outlook **for Northern Ireland**
- 03 **Addressing the** productivity gap
- 04 Impact of inflation **on growing the economy**
- 05 **Implementing the** 10X Economy strategy
- 06 Closing skills gaps **in the local economy**
- 07 The cost of living crisis: **Addressing the challenge**
- 08 Promoting innovation **in the economy**
- 09 **The economic opportunity** of net zero carbon technologies
- 10 **Tackling** economic inactivity



Sponsorship opportunities

There are still a small number of available sponsorship opportunities at this year's conference. Sponsorship of the annual Northern Ireland Economic Conference is an excellent way for organisations to raise their profile with a key audience of economic decision-makers and senior business leaders. For further details or to discuss how your organisation can benefit from close association with Northern Ireland's premier economic analysis event, **contact Lynda Millar on 028 9261 9933 or email lynda.millar@agendani.com.**



Programme

191

09:00 THE NORTHERN IRELAND ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Chair's welcome and introduction: **John Campbell**, Economics and Business Editor
BBC Northern Ireland

WELCOME **Mark Cooper**, Mayor, **Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council**

OPENING ADDRESS *Delivering the 10X Economic Strategy for Northern Ireland*
Paul Grocott, Deputy Secretary, Economic Strategy Group, **Department for the Economy**

UK ECONOMIC OUTLOOK *UK economic prospects*
Chris Giles, Economics Editor, **FT**

ECONOMIC FORECAST *The Northern Ireland medium term economic outlook*
Gareth Hetherington, Director, **Ulster University Economic Policy Centre**

PUBLIC FINANCES *Sustainable public finances and fiscal devolution*
Lisa Wilson, Senior Economist, **Nevin Economic Research Institute**

Questions & answers / Panel discussion

10:45 NETWORKING BREAK

11:15 THE LOCAL ECONOMY *Driving growth in the local economy*
Presented by **Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council**

SKILLS *The evolution of apprenticeships*
Sandra McNally, Professor of Economics, **University of Surrey** and Director, Centre for Economic Performance, **London School of Economics**

PRODUCTIVITY *Productivity: A long-standing challenge*
David Jordan, Lecturer in Economics, **Queen's Business School** and Research Associate
The Productivity Institute

GOODS TRADE *The structure of international goods trade for Ireland and Northern Ireland*
Janez Kren, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, **The Economic and Social Research Institute**

Questions & answers / Panel discussion

13:00 LUNCH BREAK

Programme

192

14:00 *The economic opportunity of Net Zero Tech*

NET ZERO

Richard Rodgers, Deputy Secretary, Head of Energy, **Department for the Economy**

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Social Enterprise on the island of Ireland

Helen Johnston, Senior Social Policy Analyst, **National Economic & Social Council**

DIGITAL ECONOMY

Enabling the Digital Economy for economic growth

Anne Sheehan, Chief Executive, **Microsoft Ireland** (invited)

PANEL DISCUSSION: THE COST OF LIVING: ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

Noyona Chundur, Chief Executive, **Consumer Council for Northern Ireland**

Kevin Higgins, Head of Policy, **Advice NI**

Paul Mac Flynn, Co-Director, **Nevin Economic Research Institute**

Kirsty McManus, Director, **IoD Northern Ireland**

Neil Johnston, Director, **Northern Ireland Retail Consortium** (invited)

16:15 CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY AND CONFERENCE CLOSE



SPEAKER PANEL

Northern Ireland's economic summit



John Campbell is Economics and Business Editor for **BBC Northern Ireland**, a position he has held since September 2013. Prior to that he was a senior BBC producer working across TV, radio and online with special responsibility for business coverage. He began his career on the Liverpool Daily Post and Echo.



Noyona Chundur was appointed Chief Executive of **The Consumer Council** in January 2021. She has extensive experience of consumer protection, economic development and arts and culture having successfully developed strategies at regional, national and international levels that deliver customer-centric business transformation. Noyona joined The Consumer Council from Invest Northern Ireland

where she was Head of Campaigns and Digital Solutions since 2006, joining the organisation in 2004. She led their communications strategy for Northern Ireland, winning multiple internationally recognised awards for marketing and digital innovation, and is also Chair of the Cathedral Quarter Arts Festival.



Chris Giles is a columnist at the **Financial Times** and has been its Economics Editor since 2004. Based in London he has a particular focus on trends in the world economy and in the UK. Previously at the Financial Times, he was the economics editorial writer. Before joining the FT in 2000, Chris was an economics correspondent at the BBC. He started his career in research, spending seven years as an economist for the Institute for Fiscal Studies.



Paul Grocott is the Deputy Secretary for Economic Strategy Group in the **Department for the Economy**. Paul's team led the development of the Department's 10X Economic Vision and is now working on developing the transformational policies that can achieve these outcomes and the organisational changes that are necessary to make it all happen. He is currently responsible for coordinating the programme of engagements for the Special Envoy to

Northern Ireland on Economic Affairs. Paul led the teams providing support to businesses during Covid and was responsible for Northern Ireland's 'High Street Scheme' that provided adults with £100 to spend in their local high streets. Paul is also the Department's Policy Champion which includes promoting and leading new policy development approaches.



Gareth Hetherington is the Director of the **Ulster University Economic Policy Centre**. The Centre is self-financing and carries out a broad range of economic policy focused research to inform Central and Local Government on key policy and strategy decisions. Typical areas of research cover skills, competitiveness, tax, community planning, economic forecasting and more recently COVID recovery. Gareth works

closely with senior stakeholders in the public and private sector, providing briefings to NI Executive Ministers, evidence to Assembly Committees and engages with senior business leaders. He also provides regular economic commentary in the media. Separately Gareth is the non-executive chair of the South Eastern Regional College (SERC) and is a member of both the High Streets Task Force and the newly established Northern Ireland Skills Council.



Kevin Higgins is Head of Policy and Research at **Advice NI**. He has worked in the advice sector in Northern Ireland for over 30 years, both as an advice worker with an independent advice centre (Advice Officer, Ballynaveigh Community Development Association), with a CAB (Manager, Falls Road Bureau), with Law Centre NI (Legal Adviser) and latterly in a support capacity in his role within Advice NI. Advice NI is the

umbrella organisation for the independent advice network in Northern Ireland – annually dealing with over 250,000 enquiries mainly on social security benefits, housing, consumer, employment and debt issues. A large part of his work revolves around addressing social policy issues raised by Advice NI members and responding to consultations. Welfare reform has taken up much of his time since the Coalition Government came to power in 2010, raising awareness of the impacts of the social security benefit cuts and the social security benefit reforms. He was part of the Welfare Reform Mitigations Working Group chaired by Professor Eileen Evason and he is currently an independent member of the DfC NI Joint Standards Committee.



Helen Johnston is a Senior Social Policy Analyst at the **Irish National Economic and Social Council (NESI)**. She was previously Director of the Irish Combat Poverty Agency. A native of Northern Ireland, Helen has previous experience working in the Northern Ireland civil service. She was chair of the Centre for Cross Border Studies from 2011 to 2021. Helen has qualifications in Environmental Science and Town and Country Planning, a Master's in Business Administration, and a Doctorate in Governance.



David Jordan is a Lecturer in Economics at **Queen's Business School**, and a Research Associate at **The Productivity Institute**. He is currently examining the reasons behind low levels of productivity in Northern Ireland, as part of the work of the Northern Ireland Productivity Forum. His wider research focuses on regional and public economics, alongside economic and financial history. He is particularly interested in the economics of devolution, including how institutions and policy have shaped the long-run performance of Northern Ireland's economy.



Janez Kren is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the **Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI)** in Dublin and a Fellow at Trinity College Dublin. His research primarily focuses on international trade and applied econometrics. Prior to his current positions he was a doctoral researcher at KU Leuven in Belgium, worked as a consultant for the World Bank and was a visiting researcher at Loughborough University. He has published peer-reviewed research on topics related to Ireland, the UK, and European economy.



Paul Mac Flynn is co-director of the **Nevin Economic Research Institute** and is based in the Belfast office. In addition to managing the Belfast office he has co-responsibility for the NERI's research programme and for its strategic direction. He leads on the NERI's analysis of the Northern Ireland economy along with all research into the impact of the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union. Other research areas include regional productivity, the all-island economy and the future of work. He is a graduate of University College Dublin with a BA in Economics and Politics and the University of Bristol with an MSc in Economics and Public Policy, specialising in the economic impacts of political devolution in the UK.



Sandra McNally is a Professor of Economics at the **University of Surrey**. She is Director of the Education and Skills Programme at the Centre for Economic Performance, **London School of Economics**. She also directs the Centre for Vocational Education Research (funded by DfE from 2015 to 2020). Her research interests include economic evaluation of government policies in schools and further education and labour market returns to education and training. She is a co-editor of the *Economics of Education Review*.



Richard Rodgers is Head of Energy at the **Department for the Economy** where he led the development of the recently published Northern Ireland Executive's Energy Strategy – The Path to Net Zero Energy. He has almost 35 years' experience in the energy industry, including British Gas for eight years, Phoenix Natural Gas for 12, as MD (International) at Eaga for five years (responsible for the delivery of fuel poverty programmes for Governments across the world), five years as Strategic Advisor (Energy) at the Strategic Investment Board and for the past three years as Head of Energy in the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland. Richard was also a non-executive director on the Board of the Utility Regulator for nine years (ending in March 2019).



Lisa Wilson is a Senior Economist at the **Nevin Economic Research Institute** and is based in the Belfast office. Her main research interests lie in the areas of labour markets, income distribution, poverty, public expenditure, living standards and well-being. Since taking up her position in the NERI Lisa has been among other things carrying out work concerned with job quality and its economic and social importance, the future of work, the gendered nature of employment, and housing and its impact for living standards in Northern Ireland. Lisa is a native of Donegal, and a graduate of Ulster University and Queen's University, Belfast. Lisa completed her PhD in Queen's University, Belfast focusing on income inequality and well-being.



agendaNi

Digital | Events | Print

19a Maghaberry Road
Maghaberry Co. Antrim BT67 0JE
Email: info@agendani.com
#NIEconomic

Unclassified

196

ITEM 9

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	25 October 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Planning
Date of Report	09 October 2023
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Public Engagement Survey- Department for Infrastructure (DFI) on 'Eastern Transport Plan'
Attachments	Appendix 1 - DFI/Atkins Presentation to Elected Members and CLT - July 2023 Appendix 2 - DFI Website Content Preamble for Engagement Survey Appendix 3 Copy of blank Questionnaire/Survey Appendix 4 Draft response to Questionnaire/Survey

Background

Members shall be aware through a report that was presented 'for noting' to the Place and Prosperity Committee (Item 5 October 2023) that DFI had written to the Council to announce a public engagement survey.

The Department for Infrastructure (DFI) is currently preparing a new transport plan which it envisages will set the framework for 'making transport policy and investment decisions up until 2035'. The 'Eastern Transport Plan' (ETP) 2035, until recently referred to as the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP), covers five council

Not Applicable

197

areas and will also support the preparation of the Local Policy Plans for these councils:

- Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
- Ards and North Down Borough Council
- Belfast City Council
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

Detail

Officials from DFI and Atkins (the consultant commissioned by DFI to produce the transport plan) invited all Elected Members and the Council's Corporate Leadership Team to an engagement event in July 2023. A copy of the DFI/Atkins presentation is attached at Appendix 1.

The ETP 2035 aims to *'ensure that the transport network meets the needs of the residents and businesses in the ETP area as well as people working and visiting the area, both now and into the future'*.

DFI states that at this early stage of ETP 2035 development, it wants to understand views on:

- *'The problems we need to solve (challenges)*
- *The end goal we want to achieve (our vision)*
- *How we will get there (our objectives)'*

The engagement survey published by DFI is primarily targeted at individuals although organisations are able to participate. The survey questions are typically generic and high-level in a reflection of the aspirational elements of the Eastern Transport Plan and as such, there is a lack of operational detail at this stage on specific policies, proposals and initiatives that will be brought forward as the Plan develops.

A copy of the website preamble for the engagement survey is attached at Appendix 2. A blank copy of the questionnaire/survey is attached at Appendix 3.

Given that the engagement survey is primarily targeted at individuals it is suggested that rather than completing the survey, that the Council submits a written response outlining any issues arising from this initial engagement and the approach proposed. A draft response prepared by Planning Service is attached at Appendix 4.

Members may also wish to respond on an individual or party-political basis.

The 'ETP' document can be accessed on the DFI website at <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/eastern-transport-plan-etp-2035>

and the engagement survey portal accessed at:

<https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/dfi-1/eastern-transport-plan-consultation/>

Not Applicable

198

Responses are requested to be submitted via Citizen Space (online consultation portal) no later than 5pm on 30 October 2023. Comments received after this deadline will not be accepted. Members shall note the deadline is ahead of call-in period for October's Council Meeting.

It is suggested that the Council could offer broad support for the approach as set out by DFI in the engagement, however there will need to be more detailed consideration of the specific policies and proposals that emerge under advance formulation of the ETP Plan and how these potentially impact. It is understood that there shall be further opportunities for the Council and the public to provide formal responses to issues as the preparation of the ETP progresses e.g. consultation at the Draft Transport Plan stage.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council agrees the draft response to be submitted by 30 October 2023 (in advance of the closing of the call-in period).



BELFAST METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT PLAN



Department for
Infrastructure
An Roinn
Bonneagair
www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk



Contents



Department for

Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagair

www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

- BMTTP background
- Overview of approach
- Delivery timescales and phasing
- BMTTP Launch
- Draft Vision, Objectives and Guiding Principles
- Ongoing work





Background





Department for

Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagairwww.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Background

A new suite of Transport Plans is being prepared to set out the framework for transport policy and investment decisions up until 2035.

The Local Transport Planning process is being carried out in parallel with the Local Development Plan (LDP) Process.

7 Local Transport Plans (LTP) are being prepared.

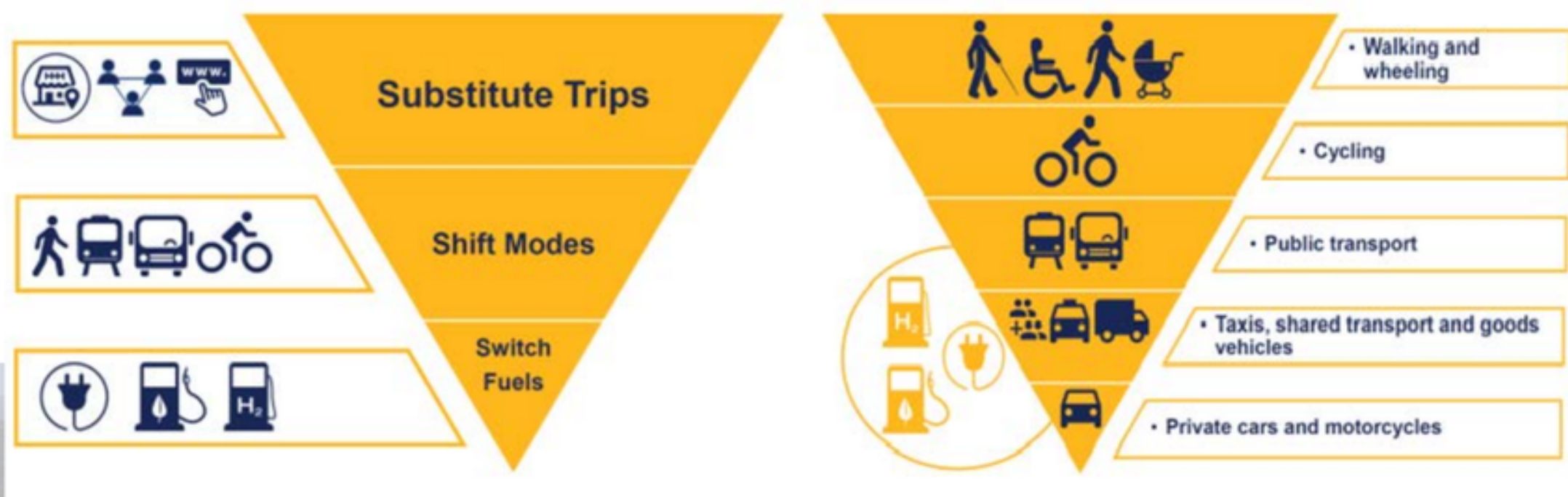
- Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP)
- North West Transport Plan (NWTP)
- 5 x Sub-Regional Transport Plans





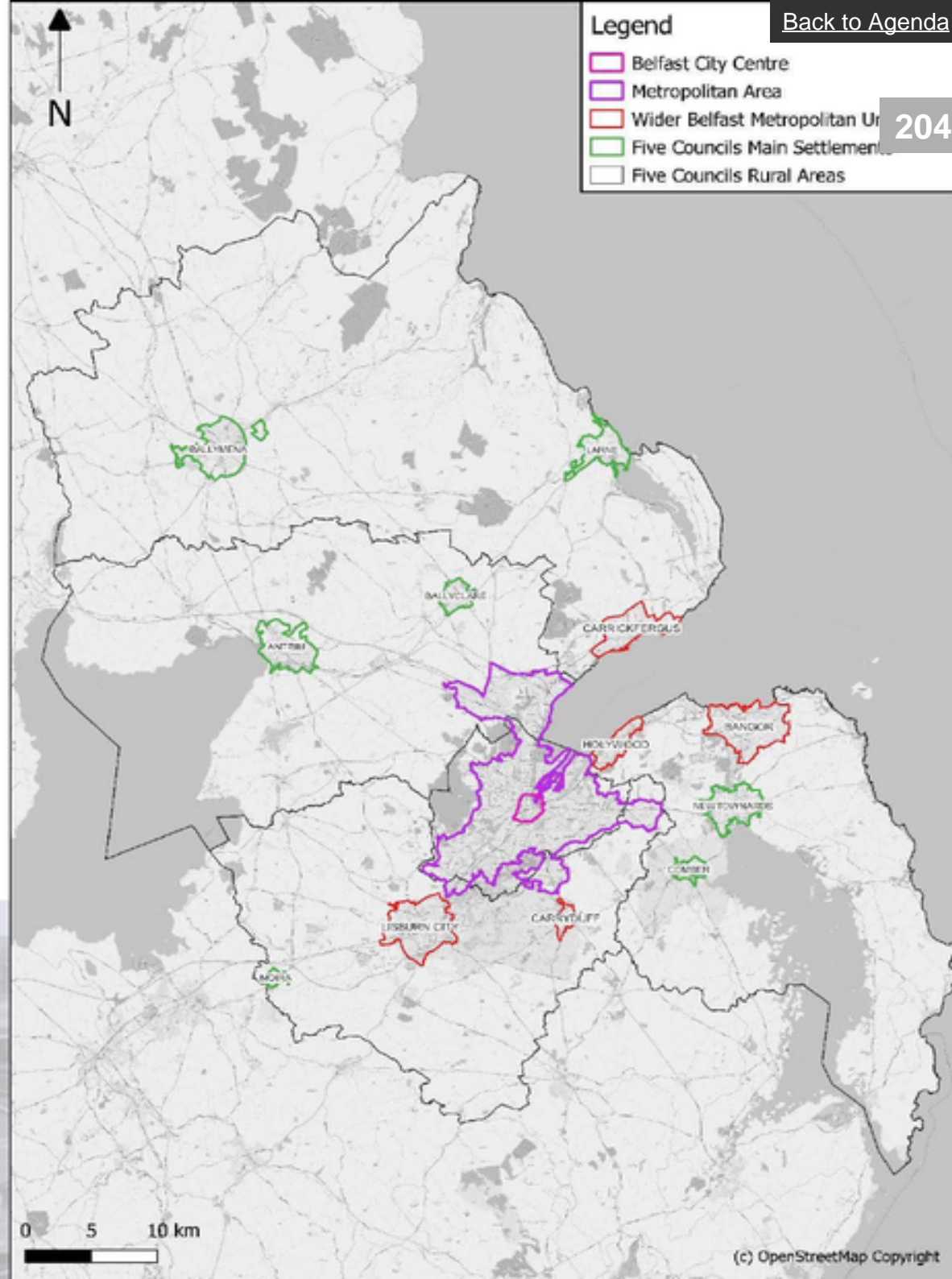
Doing Things Differently

Climate Change - Societal Change - Energy Change - Constrained Budgets



BMTP - Area

- Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (ANBC);
- Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC);
- Belfast City Council (BCC);
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC); and,
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEABC).





Approach



Overview of the Approach to the BMTP



Stage	Description	Outcomes	ISA Stages	Engagement Consultation
0	Project inception and approach to stakeholder engagement	Preparation of Work Package Initiation Report and Communications Plan		
1	Launch	Identification of problems & opportunities, vision & objectives, BMTP Guiding Principles and public engagement	A Scoping	Public
2	Development	Baseline analysis Long list development Long list appraisal to identify short list Scenario assessments Preferred scenario identification	B Develop, Refine and Appraise Options	Stakeholder
3	Drafting of Plan	ANDC – Draft BMTP ANBC – Draft BMTP BCC – Draft BMTP LCCC – Draft BMTP MEABC – Draft BMTP Full draft BMTP	C Assess the effects of Draft BMTP, ISA Reporting	Public
4	Finalised Plan	Finalisation of BMTP following outcome of public consultation	D Finalise ISA	
5	Monitoring and evaluation	Monitoring and evaluation of BMTP – specific intervals to be confirmed		



Delivery Timescales and Phasing





Department for

Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagairwww.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Delivery Timescales and Phasing

The BMTP will be delivered in iterative phases, linked to the five council's LPP publication timescales

The first draft iteration of the BMTP will set out all the key aspects associated with the transport network and local interventions for the Belfast Metropolitan Urban Area (BMUA). It is anticipated for publication in 2024.

Successive drafts will provide the evidence base the 'five councils' require to support their LDP LPP, with the final, complete BMTP anticipated for publication in 2026.





Department for
Infrastructure
An Roinn
Bonneagair
www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

BMTP Launch





Department for

Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagairwww.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Launch Purpose and Content

First public engagement exercise will be undertaken in August.

The purpose is to:

- Raise awareness of the BMTP
- Ascertain the views and opinions of members of the public and stakeholders on the planned direction of the BMTP (draft Vision, Objectives and Guiding Principles)
- Gain insights into transport problems and opportunities for consideration during baselining and optioneering

Delivered online, hosted on dedicated DfI webpage, with views captured in an online survey. Offline materials will be available on request.





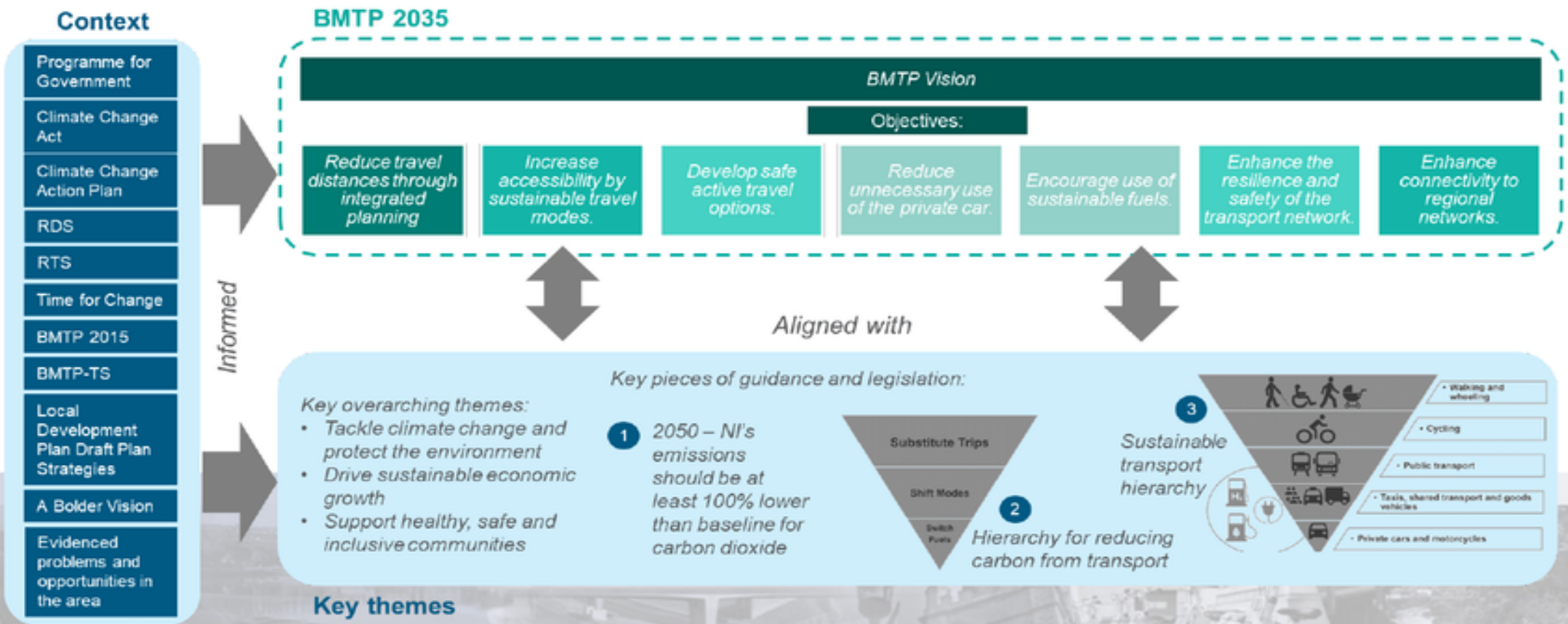
Draft Vision, Objectives & Guiding Principles



Development of Vision and Objectives



Department for
Infrastructure
An Roinn
Bonneagair
www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk



Draft Vision and Objectives



Department for

Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagairwww.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

213

Deliver an integrated Plan to enhance and re-balance transport networks in favour of sustainable, efficient modes, which connects communities creating an attractive, inclusive and safe economic region for all by delivering carbon reduction, improving air quality, enhancing the built and natural environment and facilitating healthy and sustainable travel choices over unnecessary private car travel

Reduce travel distances by promoting safe, inclusive and connected neighbourhoods, supported by integrated planning.

Deliver a reduction in carbon emissions by increasing accessibility for all to jobs, services and recreation by sustainable travel modes.

Promote healthy and inclusive communities by developing safe active travel options that respect the local built and natural environment.

Reduce unnecessary use of the private car by implementing effective demand management measures.

Improve air quality and the environment by encouraging the use of sustainable modes and vehicles which utilise sustainable fuels.

Enhance the resilience and safety of the transport network to support the economy and meet the challenges of climate change.

Support the efficient, sustainable movement of goods and people and enhance connectivity to regional networks including access to ports and airports.

Guiding Principles



Department for
Infrastructure
An Roinn
Bonneagair

www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

	Category	Definition
Place	People places	Neighbourhood areas including residential streets that prioritise active travel
	Traffic free routes	Traffic-free transport route facilitating active travel connections, including along greenways and blueways
	People and movement places	Mixed use places that serve the local community
	City and town centres	Destination people places that also facilitate high volumes of access movements
Movement	Connecting movement routes	Routes that facilitate connecting movement into urban areas
	Quality mass movement routes	Routes that facilitate high volume movement into urban areas, focused on public transport
	Strategic movement routes	Routes that facilitate movement between the local and regional strategic network

Routes that facilitate connecting movement into urban areas

- ✓ Traffic speeds max 30mph
- ✓ Max 1 lane of general traffic in each direction
- ✓ Cycle lanes / priority where needed
- ✓ High quality bus lanes in both directions (where possible)
- ✓ Accessible bus waiting facilities
- ✓ Limited on-street parking provision
- ✓ High quality pedestrian space and suitable crossing facilities where required
- ✓ Carefully planned provisions for loading and unloading



Connecting movement places

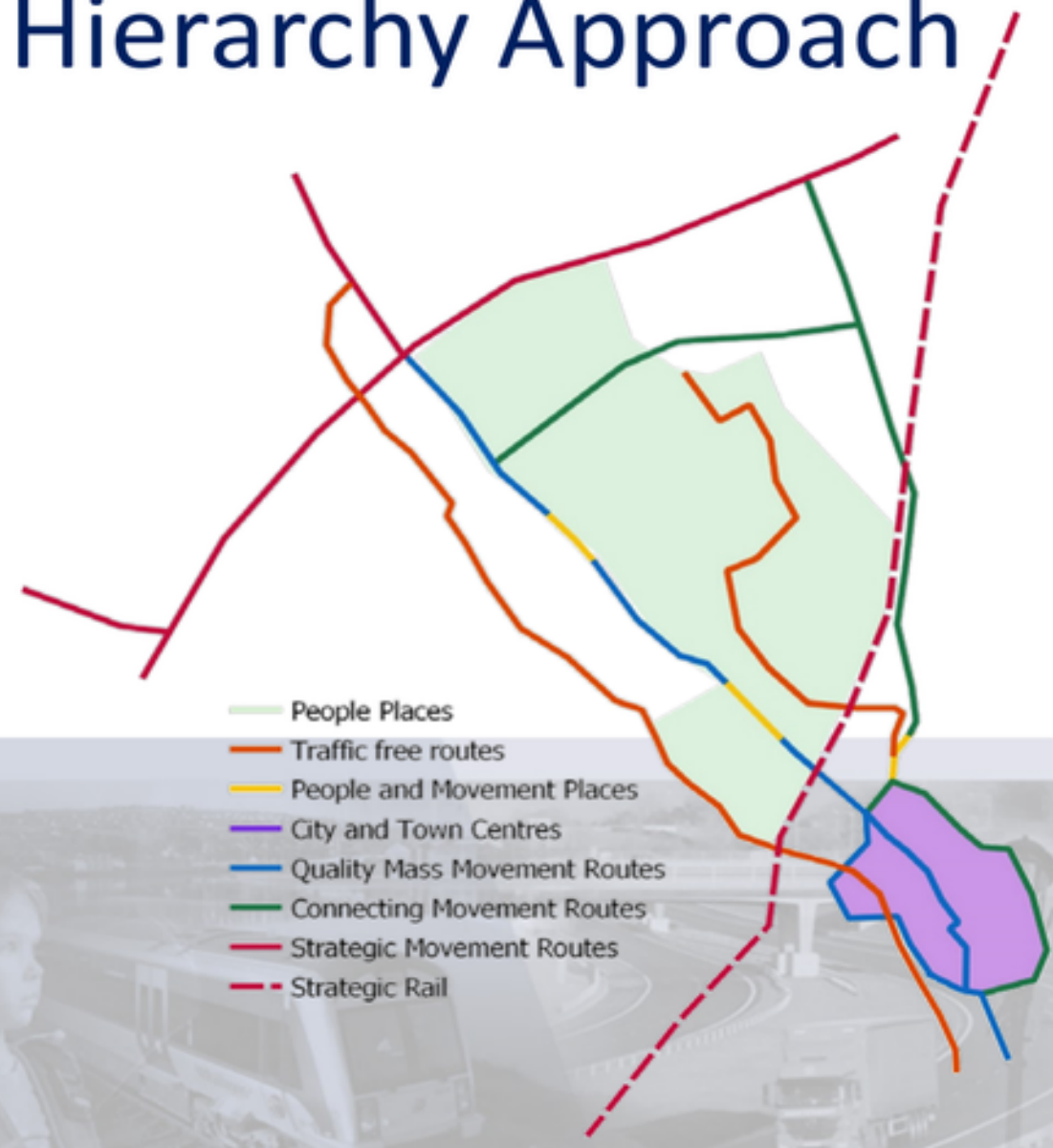
Routes that facilitate high volume movement into urban areas, focused on public transport

- ✓ Traffic speeds of max 30mph
- ✓ Max 1 lane of general traffic in each direction
- ✓ High quality bus lanes in both directions
- ✓ Accessible bus and P&R waiting facilities
- ✓ Cycle lanes / priority where needed
- ✓ Carefully managed on-street parking
- ✓ High quality pedestrian space and suitable crossing facilities
- ✓ Loading and unloading restrictions



Quality mass movement routes

Transport Network Hierarchy Approach



The seven guiding principle categories will be applied to the transport network across the BMTF area in order to identify priorities by travel mode and geography.

It will also assist decision makers in terms of which modal intervention shall be prioritised on which elements of the transport network.





Ongoing Work





Department for

Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagairwww.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Ongoing Work

Preparing for public Launch exercise, planned for mid-summer.

Ongoing technical baselining and optioneering, currently focused on Belfast city centre and wider Metropolitan Area.

Continuation of engagement with the ANDBC LDP Team in relation to the Bangor and Holywood Transport Network Hierarchies.

Ongoing stakeholder engagement.

Planned publication of draft BMTP to support ANDBC's LPP in line with the LDP timetable.



Eastern Transport Plan 2035

DfI are currently preparing a new transport plan which will set the framework for making transport policy and investment decisions up until 2035. The Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035, previously known as the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP), covers five council areas and will also support the preparation of the Local Development Plans for these councils.

2023 Launch

You can provide your views on the draft Vision and Objectives for the ETP between 4 September and 30 October 2023 at: <https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/dfi-1/eastern-transport-plan-consultation>, or by contacting DfI Transport Planning & Modelling Unit on 0800 0541 875 or at TPMU@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk. Please read on for more information.

Introduction

The new ETP encompasses the following 'five councils':

- Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council (ANBC);
- Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC);
- Belfast City Council (BCC);
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC); and
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council (MEABC)

ETP 2035 aims to ensure that the transport network meets the needs of the people and businesses living, working and visiting the ETP area, both now and into the future.

The ETP area and each of the council boundaries are shown in the map below.



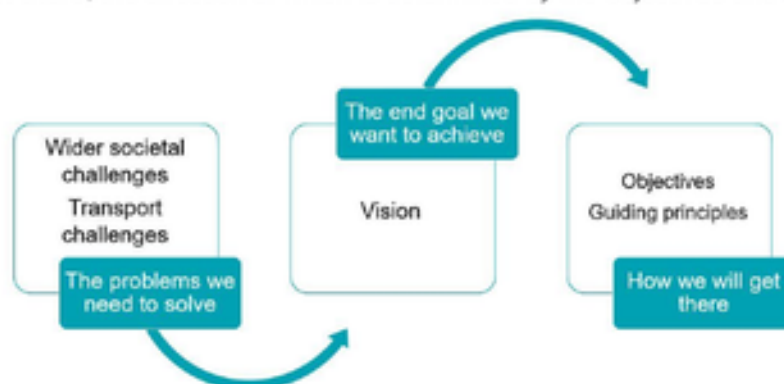
Our approach

Transport planning practice is no longer focused on attempting to predict the future in terms of movement demands and providing the required new roads and public transport services. We are facing a very uncertain future where we probably need to make radical changes that address issues arising from the environmental emergency and other societal problems related to our historical over reliance on cars. We are therefore taking a 'vision and validate' approach to the development of ETP 2035.

This proactive approach starts with an agreed vision of what we are trying to achieve and then checks if the future transport networks will assist in its delivery. The approach shifts the focus to creating places for people, built around a healthy, safe and carbon neutral vision for the future.

At this early stage of ETP 2035 development, we want to understand your views on:

- **The problems we need to solve** based on the existing context, both in terms of wider challenges faced by society and also the specific transport challenges you face every day.
- **The end goal we want to achieve**, the Vision, which will be informed by the existing challenges and the way in which we aim to address them.
- **How we will get there**, the direction of which is determined by the objectives and guiding principles.



Context (the problems)

Whilst the need for transport arises from where we live and choose to go about day to day activities, transport infrastructure itself also shapes the current and future quality of our environment and towns and cities. In developing the ETP 2035 we therefore need to reflect on the wider challenges for transport whilst recognising the current shortcomings of the transport networks.

Wider societal challenges

We know that ETP 2035 needs to reflect upon and help to combat wider economic, social and environmental challenges for the area. In order to ensure that ETP 2035 complements and supports wider DfI and council policy direction, the scoping of ETP 2035 has been informed by information set out across a range of other sources and policy.

Our review of this wider context confirmed four key overarching themes, echoed throughout local, regional and national policy documents, to be reflected within ETP 2035. Transport has a clear role to play against each of these themes:

Tackle climate change

The Climate Change Act requires DfI to publish a sectoral plan for transport which contributes towards national carbon emission reduction requirements. The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) outline that transport sector emissions need to fall 43% from 2019 to 2030¹.

Protect the built and natural environment

Pollution from vehicles contributes to poor local air quality and the construction of roads and railways can harm the built or natural environment.

Drive sustainable economic growth

Ensuring that transport enables economic, housing and employment growth, whilst improving the environment, is a key priority for all five councils as well as DfI.

¹ <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/advice-report-the-path-to-a-net-zero-northern-ireland/>

Support healthy, safe and inclusive communities

The Programme for Government draft Outcomes Framework² expresses nine key societal outcomes which aims to bring a new focus to deliver lasting, real and positive change in people's lives. The role of transport is central to healthy, safe and inclusive communities.

Transport challenges

In 2020, DfI published the findings of a Transport Study of the five councils that make up the ETP area (formerly the BMTP area). The purpose of the Transport Study was to set out an objective, evidence-based assessment of current and future transport issues in the context of the councils' growth ambitions.

The Transport Study identified a range of issues in the current transport networks recommended for consideration as part of ETP, in addition to the wider challenges previously outlined. Full details of the Transport Study findings can be viewed [here](#), while the network shortcomings are summarised as follows:



Draft ETP 2035 Vision (the end goal) and Objectives (the how)

The Draft Vision and Objectives have been developed collaboratively with key stakeholders to represent ETP 2035's aspirations. A series of seven guiding principles, which aim to bring the vision and objectives to life, have also been defined.

As well as aligning the vision and objectives with wider policy, we also want to make sure that the people who use the transport network in the ETP area can share their views on the draft vision and objectives. You can do this through the feedback form³ from 4 September to 30 October 2023.

ETP 2035 Draft Vision:

Deliver an integrated Plan to enhance and re-balance transport networks in favour of sustainable, efficient modes, which connect communities creating an attractive, inclusive and safe economic region for all by delivering carbon reduction, improving air quality, enhancing the built and natural environment and facilitating healthy and sustainable travel choices over unnecessary private car travel.

² <https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/programme-government-pfg-2021>

³ <https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/dfi-1/eastern-transport-plan-consultation/>

ETP 2035 Draft Objectives:

<p>1. Reduce travel distances by promoting safe, inclusive and connected neighbourhoods, supported by integrated planning.</p>	<p>2. Deliver a reduction in carbon emissions by increasing accessibility for all to jobs, services and recreation by sustainable travel modes.</p>	<p>3. Promote healthy and inclusive communities by developing safe active travel options that respect the local built and natural environment.</p>	<p>4. Reduce unnecessary use of the private car by implementing effective demand management measures.</p>
<p>5. Improve air quality and the environment by encouraging the use of sustainable modes and vehicles which utilise sustainable fuels.</p>	<p>6. Enhance the resilience and safety of the transport network to support the economy and meet the challenges of climate change.</p>	<p>7. Support the efficient, sustainable movement of goods and people and enhance connectivity to regional networks including access to ports and airports.</p>	

To read about our proposed objectives in more detail, please visit our website⁴ or see Appendix A.

Guiding principles

Key to the development of new transport networks integrated with land use is the understanding that all roads and streets have, to some degree, the dual functions of "movement" and "place".

- Place = part of a defined local centre and contains key attractors for people to spend time in.
- Movement = part of a connection and will it contain a high number of through people-movements throughout the day.

Seven categories of road and street have been identified ranging from "People Places" where the place predominates to "Strategic Movement Routes" where movement is essentially the sole function.



The seven categories defined will be spatially applied to the transport network across the ETP area in order to identify priorities by travel mode and geography, which will support option development when we come to identifying transport schemes to recommend through ETP 2035. An example of this, showing the guiding principle categories applied to a fictional transport network is shown below.

It is acknowledged that there is no 'one size fits all' approach for the varied and dynamic region covered by ETP 2035, and therefore flexibility in the application of the guiding principles characteristics across different geographies is anticipated. However, by applying the overarching principles defined within these wherever possible, the resulting ETP should indeed 'turn the curve' towards a focus on people and place as opposed to major infrastructure.

⁴ <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/etp-objectives>



Each guiding principle category is defined as illustrated below. A key for understanding the elements contained within these guiding principle illustrations is provided firstly below:

GUIDING PRINCIPLE CATEGORY

Definition

A bespoke **'modal hierarchy'** which indicates the priority order in which transport modes will be considered and favoured within each area.

Real world examples that demonstrate the application of the types of transport interventions that may be considered

Illustrative examples of the potential effects of the types of transport interventions that align with our draft vision and objectives that may be recommended as a result of ETP 2035.

REAL WORLD EXAMPLE

ALTERNATIVE VIEW

In some cases, an **alternative view** on the measures may be considered. For examples, in cases where physical space does not allow for all of the elements contained within the main image.



PEOPLE PLACES

Neighbourhood areas including residential streets that prioritise active travel

Cycle-friendly street design and high quality storage is provided across the area.

Convenient access to wider transport network, including **bus** and **rail** services is supported.

On street **parking** is carefully planned.

High quality public realm, including green, community-focused spaces to **walk, wheel, rest** and play.

Low speed **car** and **van** movements are permitted for access to homes and services.

Walking & Wheeling

Cycling

Bus

Car

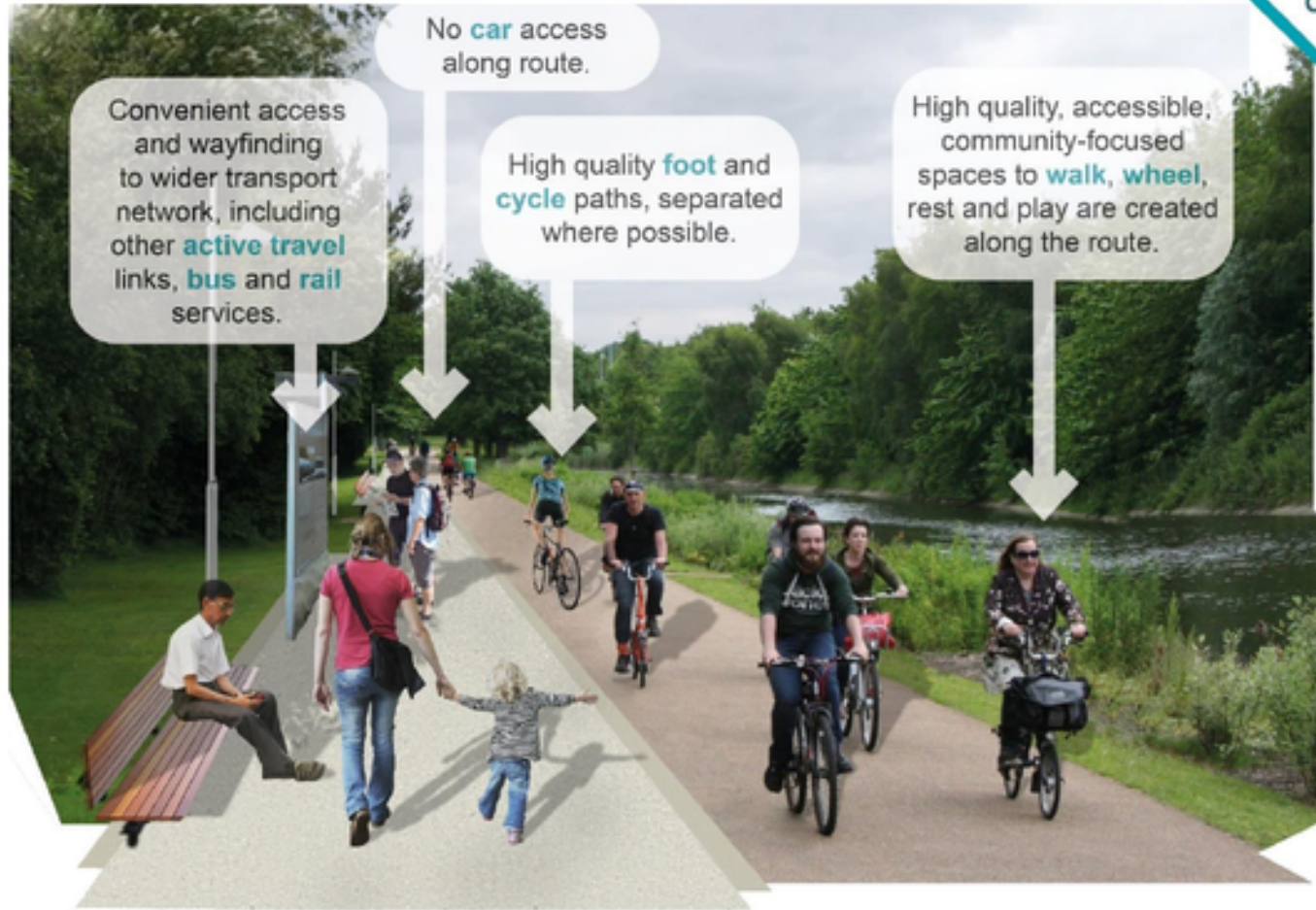
CYCLE-FRIENDLY STREETS IN CARDIFF

LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS IN CAMBRIDGE

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT IN LONDON

TRAFFIC FREE ROUTES

Traffic-free transport route facilitating active travel connections, including along greenways



Walking & Wheeling

Cycling



ACTIVE TRAVEL ROUTES IN BELFAST



ACTIVE TRAVEL ROUTES BETWEEN DUBLIN AND GALWAY



PUBLIC TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY IN KINGSTON UPON THAMES

PEOPLE AND MOVEMENT PLACES

Mixed use places that serve the local community

High quality, inclusive streetscape and prioritised crossing facilities make the area an attractive place to **walk, wheel**, shop and socialise.

Loading and unloading restrictions and parking is carefully managed.

High quality, two-way **bus** lanes and priority at junctions. Accessible stopping and waiting facilities with accurate real-time information displays.

Cycle lanes where space permits, otherwise bikes have shared access to bus lanes.

Gateway features to signify transition into neighbourhood area.

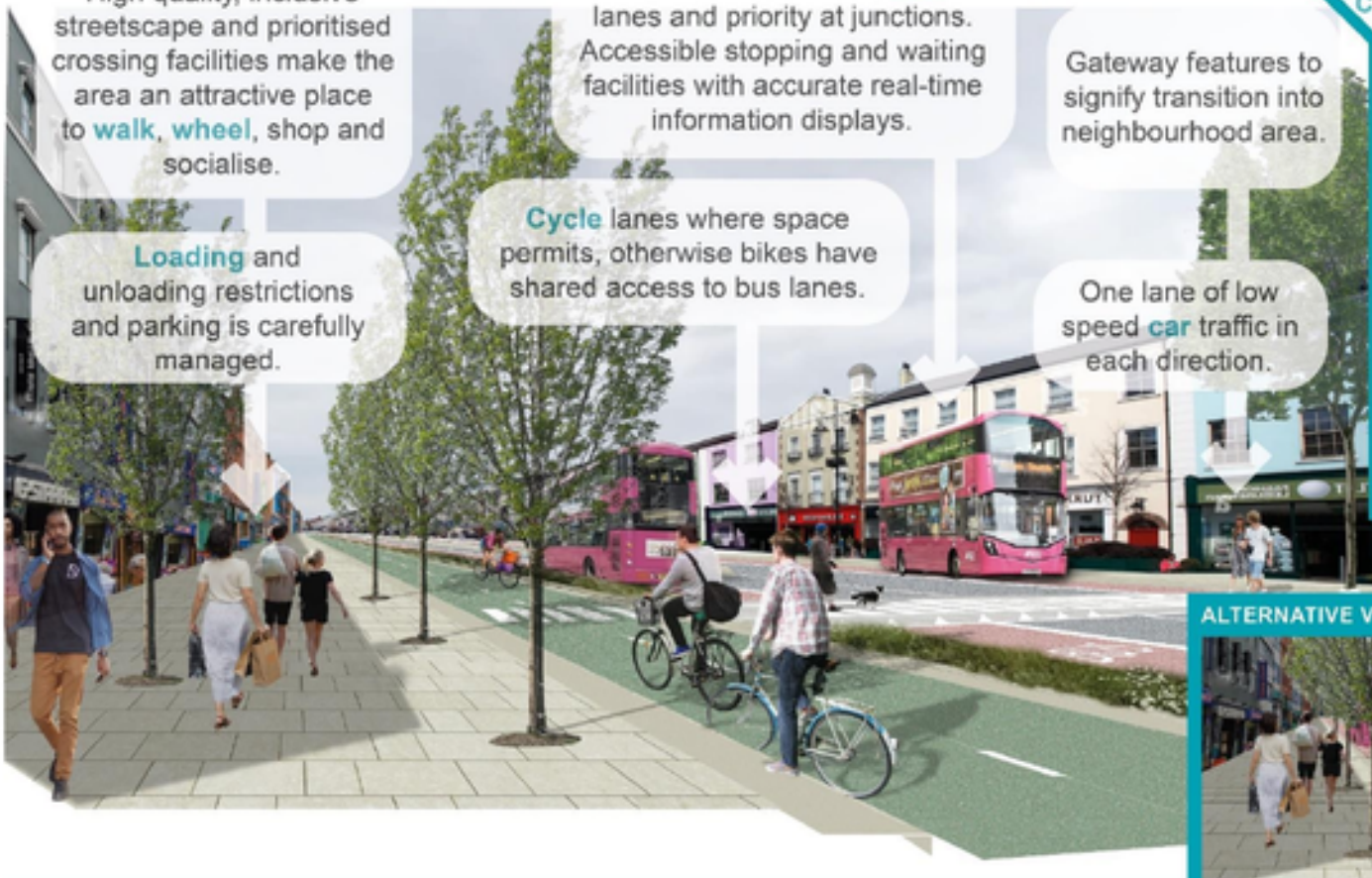
One lane of low speed **car** traffic in each direction.



HIGH QUALITY ACTIVE TRAVEL FACILITIES IN GLASGOW



HIGH STREET AREA IN AMSTERDAM



In areas where physical space is more limited, shared bus and bike lanes may be required

CITY / TOWN CENTRES

Destination people places that also facilitate high volumes of access



Convenient access and wayfinding to wider transport network, including **bus** and **rail** services.

High quality multi-use streets that prioritise **pedestrians, cyclists** and **public transport**.

Loading and unloading restrictions and managed blue badge parking. **Car parking** supply to be carefully managed.

High quality connecting streets that accommodate a number of uses and create safe and attractive places to **walk, wheel, rest** and play.

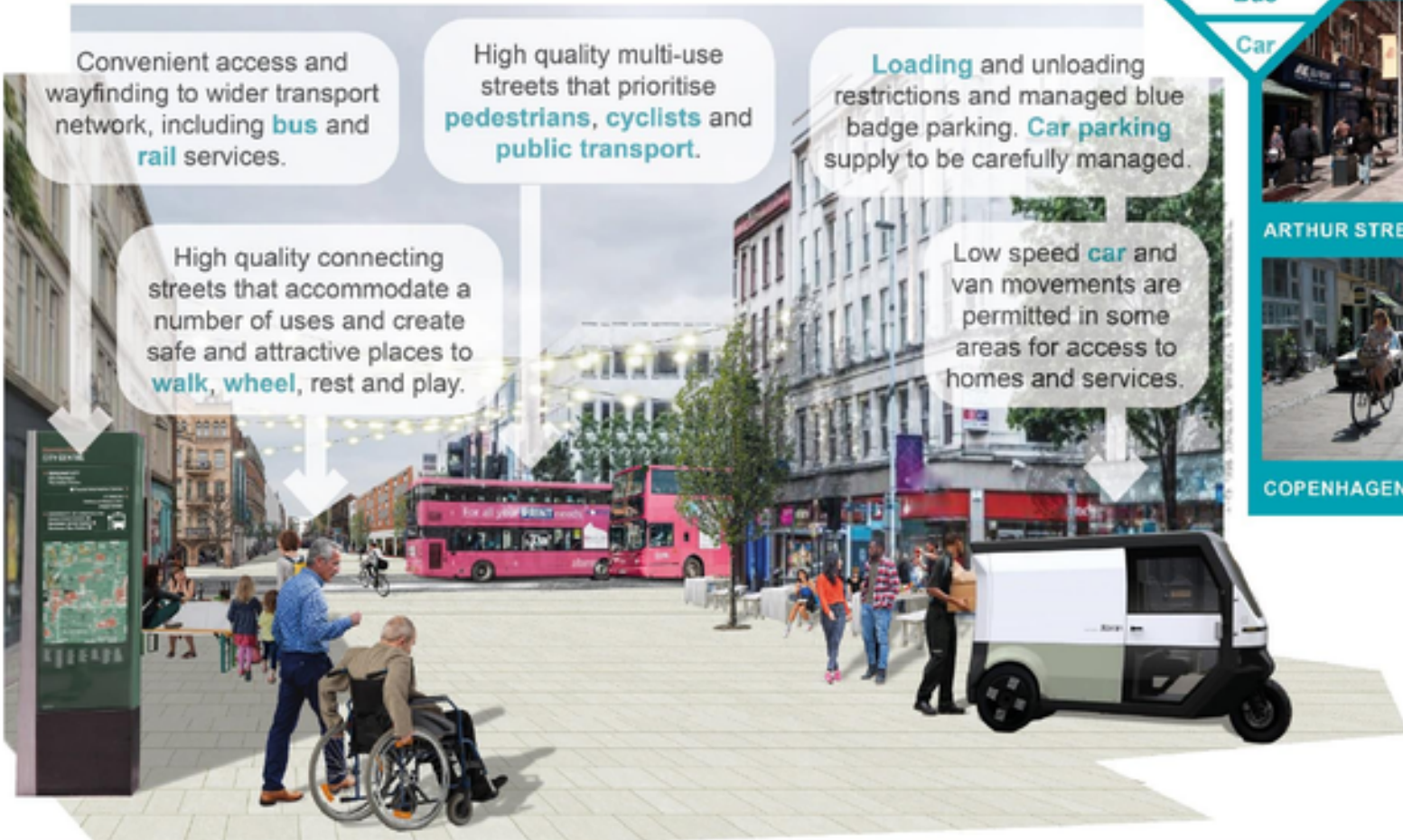
Low speed **car** and van movements are permitted in some areas for access to homes and services.



ARTHUR STREET IN BELFAST

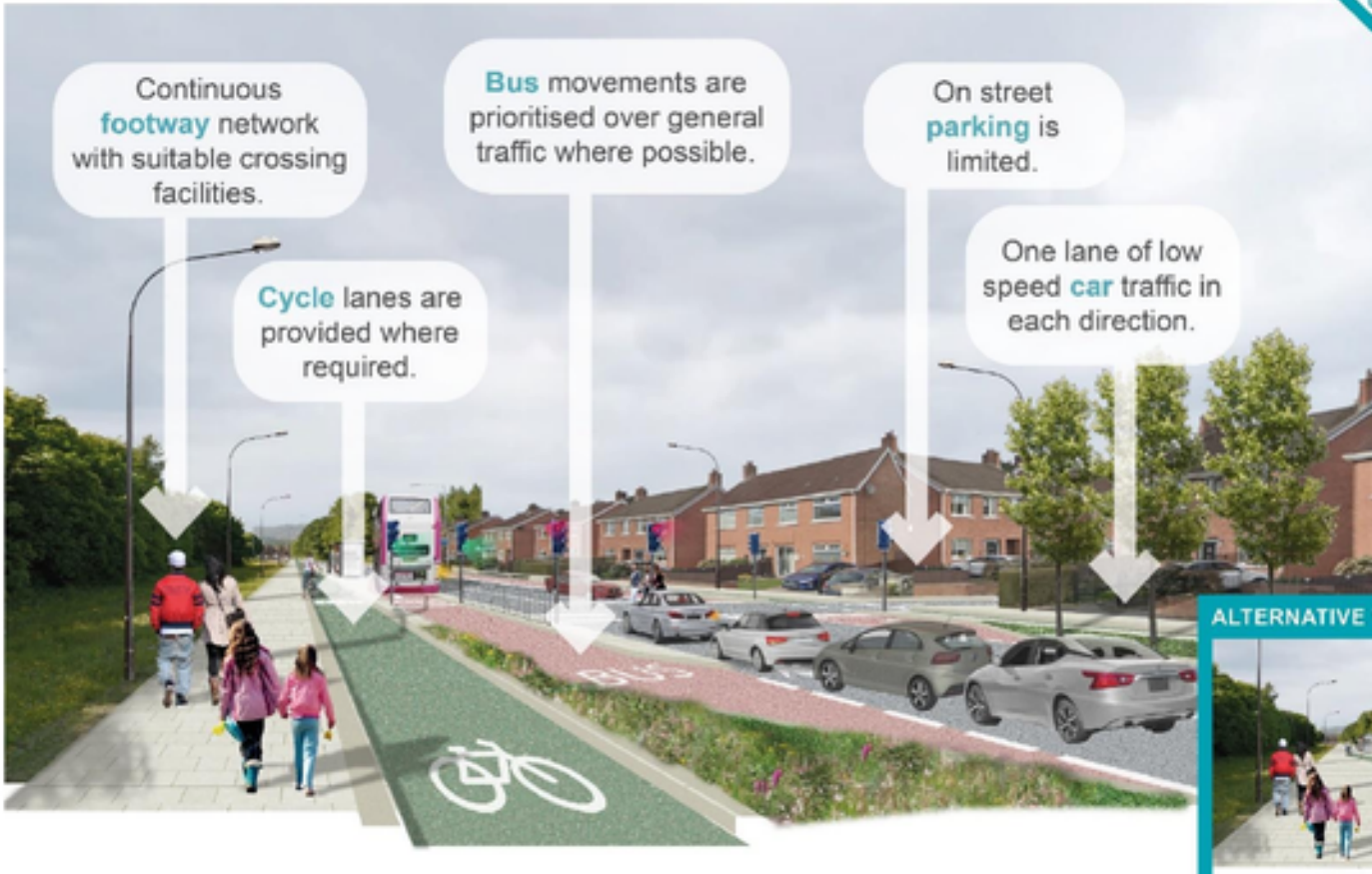


COPENHAGEN CITY CENTRE



CONNECTING MOVEMENT ROUTES

Routes that facilitate connecting movement into urban areas



In areas where physical space is more limited, shared lanes may be required

QUALITY MASS MOVEMENT ROUTES

Routes that facilitate high volume movement, focused on public transport



In areas where physical space is more limited, shared bus and bike lanes may be required

STRATEGIC MOVEMENT ROUTES

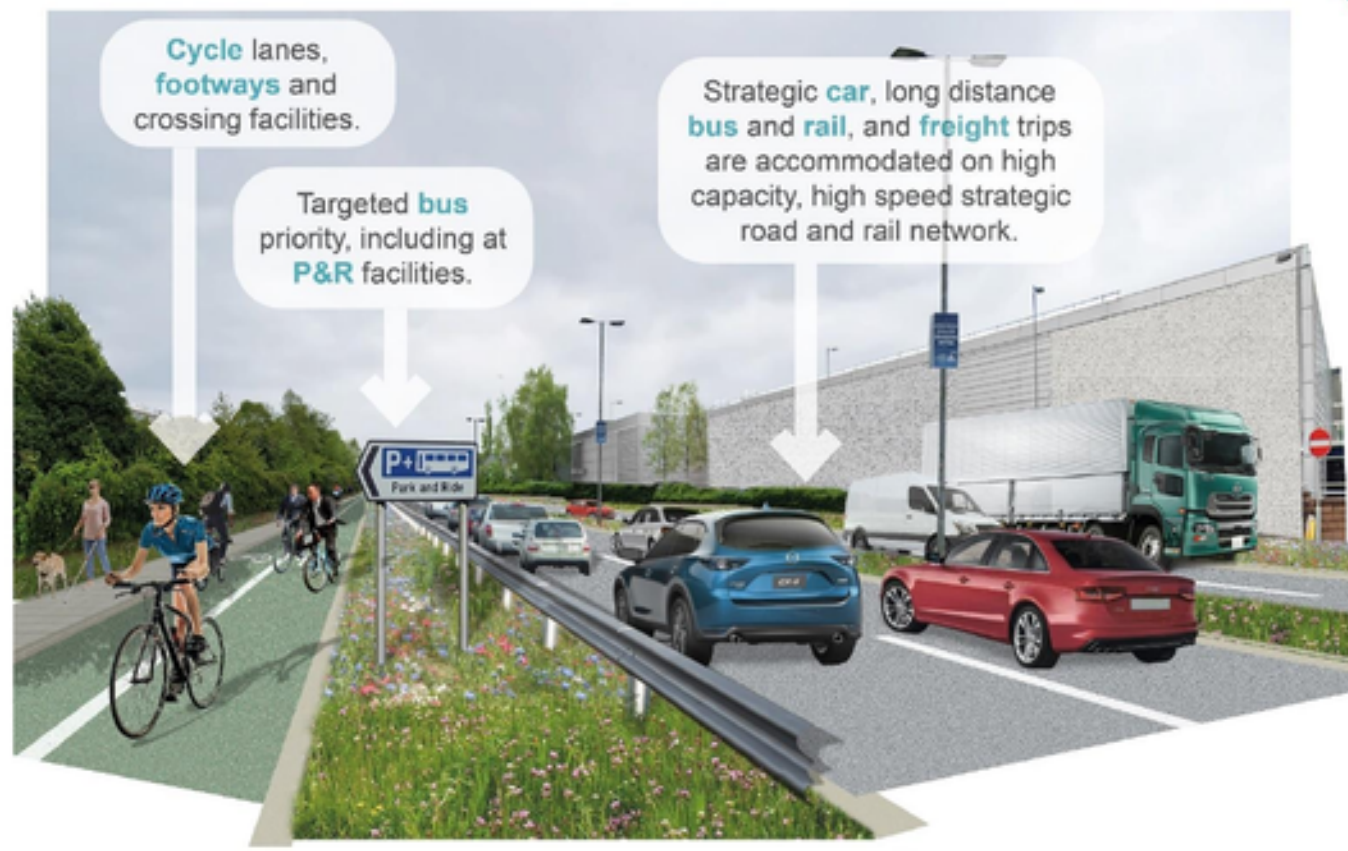
Routes that facilitate movement between the local and regional transport network



DUAL CARRIAGEWAY IN LONDON



STRATEGIC ROUTE IN SYDNEY



Cycle lanes, footways and crossing facilities.

Targeted bus priority, including at P&R facilities.

Strategic car, long distance bus and rail, and freight trips are accommodated on high capacity, high speed strategic road and rail network.

Next steps and timescales

At this stage we are looking for your views on our draft vision and objectives.

Following receipt of your feedback, our draft vision and objectives may be refined as we continue to develop ETP 2035.

You can provide your views here between 4 September and 30 October 2023:

<https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/dfi-1/eastern-transport-plan-consultation/>.

ETP 2035 will be developed in a phased approach in alignment with the publication of each council's draft Local Development Plan. The latest timescales for delivery of each council's Local Development Plan are available on their respective council websites.

Appendix A. Draft ETP Objectives Further Information

Informed by our understanding of the transport and wider context and developed collaboratively with key stakeholders, we have defined a set of objectives which represent ETP 2035's aspirations. Information about how we have derived these objectives and what they might entail as part of the ETP 2035 is explained below.

You can provide your views on these proposed objectives through our survey here between 4 September and 30 October 2023: <https://consultations2.nidirect.gov.uk/dfi-1/eastern-transport-plan-consultation/>.

Objective 1 – Reduce travel distances by promoting safe, inclusive and connected neighbourhoods, supported by integrated planning.

In line with Planning for the Future of Transport, Time for Change⁵, 'substituting trips' represents the most effective means for reducing carbon emissions from transport. This refers to both removing the need for trips to be made in the first place and shortening the length of them, where possible and appropriate. Objective 1 intends to commit ETP 2035 to seeking opportunities to better connect communities to local services, workplaces and amenities in their area. As depicted in our guiding principles (see below), this could include enhancements to public realm and improvements to walking, wheeling and cycling facilities, helping to enhance people's access to convenient local services rather than requiring them to travel further afield for every trip. This objective is about working towards a future where making a short, everyday trips – to the local corner shop, for example – on foot or by bike is the natural and easy choice, rather than it being necessary to use a car.

Objective 2 – Deliver a reduction in carbon emissions by increasing accessibility for all to jobs, services and recreation by sustainable travel modes.

Objective 3 – Promote healthy and inclusive communities by developing safe active travel options that respect the local built and natural environment.

Time for Change cites 'shifting modes' as a key contributor to the hierarchy for reducing carbon from transport, referring to encouraging a move away from private car use towards sustainable modes such as walking, wheeling, cycling, bus and rail. In line with this, objectives 2 and 3 aim to drive an improvement in the provision and quality of sustainable and active travel modes, whilst being respectful of the environment. As outlined in our guiding principles, this may involve the introduction, extension or improvement of dedicated bus and cycle lanes in areas that need them in order to support an improvement to journey times and user experience of these modes. In doing so, walking, wheeling, cycling, bus and rail will become more attractive alternatives to reliance on private car use.

Objective 4 – Reduce unnecessary use of the private car by implementing effective demand management measures.

Coupled with targeted delivery of new and improved transport infrastructure which aim to make sustainable transport options more attractive, ETP 2035 will also need to consider demand management measures to discourage private car use. As depicted in our guiding principles, measures could include a review of speed limits in some areas, careful management of parking or repurposing of road space away from car towards sustainable modes and uses. Measures such as congestion charging and low emission zones may also be considered for implementation.

Objective 5 – Improve air quality and the environment by encouraging the use of sustainable modes and vehicles which utilise sustainable fuels.

Objective 6 – Enhance the resilience and safety of the transport network to support the economy and meet the challenges of climate change.

These two objectives aim to ensure that ETP 2035 adequately considers the impact that the transport network can have on the local and global environment. ETP 2035 needs to complement the decarbonisation of transport as well as unlocking other opportunities to reduce the impact of transport on air quality and the local environment. Further, as the need to respond to the global climate emergency intensifies, it is more vital than ever that the transport network is able to withstand extreme weather and other associated challenges. These elements are important as part of a strong and resilient economy, supporting the Regional Development Strategy's vision for an outward-looking, dynamic and liveable Region⁶.

⁵ <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/planning-future-transport-time-change>

⁶ <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/regional-development-strategy-2035>

Objective 7 – Support the efficient, sustainable movement of goods and people and enhance connectivity to regional networks including access to ports and airports.

While ETP 2035 is primarily focused on enhancing transport connections within the towns and cities of the ETP area, this objective aims to ensure that longer distance trips, both of individuals and freight, are also suitably considered. The ETP area is home to several major strategic transport hubs, and it is important to ensure that people and goods are able to access these efficiently. As shown in our guiding principles, designated strategic movement routes may be identified through ETP 2035 in order to facilitate these effective connections to regional transport networks.

Eastern Transport Plan Engagement Survey

233

Overview

The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) is currently preparing a new transport plan which will set the framework for making transport policy and investment de until 2035. The Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035, previously known as the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP), covers five council areas and will also support the preparation of the Local Policy Plans for these councils:

- Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council
- Ards and North Down Borough Council
- Belfast City Council
- Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council
- Mid and East Antrim Borough Council

ETP 2035 aims to ensure that the transport network meets the needs of the people and businesses living, working and visiting the ETP area, both now and into the future. More information on ETP 2035 can be found on the project website [here](#).

At this early stage of ETP 2035 development, we want to understand your views on:

- The problems we need to solve (challenges)
- The end goal we want to achieve (our vision)
- How we will get there (our objectives)

Please note that for individual responses, postcode data will be gathered as part of the survey. Postcode data will only be held for a maximum of 6 weeks after the survey closes and will be deleted at this stage following aggregation in line with the Data Protection impact Assessment (DPIA).

More information on the Department's Privacy policy and the privacy statement can be found by clicking [here](#).

Why your views matter

Your feedback is important so that we can use it to inform the development of the ETP. Following receipt of your feedback, the draft vision and objectives may be refined as we continue to develop ETP 2035.

You can provide your views here between 4th September and 30th October 2023 closing at 17:00.

Wider Societal Challenges (1)

Four overarching strategic challenges, consistent with local, regional and national policy documents, have been identified to help shape the development of the Plan.

Tackle Climate Change

The Climate Change Act requires DfI to publish a sectoral plan for transport which contributes towards national carbon emission reduction requirements. The of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA, source: [CCC Advice Report: The Path to a Net Zero Northern Ireland](#)) outlines that transport sector emissions need to fall 43% from 2019 to 2030.

- 1 To what extent do you agree that the travel choices made by individuals in the ETP area can contribute to achieving the draft target identified by DAERA?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

- 2 To what extent do you agree that, in conjunction with improving sustainable modes, reducing reliance on private cars is necessary to reduce the carbon emissions from transport?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Wider Societal Challenges (2)**Protect the built and natural environment**

235

Pollution from vehicles contributes to poor local air quality and the construction of roads and railways can harm the built or natural environment.

3 To what extent do you agree that any major new transport infrastructure must be designed and constructed such that it improves air quality and the natural and built environmental?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Wider Societal Challenges (3)

Drive sustainable economic growth

236

Ensuring that transport enables economic, housing and employment growth, whilst improving the environment, is a key priority for all five councils as well as DfI.

- 4 To what extent do you agree that ensuring the transport network operates in a sustainable and efficient manner influences the economic performance of the region?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

- 5 To what extent do you agree that land use planning (e.g. building of new homes and employment infrastructure) needs to be linked with the provision of suitable sustainable transport options?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Wider Societal Challenges (4)

Support healthy, safe and inclusive communities

237

The Programme for Government draft Outcomes Framework expresses nine key societal outcomes which aim to deliver lasting, real and positive change in people's lives. The role of transport is central to healthy, safe and inclusive communities.

- 6 To what extent do you agree that access to opportunities (e.g. jobs, services, social activities) should be possible by convenient, safe and affordable public transport (bus and rail services)?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

- 7 To what extent do you agree that access to opportunities (e.g. jobs, services, social activities) should be possible by convenient, safe and affordable active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling options)?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

- 8 Do you have any further comments on the wider societal challenges that have informed the development of ETP 2035 so far?

Transport Challenges

During the development of the draft vision and objectives, a series of key transport challenges were identified. These capture the main challenges that ETP 2035 aims to address across the whole plan area, however we understand that challenges and priorities vary by location.

9 To what extent do you agree or disagree that the key transport challenges identified for consideration during ETP 2035 development apply in your local area?

<i>(Required)</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Some areas have a lack of safe footpaths or cycle paths. <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Some areas are less well connected by active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling) routes than others. <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bus journeys can be unreliable, slow or delayed. <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inconsistent provision of public transport can make it difficult to get around without a car. <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Rural areas in particular are very difficult to access without using a car. <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provision of parking needs to be better managed to limit car use while maintaining accessibility. <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Some roads can't cope with the level of car traffic, particularly in the mornings. <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10 Are there any further transport challenges that are not covered by the list above that you think should be considered during ETP 2035 development?

Draft Vision

The vision represents the long-term, strategic goal that the content of the ETP 2035 will unlock. The draft vision is proposed as:

"Deliver an integrated Plan to enhance and re-balance transport networks in favour of sustainable, efficient modes, which connects communities creating an inclusive and safe economic region for all by delivering carbon reduction, improving air quality, enhancing the built and natural environment and facilitating healthy and sustainable travel choices over unnecessary private car travel."

11 To what extent do you agree that the vision statement reflects how you would like to see the Transport Plan evolve and be delivered?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Draft Objectives and Guiding Principles

The objectives and guiding principles for ETP 2035 will be used to inform the preparation of the Plan, including assessment of potential transport intervention objectives aim to reflect a range of local, regional and national priorities. The guiding principles aim to depict the types of transport intervention that may be achievable if we deliver in line with our objectives. You can refer to these in the supporting information found [here](#).

Objective 1

Objective 1: Reduce travel distances by promoting safe, inclusive and connected neighbourhoods, supported by integrated planning

Objective 1 commits ETP 2035 to better connect communities to local services, workplaces and amenities. This objective is about a future where many essential trips are short and made on foot or by bike by choice.

12 To what extent do you agree with objective 1?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Objective 2 and 3

Objective 2 - Deliver a reduction in carbon emissions by increasing accessibility for all to jobs, services and recreation by sustainable travel modes.

Objective 3 – Promote healthy and inclusive communities by developing safe active travel options that respect the local built and natural environment.

Objectives 2 and 3 aim to drive an improvement in the provision and quality of sustainable and active travel modes, whilst being respectful of the environment. This may involve the introduction, extension or improvement of dedicated bus and cycle lanes in areas that need them in order to support an improvement to journey times and user experience of these modes.

13 To what extent do you agree with objective 2?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

14 To what extent do you agree with objective 3?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Objective 4

Objective 4: Reduce unnecessary use of the private car by implementing effective demand management measures.

ETP 2035 will also need to consider demand management measures to discourage private car use. Measures could include a review of speed limits in some areas, careful management of parking or repurposing of road space away from car towards sustainable modes and uses. Measures such as congestion charging and low emission zones may also be considered for implementation.

15 To what extent do you agree with proposed objective 4?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Objectives 5 and 6

Objective 5 – Improve air quality and the environment by encouraging the use of sustainable modes and vehicles which utilise sustainable fuels.

Objective 6 – Enhance the resilience and safety of the transport network to support the economy and meet the challenges of climate change.

These two objectives aim to ensure that ETP 2035 adequately considers elements such as the impact that transport can have on air quality and the local environment. Further, as the need to respond to the global climate emergency intensifies, it is more vital than ever that the transport network is able to withstand extreme weather and other associated challenges, supporting the Regional Development Strategy's vision for an outward-looking, dynamic and liveable Region.

16 To what extent do you agree with objective 5?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

17 To what extent do you agree with objective 6?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Objective 7

Objective 7: Support the efficient, sustainable movement of goods and people and enhance connectivity to regional networks including access to airports.

While ETP 2035 is focused on enhancing transport connections within the towns and cities of the ETP area, this objective aims to ensure that longer distance trips, both of individuals and freight, are explicitly considered.

18 To what extent do you agree with objective 7?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

19 Do you have any other suggestions or comments relating to the objectives or guiding principles?

Travel Choice

As outlined throughout this survey and supporting material ([found here](#)), ETP 2035 will look to turn the current situation away from supporting a car-centric transport network, seeking to maximise opportunities for people to access efficient, convenient and travel and public transport options where possible. The guiding principles depict some potential measures that may be considered in different area types.

20 Which of the following would encourage you to walk, wheel or cycle for short trips more often? (Please tick all that apply).

Please select all that apply

- New or improved footways and crossings connecting to local amenities or other transport services
- New or improved traffic-free cycle paths connecting to local amenities or other transport services
- Secure, well located cycle parking
- Access to shared electric or manual bikes
- A reduction in car parking availability at your destination
- Increased cost of car parking at your destination
- None of the above / nothing
- Other

Other (Please specify)

21 Which of the following would encourage you to use public transport for more of your regular trips? (Please tick all that apply).

Please select all that apply

- More direct services
- Quicker journey times
- Reduced cost of services
- More frequent services
- Improved shelters / stations
- Increased provision of Park & Ride facilities
- A reduction in car parking availability at your destination
- Increased cost of car parking at your destination
- Increased cost of driving
- None of the above / nothing
- Other

Other (Please specify)

About you...

244

Individual or Organisation?

22 Are you responding on behalf of an organisation or as an individual?

(Required)

Please select only one item

- Organisation
- Individual

Your Organisation

23 Please state the name of your organisation.

Future Travel - Work

We know that many people have changed their travel behaviours since the COVID-19 pandemic. We are interested in how you would like to travel in the future.

24 Please tick the statement that best represents how you would like to travel to work in the future.

Please select only one item

- Not applicable (I don't work)
- No travel (I work mostly from home)
- Walking (or wheeling)
- Cycling
- Public Transport - Bus
- Public Transport - Train
- Car (or van/taxi) – petrol or diesel
- Car (or van/taxi) – electric/hybrid Electric
- Other (inc Motorbikes/electric scooters)

Future Travel - Study/Education

25 Please tick the statement that best represents how you would like to travel to school/place of study in the future. This includes how you would like to take your children to school.

Please select only one item

- Not applicable (I / my children don't attend school or place of study etc)
- Walking (or wheeling)
- Cycling
- Public Transport - Bus
- Public Transport - Train
- Car (or van/taxi) – petrol or diesel
- Car (or van/taxi) – electric/hybrid Electric
- Other (inc Motorbikes/electric scooters)

Future Travel - Other Trips

26 Please tick the statement that best represents how you would most like to travel for other trips in the future, such as leisure trips etc.

Please select only one item

- Walking (or wheeling)
- Cycling
- Public Transport - Bus
- Public Transport - Train
- Car (or van/taxi) – petrol or diesel
- Car (or van/taxi) – electric/hybrid Electric
- Other (inc Motorbikes/electric scooters)

About you

Postcode data will only be held for a maximum of 6 weeks after the survey closes and will be deleted at this stage following aggregation in line with the Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA).

27 To help us to understand and apply the findings of this survey effectively, please provide us with your postcode.

28 Are you...?

Please select only one item

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

29 To which age group do you belong?

Please select only one item

- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-49
- 50-64
- 65 and over

30 Do any conditions or illness reduce your ability to carry out day to day activities? Please tick only one.

Please select only one item

- Yes, a lot
- Yes, a little
- Not at all

Draft response to engagement questionnaire survey - Department for Infrastructure's (DFI) 'Eastern Transport Plan' (ETP)

Ards and North Down Borough Council welcomes the formal launch and public announcement of Eastern Transport Plan (ETP) 2035 and associated engagement.

The Council shall continue to offer a positive contribution to the ongoing preparation and development of the ETP'.

The Council acknowledges that this public engagement survey is targeted primarily at individuals, however, offers some comments on the proposed approach and constituent parts including the draft Vision, Objectives and General Principles.

The Council is broadly supportive of the vision and ambition set out.

Wider societal challenges

The context set out by DFI of wider societal challenges and specific shortcomings of the transport network appears to be adequate in identifying the range of challenges facing society today. Comment on the wider issue of the economic climate that the plan is being formulated in is largely absent. DFI had recently referred to consulted on the draft Equality Impact Assessment and there are budgetary pressures that are clearly incongruous to the support required for sustainable modes of transport and the frequency and geographical reach required of said services.

Transport Challenges

Provision of accessible public transport and particularly reliable services at key times of day is vitally important. Services require fit for purpose fleet to offer for those with mobility needs. There are key user needs and needs for aging population. The EPT needs to address accessibility needs of all. Confidence in safe means of alternative travel methods to the private vehicle is vital.

The connectivity to and through the Borough is also influenced by the ferry from Portaferry to Strangford. The ferry reduces road miles for a number of vehicle journeys. The provision of targeted services to address early sailings is important to key workers in rural locations where there is little choice and will clearly continue to present the challenge on modal shift.

Vision

The Council is generally supportive of the Vision set out for the ETP.

The Council shall welcome further opportunity for early engagement in particular in respect of the emerging proposals and policies that shall be formulated to support the vision. It is clear that the delivery outcomes shall be dependent on the specific policies, proposals and initiatives that emerge as the ETP develops.

Objectives associated Guiding Principles

The objectives and guiding principles are considered relevant and should assist in delivering on the Plan Vision. The Council appreciates that as a constituent geographical component that there are differences across the ETP. There is a need for flexibility that will be necessary in the application of the guiding principles across the different geographies – e.g. the people and movement places aspect

Ards and North Down Borough Council geographic area is locally distinct due to the

peninsula aspect with a ferry connectivity at the peninsula – critical for the movement and reducing distances covered by private vehicles. The needs of public transport and people should be addressed proportionately.

In welcoming formulation of an up to date Transport Plan it is vital that it is matched in resources needed for modal transformation change that is also required to deliver on wider Climate commitments. The Council looks forward to continued engagement and involvement in the development of this key document.

Unclassified

249

ITEM 10**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	25 October 2023
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	16 October 2023
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below.
Subject	Nomination to Trustees on Northern Community Leisure Trust
Attachments	Appendix 1

Places on working groups are filled through nomination at the Council's Annual Meeting and are thus held by individual Members rather than Parties. When a position becomes vacant, it reverts back to Council to nominate a Member to fill the place rather than Party Nominating Officers.

Following the resignation of Councillor Woods from the Northern Community Leisure Trust, a place has now become available. The Council is represented by two Trustees, the other Trustee is Councillor W Irvine.

A nomination is sought from the Council to fill the above vacancy for the remainder of the four-year term.

NCLT role of the Trust and its members are attached as Appendix 1.

Not Applicable

250

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council nominate a Member as a Trustee on Northern Community Leisure Trust for the remainder of the term.

NORTHERN COMMUNITY LEISURE TRUST

THE ROLE OF THE TRUST AND ITS MEMBERS

The Northern Community Leisure Trust (NCLT) is a Registered Society under the Co-Operative and Community Benefits Society Act 2014. The objects of the Trust are to 'carry on any trade, industry or business for the benefit of the community by:

(a) providing or assisting in the provision of facilities and services primarily for the benefit of the community and visitors to, and the residents of England, Wales and Northern Ireland for recreational, sporting or other leisure time occupation in the interests of social welfare, such facilities being provided to the public at large save that special facilities may be provided or persons who by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disability, poverty or social or other economic circumstances may have need of special facilities and services; and/ or

(b) providing maintaining improving and advancing public education by the encouragement of culture and arts.'

North Down and, after the merger, Ards and North Down Borough Council contracted the Trust to provide leisure services in North Down, beginning in 2013 and currently in place until 2028. This covers services at Bangor Aurora, Queen's Leisure Complex in Holywood, Bangor Sportsplex and some sports grounds. The Trust in turn contracted Serco Leisure to provide the services on its behalf. The Council continues to own the facilities and has landlord responsibilities in terms of repairs and maintenance.

The Trust provides services which focus on the local community's health and wellbeing. Its key objectives are to engage the local community in the decision-making processes for leisure services. It therefore prepares clear statements of vision and intent and monitors progress towards its objectives and the performance of Serco Leisure in providing the services. The Trust's role is strategic, not operational, and its overriding aim is to add value, by its community focus, to the leisure services that are provided.

Under its Rules, the Trust consists of a number of Members, and these Members appoint a Management Committee of between 3 and 12 people; and this Committee oversees the provision of leisure services (in practice, all Members of NCLT are members of the Management Committee). The role is unremunerated, but expenses may be reimbursed.

The Trust draws on and benefits from the skills and experience its Members bring to its work and it therefore expects those who agree to become Members to:

- ensure that they are well-informed about the Trust and understand its aims and business;
- be regular attenders at Trust meetings, including reading papers and making comments when they are unable to attend meetings;
- apologise if or when they are unable to attend a meeting;
- play a full part in developing and implementing the Trust's aims, strategies and plans;
- put the aims of the Trust first, pursuing its interests above any personal interests;
- work collectively with other Members, seeking to explore and challenge and then support the agreed position reached;
- be prepared to give their time, to the extent and in the ways agreed, outside meetings to further the aims of the Trust;
- to act at all times in good faith, prudently and reasonably.

A Member may resign at any time; a Member may be asked to resign if, in the opinion of the Trust Officers and after attempts to resolve issues, s/he is not fulfilling the duties listed above.

Unclassified

253

ITEM 11**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	12 September 2023
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	29 August 2023
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Handling Correspondence Related to Roads Maintenance Defects
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Letter from the Permanent Secretary, DfI to Chief Executives

A letter has been received from the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Infrastructure to the Chief Executive regarding changes to the Department's handling of Correspondence relating to Roads Maintenance Defects. A copy of the letter is enclosed at appendix 1 for Member's consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council consider the letter in Appendix 1.



From the Permanent Secretary
Dr Denis McMahon

Our Reference: SSUB-0260-2023

Council Chief Executives

Via email: name@emailaddress.co.uk

Room 701
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
BELFAST
BT2 8GB
Telephone (028) 9054 1175
Email: perm.sec@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

4 October 2023

Dear Chief Executives

HANDLING CORRESPONDENCE RELATED TO ROADS MAINTENANCE DEFECTS

The purpose of this letter is to advise you and Councilors of the Department for Infrastructure's preferred approach to handling correspondence relating to the reporting of defects on the roads network. Our aim in doing this is to ensure that we provide the best possible service while focusing our resources on delivery on the ground.

The Department, and in particular the Transport and Roads Asset Management Teams, receive a significant volume of correspondence from the public and elected representatives throughout the year. To give you a sense of scale, one Division was sent over 19,000 items of correspondence last year. Indeed, the level of correspondence has been increasing in recent years at a time when resources have been reducing which is adversely impacting on our ability to deliver key services and public safety responsibilities.

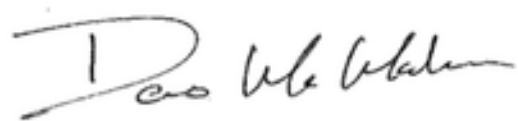
In an effort to maximise the Department's effectiveness in delivering key road maintenance functions, I would ask that members of the public and elected representatives who have access to the internet report road defects via the DfI online reporting facility provided by NI Direct (<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/travel-transport-and-roads/problems-roads-and-streets>) rather than by direct correspondence with the Department.

Alternatively, faults that are considered to be an emergency can be reported by telephone to 02890 540540 and reports of Flooding can be directed to the Flooding Incident Line 0300 2000 1000 (24 hours a day).

I hope you find this helpful and know that you will appreciate the reasons for this

approach which is seeking to make best use of the people we have.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr Denis McMahon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DR DENIS McMAHON
DfI Permanent Secretary

Unclassified

256

ITEM 14**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	25 October 2023
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	16 October 2023
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Notice of Motion Status Report
Attachments	Notice of Motion Status Report

Please find attached a Status Report in respect of Notices of Motion.

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

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council notes the report.

NOM REF	DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	31/05/15	Rory McIlroy recognition	Councillor Muir	Jun-15	Corporate Services Committee – October 2015	Corporate Services	Agreed	TBC	Further Report to follow during 2023.
	21/01/19	Shelter at slipway in Donaghadee	Councillor	Jan-19	Environment	Environment	Agreed	TBC	Officers awaiting feedback
	25/09/19	Report on feasibility of holding annual remembrance service for those lost to suicide	Councillor Martin	Oct-19	Corporate Services – November 2019	Corporate Services	Agreed	TBC	Further Report to follow during 2023, awaiting proposer feedback .
NOM118	16/01/20	Closing of a public right of way at Andrew Shorefield, Groomsport	Alderman Keery	Jan-20	Corporate Committee – February 2020	Corporate Services	Agreed	TBC	Further Report to follow during 2023.
	20/10/20	"I would like to task officers to produce a report to consider what could be a more environmentally friendly and benefit the wellbeing of the community for the use of the disused putting green on the Commons and play park at Hunts park in Donaghadee . Following the success of the Dog park in Bangor and the demand for a Dementia garden, both should be considered as options in the report. The process should involve consultation with the local community."	Councillor Brooks	Oct-20	Community & Wellbeing Committee – December 2020	Community & Wellbeing	Agreed	TBC	Officers to liaise with Regeneration and consideration of Masterplan and also take into account play strategy local consultation when it takes place in Donaghadee and bring back a report thereafter.
	10/05/21	That officers are tasked to bring back a Report on how the Council might approach a Climate Change Action Plan and perhaps including - but not limited to - a review of all Council long-term investment, a Borough-wide engagement via an Innovation Lab, a Conference of Ideas, and values-based recommendations for next steps.	Councillors Walker & Egan	Jun-21	Environment Committee – October 2021 (deferred from September Committee)	Environment	Agreed	TBC	Various strands of work taking place across different departments on development of Council Climate Action Plan - led within Corporate Services Directorate.
	31.12.21	Coastal and Storm Damage to Ballywalter Harbour, repair costs and reinstatement costs	Councillors Adair and Edmund	Jan-22	Environment February 2022	Environment	Agreed	TBC	Report to be brought back to a future meeting
	13.04.22	Environmental damage caused by modern day packaging	Councillors McRandal and Douglas	Apr-22	Environment Committee – June 2022	Environment	Agreed		Report to be brought back to a future meeting
	17.05.22	2028 Centenary of the internationally renowned Ards TT races. Asking Council how best to commemorate this important sporting anniversary.	Alderman McIveen and Councillor Kennedy	May- 22	Community and Wellbeing June 2022	Community and Wellbeing	Agreed	Report to November 2023 P&P	NoM transferred to P&P Committee.

	19.05.2022	Business case for redesign of the parallel sports pitches and facilities at Park Way, Comber	Councillors Cummings and Johnson	Jun-22	Community and Wellbeing Committee – September 2022 – deferred	Community and Wellbeing		TBC	Officers considering report to be brought back to future Committee
NOM164	20.06.2022	Review of health and safety process re community groups	Councillors MacArthur, Brooks, T Smith and Kennedy	Jun-22	Corporate Services Committee - deferred to October 2022	Corporate Services	Agreed	Report to CS 20.6.2023	Further report to be brought back after the Autumn workshop
NOM165	20.06.2022	Report exploring the possibility of introducing a policy that shows commitment to supporting the wellbeing of our workforce by ensuring appropriate support is available to anyone undergoing IVF.	Councillor Greer and Councillor McKee	Jun-22	Corporate Services Committee – deferred to October 2022	Corporate Services	Agreed	TBC	Further report to follow in 2023.
	21.06.2022	Engagement with relevant community stakeholders to ascertain community need and desires in respect of the Queen's Leisure Complex	Councillors Kendall, McRandal and McClean	Jun-22	Community and Wellbeing Committee – September 2022 – deferred to October 2022	Community and Wellbeing		TBC	Officers considering report to be brought back to future Committee
	5.07.2022	That this Council changes the name of Queen's Parade to Queen's Platinum Jubilee Parade in honour and recognition of the 70th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne. *** Amendment Received from Councillor Cathcart - That this Council, in recognition of Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee and her conferment of City Status upon Bangor, agrees to name an appropriate place or building within Bangor in her honour and that future Council Bangor entrance signs make reference to Bangor being a Platinum Jubilee City.	Alderman Irvine & Keery	Jul-22	Environment Committee - September 2022	Corporate Services	Amended and agreed	TBC	Officers considering report to be brought back to future Committee
NOM167	24.08.2022	That this council withdraws all funding to any sporting organisations with any political objectives or named references to terrorism in their constitution, club names, stadiums or competitions, and tasks officers to bring back a report outlining the specific relevant council policy.	Cllrs Cooper, T Smith and Councillor Irvine	Aug-22	Corporate Committee – deferred to October 2022	Community and Wellbeing	Amended and agreed	TBC	NoM Transferred to C&W Committee. C&W Officers considering report to be brought to future Committee
	22.08.22	Street Clutter Audit for the Borough	Councillor Dunlop and Councillor Douglas	Sep-22	Environment Committee – October 2022	Environment	Agreed	Reported to October 2022 EC Committee	Report to be brought back to a future meeting
	21.09.22	Humane control of Pigeons in Conway Square, Newtownards	Alderman McIveen and Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	Sep-22	Environment Committee 2022	Environment	Agreed	Reported to October 2022 ENV Committee	Signage has been erected in Conway Square
	16.11.22	That Council officers open discussions with Historic Environment Division regarding the return of the 13th century 'Movilla Stones' to the Borough and the provision of a suitable site for these to be located. Officers are also tasked with promoting these extremely important archaeological artefacts in the local community and local schools when the stones have been returned.	Alderman McIveen & Councillor Cummings	Nov-22	Community & Wellbeing - December 2022	Community and Wellbeing	Agreed	March and June C&W Committee	Officers to discuss further with HED and report to future C&WC when final arrangements for return of the stones is agreed.

	09.12.22	That this Council adopts the White Ribbon Pledge to 'Never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women and girls', agrees to sign the Pledge, and tasks Officers to bring back a report outlining how we can amalgamate existing relevant policies, undertake the Listen, Learn, Lead programme within the Council, and identify effective routes to encourage other agencies and organisations in our Borough to engage with the White Ribbon Project.	Councillors Douglas & Walker	Dec-22	Corporate Services Committee – January 2023 Community and Wellbeing Committee - TBC	Community and Wellbeing	Agreed	TBC	14/3 it has been agreed that this NOM will transfer to PCSP/C&W. Officers considering with a report to a future C&W Committee
	13.12.22	That this Council expresses concern with the number of residential and commercial bins left on public footways in the Borough long after the bin collection date. Bins left on public footways are not only unsightly, they can lead to hygiene and contamination issues, as well as safety concerns, forcing pedestrians onto the road due to the blocking of a footway. This Council notes its own lack of enforcement powers to tackle this issue and expresses concern at the Department for Infrastructure's reluctance to use its own enforcement powers. Accordingly, this Council agrees to write to the Department for Infrastructure asking the Department to engage with Councils with the aim of creating appropriate enforcement powers to tackle this issue. Council Officers, will in the meantime, bring back a report to the appropriate committee detailing action that the Council can take under current powers to try address the issue of bins left on public footways.	Councillors Cathcart and MacArthur	Dec-22	Environment Committee – January 2023	Environment	Agreed	June Committee	Alternative proposal agreed at June Committee. Update report to be brought to a future meeting (date to be confirmed) Letters sent to DfI and PSNI 12/10/23 - Acknowledgement rec'd from PSNI 13.10.23
	08.12.22	This Council acknowledges the environmental and health benefits associated with the recent increase in cycling and declares Ards & North Down a cycling friendly borough. The Council also recognises that people who cycle are among the most vulnerable road users, and tasks officers with producing a report detailing ways in which we can help improve safety. The report should include possible sources of funding, potential partnerships, and ways in which we can promote good relations between users of different forms of transport	Alderman Wilson & Councillor Douglas (Postponed from Dec Council to Jan Council)	Jan-23	Community and Wellbeing Committee – February 2023	Community and Wellbeing		June C&W Committee	Further report to future C&WC including the report to recommend declaration.
		Building on the practice of other council areas, that this council tasks officers to liaise with DfI Roads as a matter of urgency to offer its assistance in providing self-service grit piles for residents and to post locations of such grit piles on the council website	Alderman McIveen & Councillor Cathcart	Jan-23	Environment Committee – February 2023	Environment	Agreed	October	Further report to be brought to future committee on the potential use of Household Recycling Centres, community centres and other supervised Council facilities for self-help grit piles.
	08.01.2023	That this Council writes to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Infrastructure expressing concern that the provision of a footpath at Shore Road Ballyhalbert is currently not considered a priority by the Department following the completion of a feasibility study which demonstrated need. That the Council highlights the road safety concerns raised by residents for pedestrians using the Shore Road from the village to the residential developments including Park Homes and St Andrew's. That Council requests that the Department for Infrastructure makes the installation of a footpath a priority and commits to deliver the scheme as a matter of urgency.	Councillors Adair & Edmund	Jan-23	Place & Prosperity – February 2023	Place & Prosperity	Agreed and ratified at Council 5.7.23	TBC	Perm Sec's of DfI ltr of 10.8.23 reported to Sept P&P where it was agreed that that Council writes to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Infrastructure expressing disappointment at the lack of understanding in the response...Letter being drafted/sent, response to be reported to P&P when received.

	18.01.2023	The prolonged cold weather spells just before Christmas and last week resulted in icy, slippery, and dangerous footpaths and car parks in the Borough's City and town centres. It is not acceptable that in such circumstances the Council does not have a plan or the resources or facilities to grit these areas to enable residents to walk safely to and from the main shopping areas or fall when they step out of their cars onto ice. It is proposed that officers bring back a report with costs to outline what steps can be taken to ensure that Council car parks and footpaths in the City and town centres are gritted when the weather is forecast to have heavy snowfall or prolonged freezing weather conditions.	Councillors Morgan and McRandal	Jan-23	Environment Committee – February 2023	Environment	Agreed	October	Agreed that officers bring back a report detailing the legal advice that backs up this risk assessment and that this report is brought back to the Committee and a review is undertaken of other NI Council policies on Council owned carparks during freezing weather conditions. This should include analysis of how gritting of car parks and footpaths is delivered by any Councils that do so.
	18.01.2023	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 nd Marquess of Londonderry, who was known by the courtesy title of Viscount Castlereagh during most of his life, in the 200 th year of his passing.	Alderman McIveen and Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	Feb-23	Environment Committee March 2023	Environment	Agreed	TBC	Report to be brought to future meeting
	08.02.2023	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. football. A report to be brought back to Council following said discussions.	Alderman Irvine and Alderman Keery	Feb-23	Community and Wellbeing Committee March 2023	Community and Wellbeing	Agreed	TBC	Officers considering report to be brought back to future Committee
NOM179	10.02.2023	That 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 reopen 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 and Councillor Kennedy, also Councillor S Irvine, Councillor McKimm, Councillor Boyle and Councillor Cathcart	Feb-23	Corporate Services Committee March 2023	Corporate Services		Response to NOM to CS10.10.23	Remove from tracker after ratification.
NOM180	14.02.2023	This Council rename the square at Portavogie War Memorial Queen Elizabeth Square in memory of our late Sovereign Queen Elizabeth II.	Councillor Adair and Councillor Edmund	Feb-23	Corporate Services March 2023	Corporate Services			Officers considering next steps for further report to be brought back.
	20.3.2023	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.	Councillors Gilmour & Cathcart	Mar-23	Community & Wellbeing Committee 21/06/2023	Community and Wellbeing	Agreed - subject to ratification by June Council	TBC	Officers considering report to be brought back to future C&W Committee
TBC	20.3.2023	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.	Councillors Thompson & Adair	Mar-23	Place and Prosperity Committee June 2023	Place & Prosperity	Agreed and ratified at Council 5.7.23	TBC	CEx issued ltr to Perm Secretaries of DfI and DfC 2.8.23 - Kircubbin HAG to consider response

573	09.06.2023	That this Council requests officers to bring back a report with full costings and budgetary options outlining pragmatic solutions to tackling anti-social behaviour in the Bank's Lane car park, Ballyholme including the restricting of access to the car park at night. In addition, officers should clarify ownership of the Bank's Lane as part of the solution.	Alderman K Douglas and Councillor Cathcart supported by Cllr W Irvine, Cllr Blaney, Cllr McKimm and Cllr McCracken	Council July 2023	Heard at Council - 05.07.2023	Environment Committee	Heard and Agreed at Council meeting 05.07.2023	October	Agreed to install hydraulically operated bollards at a cost of around £80k, with a further report to be brought back to committee on what other work would need to stop within the department in order to facilitate the funding of this.
575	31.07.2023	That this council notes that the number of households with homelessness status on the social housing waiting list across NI has increased from 12,431 to 26,310 households between 31 March 2013 and 31 March 2023, an increase of 111.7%; notes the enormous strain the homelessness system is under with the number of households in temporary accommodation at unprecedented levels; agrees that this council has a role to play in preventing homelessness in this borough alongside other organisations and bodies in the Public, Statutory and Voluntary sectors; calls on this Council to assess how it contributes to homelessness prevention through carrying out an audit of its services; and requests that Officers bring back a report detailing the homelessness prevention work currently supported as well as how the Council's community planning function can further support homelessness prevention work in the local area	Councillors Creighton and Moore	Council - August 2023	Community & Wellbeing Committee-September 2023		Agreed - ratified at September Council	TBC	Officers to consider report to future C&WC
576	01.08.2023	That this Council recognises the significant public concern created by the feud between rival organised crime groups within Ards and North Down. This feud which began in March 2023 has led to violence, criminal damage, and communities living in fear. We ask that Council contact representatives of the Talking Paramilitarism Programme including The Executive Office and Department of Justice seeking their shared engagement with Council and elected representatives focusing solutions to address this issue, and to reduce the prospect of a similar occurrence in the future. Further to this we ask the Communities in Transition Programme to broaden its remit across the Borough to help create a culture of lawfulness, and strengthen community resilience against	Councillors Smart & P Smith	Council - August 2023	Heard at Council August & Agreed				
577	02.08.2023	This Council condemns without reservation the threats made to District Judge Mark Hamill and the attack on Newtownards Courthouse as an attack on the rule of law which is the basis of a democratic and free society. Furthermore, this Council affirms its full support for the PSNI in investigating and bringing to justice those who have committed criminal acts within this Borough and encourages everyone to assist the legitimate authorities in this endeavour.	Aldermen McIveen & Armstrong Cotter, Councillor Kennedy	Council - August 2023	Heard at Council August & Agreed				
		That Council task officers to bring back a report on the costing to install signage identifying the townlands of Ballyblack and Kirkistown and that officers are tasked to bring forward proposals to incorporate townland signage across our Borough.	Alderman Adair, Councillors Edmund & Kerr	Council - August 2023	Environment Committee - September 2023	Environment Committee	Agreed - ratified by September Council	To be confirmed	

579	31.08.2023	<p>This Council believes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education should be accessible to all who seek it and embedding a culture of lifelong learning in our society is essential to enabling people to realise their potential. Part-time flexible learning is crucial to meeting the skills needed to build a modern, inclusive and green economy. Part-time students are a unique demographic, they are more likely to have disabilities, come from disadvantaged backgrounds, have caring responsibilities, such as children or elderly relatives, and in general, be part of a 'hard to reach' group who missed out on full-time study.1 Lifelong learning, including non-formal education, addresses social issues, strengthens communities and builds civic engagement. It is the most effective tool for meeting social policy objectives and creating positive social change. Recognises that lifelong learning must become a meaningful and developed policy area with tangible actions and outcomes, underpinned by the wealth of best practice and innovation from across the UK and Ireland. <p>This Council therefore resolves to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work with the Lifelong Learning Alliance to develop a Lifelong Learning campaign, to inform and raise public awareness of how lifelong learning transforms lives and communities. Engage with MLAs and MPs to prioritise funding for formal and informal part-time education when the Executive is formed. Encourage MLAs to form an All-Party Group on Lifelong Learning to support an evidence and best-practice informed approach to policy making, in collaboration with adult education bodies to form a voice for Lifelong Learning in the Assembly when an Executive is formed. 	Cllrs Moore and Creighton	Council - 27 Sep 2023	Corporate Services Committee		Agreed as ammended, subject to ratification at October Council.	
580	06/01/00	That this Council, recognising its commitment as a responsible employer, and that staff are paid the current Living Wage, tasks officers to explore becoming 'Living Wage' accredited with the UK Living Wage Foundation, as well as ensuring any regularly contracted employees and workers, including those who are employed externally to deliver Council services, are paid the living wage hourly rate. It also explores becoming Living Hours and Living Pensions accredited too.	Cllrs Woods and McKee	27-Sep-23	Corporate Services Committee		Agreed subject to ratification at October Council	
581	18.09.2023	That Council notes the increasing complaints regarding the poor condition and appearance of our cemeteries across the Borough and tasks officers to bring back a report on options to improve the maintenance of our cemeteries which are places of special significance to those who have lost loved ones.	Alderman Adair, Councillor Douglas and Alderman McIveen	27-Sep-23	Community and Wellbeing Committee		Agreed subject to ratification at October Council	