

## ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

23 June 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a meeting of Ards and North Down Borough Council which will be held remotely via Zoom on **Wednesday, 29 June 2022 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 June 2022 (Copy attached)
6. Minutes of Council meeting dated 25 May 2022 (Copy attached)
7. Minutes of Council Annual Meeting dated 1 June 2022 (Copy attached)
8. Minutes of Committees (copies attached)
  - 8.1. Minutes of Planning Committee dated 19 May 2022
  - 8.2. Minutes of Planning Committee dated 7 June 2022
  - 8.3. Minutes of Meeting of Environment Committee dated 8 June 2022
  - 8.4. Minutes of Meeting of Regeneration and Development Committee dated 9 June 2022
    - 8.4.1 Matter Arising – Addendum Report regarding the Covid Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme
  - 8.5. Minutes of Meeting of Corporate Services Committee dated 14 June 2022
  - 8.6. Minutes of Meeting of Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 15 June 2022

9. Consultation Documents

- 9.1 The Housing Executive's Affirmative Action Plan. Closing date for responses is 19th August 2022. (Consultation document attached)

10. Invitations

- 10.1 Somme Sunday Invitation - Royal British Legion, Bangor Branch, parade at the Ward Park War Memorial, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2022 (2pm)

11. Appointments to Outside Bodies (Report attached)

12. Request to Light up Council buildings for World Fragile X Day (Report attached)

13. Tender for the Provision of a Suitable Electric Vehicle Management Contractor (Report attached)

14. Sealing Documents

15. Transfer of Rights of Burial

16. Request for Deputation from U3A (Report attached)

16.1 Grant of Entertainment Licence (Report attached)

17. Notice of Motion Status Report (Report attached)

18. Notices of Motion

- 18.1. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cummings and Councillor Johnson

That this council notes the recently launched development strategy by Comber Rec FC and receipt of IFA funding for stadia improvements and brings back a business case for the proposed redesign of the parallel sports pitches and facilities at Park Way, Comber as outlined in the councils agreed capital investment schedule and a report on how the Council can work in partnership with Comber Rec FC and other sporting partners in the realisation of the objectives contained within that strategy.

- 18.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor MacArthur, Councillor Brooks, Councillor T Smith and Councillor Kennedy

That this Council acknowledges the exceptional work which community and voluntary groups carry out, often staging events which were previously run by this Council.

Risk management and Event Management Plans should assist the planning and the safe running of these events. However, many voluntary groups find the process arduous and inflexible, especially when trying to organise events on Council owned land.

This Council therefore requests that a full review of this process takes place in consultation with community groups to ascertain their concerns, ensuring that Health and Safety expectations are realistic and meet the necessary requirements. Groups should be more actively supported as part of the process and that, if necessary, a wide range of supporting materials should be provided for a range of events, thereby ensuring that voluntary groups are more robustly assisted in their work rather than hindered by the current burdensome process.

#### 18.3 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Greer and Councillor McKee

That this Council recognises and acknowledges the difficulties that some individuals experience with fertility problems, and will treat all staff fairly and equally, with dignity and respect. Furthermore, council officers will bring back a 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

#### 18.4 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Girvan and Councillor Irwin

The Ulster Bank recently announced that it is closing nine branches across Northern Ireland in September and October 2022, two of which are in the Borough – Comber and Holywood. It is proposed that this Council writes to the Ulster Bank to express its total opposition to the closures and invites the Ulster Bank to a meeting to assess how the closure will affect not only the businesses in the high streets but also the local residents who are left with no banking facilities in these thriving and growing towns.

#### 18.5 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman McIlveen and Alderman Armstrong-Cotter

That officers bring back a report with a view to widening the Council's use of digital technology (in particular QR codes) to promote and provide information about statues, built heritage and monuments in the Council's ownership and care as well as points of interest throughout the borough.

#### 18.6 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Kendall, Councillor McRandal, Councillor McClean and Councillor Johnson

This Council recognises the opportunity that a return to Council management of the Queen's Leisure Complex, Holywood presents to

develop the potential for a revitalised local asset that benefits the whole community, - a space for health, arts, culture, recreation, events and learning.

In light of this opportunity, this Council resolves to facilitate engagement with relevant community stakeholders to form a costed, plan. The purpose of which will be to ascertain community need and desires in respect of the Queen's Leisure Complex asset

Circulated for Information:

- a) Census 2021 – first results (Correspondence from NISRA attached)
- b) NI Housing Council Minutes dated 12 May 2022 and June Bulletin (copies attached)

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

19. Request from NI Water - works at Spafield carpark and request for a temporary carpark at the entrance to the Rugby Club (Report attached)
20. Land at Dickson Park, Ballygowan (Report attached)
21. Request from the Rotary Club of Donaghadee to install a look out compass/direction point on Council land (Report attached)
22. Freedom of the Borough for Gary Lightbody (Report attached)
23. arc21 Residual Waste Treatment Project – Update (Report attached)
24. Update on Discussions following suspension of Unite Strike Action (Report attached)

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

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



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

**LIST OF MAYOR'S/DEPUTY MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**  
**FOR JUNE 2022**

**Thursday 2 June**

15:30 hours Tree Planting – Platinum Jubilee Park, Ballygowan  
20:30 hours Queen's Jubilee Beacons – Conway Square, Newtownards

**Friday 3 June**

11:10 hours BBC Ulster's Conor Philips Show from Bangor Sea Festival Set Up – McKee Clock Arena, Bangor  
13:45 hours HMS Bangor – Jubilee Visit – Eisenhower Pier, Bangor

**Saturday 4 June**

11:30 hours Sea Bangor Event – Quay Street Car Park and Eisenhower Pier, Bangor  
12:30 hours **Deputy Mayor** – Visit to Hair & Co, South Street, Newtownards  
14:00 hours Donaghadee Exhibition to Celebrate the Queen – Donaghadee Methodist Church Hall – Moat Street, Donaghadee  
15:15 hours Comber Rec FC Jubilee Event – Parkway, Comber

**Sunday 5 June**

11:30 hours The Big Jubilee Lunch – Sea Bangor Festival  
14:30 hours **Deputy Mayor** – Tree Planting – Platinum Jubilee  
15:30 hours The Belfast Lieutenancy Service of Thanksgiving for the Platinum Jubilee – St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast

**Monday 6 June**

13:45 hours Carers Week – Coffee Cure at the Museum, Bangor

**Tuesday 7 June**

10:00 hours Pilot 4C UR Future LIVE Event – Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex, Newtownards

**Friday 10 June**

10:00 hours Comber School Olympics – Comber Rec FC – Parkway, Comber  
16:00 hours Bangor Central Nursery School's 80th Birthday – Bangor  
18:00 hours Parade to Celebrate 100 Years of Policing in NI – Conway Square, Newtownards

**Saturday 11 June**

15:30 hours Regatta Day Reception – Royal Ulster Yacht Club, Clifton Road, Bangor

**Monday 13 June**

14:30 hours PR Photo – Launch of Translink Ulster in Bloom – Walled Garden, Bangor

16:00 hours Summer Parliamentary Reception and Launch of High Street Heroes – The Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings, Stormont

**Tuesday 14 June**

13:00 hours Reception to Inaugurate the 'Beyond Walls' Land-Art Painting – The Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings, Stormont

14:00 hours **Deputy Mayor** – Launch of Ulster in Bloom Competition – The Braid, Ballymena

**Wednesday 15 June**

09:00 hours Climate Clever Communities Summit – Waterfront Hall, Belfast

12:00 hours Presentation of Ballyholme Yacht Club Certificates – Seacliff Road, Bangor

**Thursday 16 June**

18:00 hours Roam Local Ards & North Down Launch Event – Coffee Cure at the Museum, Town Hall, Bangor

**Saturday 18 June**

11:30 hours Donaghadee Lifeboat Festival – Donaghadee Lifeboat, Harbour

13:30 hours Gin Tour in Bangor – Dander Down Tours – The Ava and Various Locations

19:00 hours **Deputy Mayor** – Ards Ladies Hockey Club's Centenary Gala Dinner – Stormont Hotel, Belfast

19:30 hours Mairtin O'Connor Trio Band & Celtic Storm Band – St Comgall's Parish Centre, Brunswick Road, Bangor

**Sunday 19 June**

13:00 hours NIFRS Cadets Display and Graduation Ceremony – Bangor Fire Station, Newtownards Road, Bangor

**Monday 20 June**

10:00am hours Raising of the Armed Forces Flag – Town Hall, Bangor

**Tuesday 21 June**

- 10:20 hours Clifton Special School Record of Achievement Day for Secondary Department – Old Belfast Road, Bangor
- 12:00 hours **Deputy Mayor** – 25th Ireland's Best Kept Towns – Titanic Hotel, Queen's Road, Belfast
- 13:00 hours Meeting with North Down & Ards Women's Aid CEO – Mayor's Parlour, Town Hall, Bangor

**Wednesday 22 June**

- 10:00 hours Eco-Schools Award Ceremony for Ards and North Down Borough Council – Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing & Leisure Complex, Newtownards
- 11:15 hours Launch of EuroPro NI Masters Golf Tournament – Clandeboye Golf Club, Conlig
- 13:45 hours Photo with the Mayor of Jersey – Town Hall, Bangor
- 15:00 hours PR Photo – Creative Peninsula – Walled Garden, Helens Bay
- 15:45 hours Annual Art Exhibition – Bangor Academy & Sixth Form College, Castle Park Avenue, Bangor
- 18:30 hours Welcome Reception for Northern Ireland Masters PGA EuroPro – Clandeboye Golf Club, Conlig

**Thursday 23 June**

- 10:20 hours Clifton Special School Record of Achievement Day for Primary Department – Old Belfast Road, Bangor
- 12:00 hours Recovery College Networking Event – Ards Arts Centre, Conway Square, Newtownards
- 14:00 hours Dress for Success NI Boutique Open Day – Glengall Street, Belfast
- 18:40 hours BCIPS School Production 'A Central Spark' – Castle Park Avenue, Bangor

**Friday 24 June**

- 12:00 hours Visit with the Captain of Bangor Golf Club – Broadway, Bangor
- 18:00 hours Conferment Ceremony for Irish Guards – Culloden Hotel, Cultra

**Saturday 25 June**

- 10:00 hours Irish Guards Parade – Conway Square, Newtownards
- 14:00 hours Comber Earlies Festival – Comber Square

**Sunday 26 June**

- 09:00 hours Queen's Baton Relay – Donaghadee Harbour
- 10:30 hours Queen's Baton Relay – Exploris Aquarium, Portaferry
- 15:30 hours Bangor Town Regatta – Royal Ulster Yacht Club, Clifton Road, Bangor

**Monday 27 June**

16:00 hours            Launch of the Hospitality Workforce Strategy – The Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings, Stormont

**Tuesday 28 June**

10:30 hours            Photo with Prize-winner of 'My Street, Main Street' Competition – North Down Museum, Town Hall, Bangor

**Wednesday 29 June**

11:00 hours            Millisle 'In Bloom' Competition Photo – Millisle Community Garden, Ballywalter Road, Millisle

**Thursday 30 June**

17:00 hours            **Deputy Mayor** – ForM Closing Event – Walled Garden, Bangor

## ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Ards and North Down Borough Council was held remotely using Zoom on Wednesday, 25 May 2022 commencing at 7.00pm.

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

**Officers:** Chief Executive (S Reid), Director of Finance and Performance (S Christie), Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning (S McCullough), Director of Environment (D Lindsay), Head of Community and Culture (J Nixey), Corporate Communications Manager (C Jackson), Democratic Services Manager (J Wilson) and Democratic Services Officer (H Loebnau)

### **1. PRAYER**

The Mayor, Councillor Brooks, welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited the Chief Executive to read the Council prayer.

**NOTED.**

### **2. APOLOGIES**

The Mayor sought apologies at this stage.

Apologies were received from Alderman Girvan and apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Boyle.



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 expressing his delight at having learnt on Friday past that Her Majesty The Queen had awarded City Status to Bangor as part of her momentous Platinum Jubilee celebrations. He was sure that everyone would agree that it was an incredible honour to be selected along with seven other places across the United Kingdom, the Dependencies and Crown Territories. The new status for Bangor would bring great opportunities for the entire Borough of Ards and North Down. He looked forward to the formal ceremony and the granting of the Letters Patent, and in the meantime the news could be celebrated. He put on record his thanks to the Officers of the Council who had prepared the successful bid on behalf of all of the Members of the Council and thought it had been very well done.

He reminded Members of the range of Platinum Jubilee events which would be taking place throughout the Borough and hoped that they would be well supported. In particular, he mentioned the lighting of the Jubilee Beacons on the evening of 2<sup>nd</sup> June in Bangor, Ballyhalbert and the main event in Newtownards where the Vice Lord Lieutenant and the new Mayor would be in attendance. There would also be many street parties and fun events across the Borough, and Sea Bangor would celebrate the Jubilee on the waterfront on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> June.

The Mayor offered warm congratulations to Councillor McClean and his wife on the birth of their first child, a son, Elias William Hector McClean.

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

### **5. MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR ENGAGEMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF MAY 2022** (Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Engagements for the month of May 2022.

The Mayor referred members to his List of Engagements undertaken for the month of May 2022 and took the opportunity to express his thanks to the Deputy Mayor Councillor Adair for his assistance throughout.

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

## **6. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 27 APRIL 2022**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above minutes.

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

## **7. MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 9 MAY 2022**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above minutes.

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

## **8. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

### **8.1 Regeneration and Development Committee dated 10 May 2022**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

The Chief Executive clarified that Item 6 on that Committee was the Town Advisory Group minutes which should have been recorded 'In Committee.'

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

### **8.2. Corporate Committee dated 10 May 2022**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

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

#### **8.2.1. Arising from Item 6 Sustainability and Climate Change Policy 2022 (Amended) (Appendix II)**

#### **Matter Arising from Corporate Services Committee 10 May 2022.**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Organisational Development and Administration detailing that at the Corporate Services Committee on the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022 it was agreed that the Council approved the Sustainability and Climate Change Policy 2022 subject to the inclusion of a reference to the declared climate emergency prior to ratification.

The amended policy was attached for approval.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the Sustainability and Climate Change Policy 2022 which includes reference to the declared climate emergency.

**RESOLVED on the proposal of Councillor Dunlop, seconded by Councillor McKee, that the recommendation be adopted.**

### **8.3. Environment Committee dated 11 May 2022**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

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

### **8.4. Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 11 May 2022**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

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

#### In respect of Item 12.2, Notice of Motion Submitted by Alderman Irvine and Alderman Keery

Councillor McKee proposed an amendment to the Notice of Motion that had been brought by Alderman Irvine and Alderman Keery at Item 8.4 which was seconded by Councillor Kendall.

That this Council notes with the concern the recent decision taken to no longer lock playgrounds and MUGAs in the Borough. That a report is brought back on the matter that will look at maintaining a locking up schedule that will include the Bloomfield and Rathgill playparks and the playpark and MUGA at Clandeboye.

Councillor McKee expressed great sympathy for the residents of Bloomfield and Rathgill due to the antisocial behaviour they had endured in recent times and he was aware that his Green Party colleagues had been actively involved in trying to assist the residents affected. Unfortunately, it was not only in Bloomfield and Rathgill that antisocial behaviour had coincided with the end of locking of facilities.

In Clandeboye, the issues had not been attributed to young people but rather adults who had been responsible for the majority of the issues, most significantly with pet owners allowing dogs to be exercised and to foul in the children's park and sports facilities. Therefore, he believed that with the residents of Clandeboye in mind, it would be prudent to include Clandeboye in the Officers evaluation of the locking up of those important and valuable community facilities. He also suggested that the Council actively worked with residents in those communities to overcome the issues that were affecting those areas and people's lives.

Alderman Irvine was happy to support that minor amendment to the other areas which had been highlighted during discussion of his Motion in relation to the locking up schedule for the summer months.



Alderman McIlveen sought clarification from Officers since it had been his reading of the original Notice of Motion that the whole schedule would be considered and to name areas explicitly could lead to other areas being excluded. In response, the Head of Community and Culture assured him that all play areas would be included, but that if there was a specific issue in Clandeboye, it could be looked at as part of the overall review. Alderman McIlveen was happy to support the overall review to include all parks.

Alderman Wilson also gave his support and was pleased that the Motion would cover all areas but additional consideration would need to be shown to areas where there were known to be long standing problems with anti social behaviour.

With the understanding that all areas would be considered in the consideration Councillor McKee asked to keep his amendment to include Clandeboye and the Chair of the Committee, Councillor Thompson, was happy to accept that as were the other Members of the Committee.

### **AGREED.**

#### In respect of Item 8, Indicative Programme of Events to Mark the 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Kirkistown Castle

Councillor Adair proposed an amendment which was seconded by Councillor Edmund, 'that the decision on Kirkistown Castle 400th anniversary be referred back to the Committee for further consideration.'

Councillor Adair began by thanking Officers for the report which had been presented to the Committee and the items which had been suggested were timely and would be well received. He felt that a budget of £5k was acceptable but was disappointed that the Council could not find that level of funding. He accepted that the proposal had been brought to the Committee's attention rather late but insisted that Members were only made aware of the significance of the anniversary in recent months.

He said this was a significant milestone in the Castle's history and no one present would ever see the next one in one hundred years. He reported that there was great excitement and anticipation being shown by the Cloughey community which hoped to celebrate the anniversary, and he believed the sum required was relatively modest. He did not feel it was appropriate for the Council to simply refuse to allocate funding and felt it could do much better than that. The celebration would bring the entire community together in marking one of the oldest buildings on the Ards Peninsula.

Seconding the amendment Councillor Edmund agreed with what his Council colleague had said and encouraged Officers and Members to work together to find what was a modest budget to help the Cloughey community celebrate in an appropriate manner and also promote the building as an attraction for those visiting the Borough. Not to promote the Castle and its history would be in his opinion a lost opportunity.

As Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee Councillor Thompson also gave his support and was aware that many members of the Committee were frustrated that no funding had been found to date.

**AGREED.**

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

## **9. RESOLUTIONS**

### **9.1. From Fermanagh and Omagh District Council – Public Holiday St Brigid’s Day (Appendix III)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy correspondence dated 21 April 2022 from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council regarding Public Holiday St Brigid’s Day.

RECOMMENDED that the information be noted.

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

### **9.2. From Fermanagh and Omagh District Council – Additional Roles for Local Councils (Appendix IV)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Correspondence dated 25 April 2022 from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council regarding additional roles for local Councils.

RECOMMENDED that the information be noted.

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

## **10. CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS**

### **10.1. Further Consultation on Body Worn Video – Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (Appendix V - VIII)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Correspondence from the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service.

RECOMMENDED that the information be noted.

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

## **11. DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE (DFI) WATER AND DRAINAGE POLICY DIVISION CONSULTATION (Appendix IX - XI)**

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:-** Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing that the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) had commenced a consultation on a range of policy options being considered for inclusion in future primary legislation relating to water, flooding and sustainable drainage. The letter attached outlined that the consultation was open for a period of 12 weeks from 11 March 2022 until 3 June 2022. The DFI consultation document, 'Water, Flooding and Sustainable Drainage: Improving how we manage water' set out the issues.

The consultation paper set out the background, including the wider consultation focusing on nine key policy areas where the Department for Infrastructure ("the Department") considered that current policy could benefit from change. Those included providing additional powers, rectifying loopholes and strengthening existing powers:

- Powers for NI Water to implement wider water shortage measures.
- Powers for NI Water to enter onto private land to carry out works for flood risk management purposes including construction of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).
- Provision of an enabling power for the Department to introduce arrangements to encourage developers to use Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) as the preferred drainage solution in new developments
- Powers for NI Water to adopt certain drainage infrastructure, which was in private ownership and was constructed prior to 1st October 1973
- Enhanced powers for NI Water to deal with drain and sewer misconnections.
- Powers for NI Water to register Article 161 agreements in the Statutory Charges Register
- Powers for the Department to grant fund Homeowner Flood Protection measures
- Powers to provide for easements and additional compensation arrangements for affected landowners to facilitate flood storage
- Technical amendments to enable future amendment of subordinate legislation
  - Powers for the Department to amend, update or revoke the Drainage (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 and the Water Environment (Floods Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009.

Responses to the consultation were requested to be submitted by Friday 3 June 2022. A draft response for consideration was included. Input from Building Control, Emergency Planning, Environmental Health and the Council's Sustainability Officer had been incorporated.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council notes the consultation and agrees to submit the response as outlined.

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



## **12. ANNUAL MEETING ARRANGEMENTS**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive detailing that the report considered the arrangements, given the continuing Covid-19 pandemic, for the holding of the Council's Annual Meeting. Public health guidance required a risk assessment to be carried out of public spaces. The current risk assessment of the Council Chamber would permit up to 16 members (including the Mayor).

A full Council meeting would require accommodation large enough for approximately 50 attendees plus the public and press, whilst the Annual Meeting could proceed with a reduced but quorate number and so the option of holding it physically in the Chamber was more feasible. That was the same arrangement as in 2021.

It was recommended - dependent upon all Members not attending agreeing to voluntarily send their apologies - to proceed with the Annual Meeting on 1 June 2022 at 11am in the Council Chamber, Bangor Castle.

A draft agenda for the meeting was attached. The substantial items of business being: Mayor's Review, appointments to the Positions of Responsibility including the position of Mayor and Deputy Mayor. The most suitable course of action regarding the election of an Alderman position was to be confirmed.

The Positions of Responsibility did not require a Council decision or vote, as they were dealt with through the Party Nominating Officers and their allocation had been agreed in 2019. However, the allocation of places to outside bodies, which would require votes, would be taken to the next full Council meeting on 29 June.

Therefore, it was recommended that the physical Annual Meeting be attended by the  
 Outgoing Mayor, Councillor Brooks  
 Outgoing Deputy Mayor, Councillor Adair  
 Incoming Mayor, Councillor Douglas  
 Incoming Deputy Mayor, Councillor Blaney  
 Nominating Officers for the four largest Parties  
 An Independent/Single Member Party,

Plus 7 Members decided using the d'Hondt method:

3 DUP

2 Alliance

2 UUP

That number would mean the meeting would be quorate (10 Members required) and would remain so if up to 6 Members needed to leave the room for any reason. The Chief Executive and a minimal number of support staff would also attend.

The meeting would be broadcast through a live YouTube broadcast, with a link provided on the Council's website, meaning other Members could watch (but not participate) in the meeting as could members of the press and public.

Party Group Leaders were asked to gain the support of their Groups so that voluntary apologies would be tendered accordingly.

RECOMMENDED that the Council agree to the proposals set out in the report for the holding of a physical Annual Meeting on 1 June 2022.

Councillor T Smith thought that this position was unusual and that if a meeting was being called surely it was correct that every Member had a right to attend. The Chief Executive explained that what was being recommended reflected the arrangements which had been put in place the previous year and Covid-19 concerns remained. Members not able to attend were being asked to lodge their voluntary apology based on the practicalities of how many people could be safely brought together in the Council Chamber. He said that no Member would be prevented from attending but that the recommendation was a practical solution to a problem which continued to exist.

The Member expressed his view that the meeting should be conducted in a similar way to how it had been done pre pandemic. He thought that society had in the main moved on but some parts of the public sector seemed reluctant to move with them.

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

### **13. SEALING DOCUMENTS**

**RESOLVED: -** (On the proposal of Councillor Edmund, seconded by Councillor Adair)

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

- (a) Rights of Burials: Nos 14208 – 14270
- (B) Duplicates: Clandeboye JX 3553, JX3554 and JX3555

### **14. TRANSFERS OF RIGHTS OF BURIAL**

**RESOLVED: -** (On the proposal of Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor Edmund)

**THAT** the following transfers be approved:-

Ballyvester Section C Grave A10

### **15. CONFERENCES**

**15.1. Attendance at Harkin Summit 7-8 June 2022** (Appendix XII - XIV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive detailing that the Harkin Summit would be hosted in Belfast on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022. It represented a global platform for senior international leaders across Business, Government, Public and Third Sectors to discuss and share best practice on advancing disability employment at a macro level.

Senior delegates included Microsoft, Twitter, BBC, PayPal, LinkedIn, Danske Bank, Ulster Bank, US Department for Labor, several visiting governments, and international disability organisations. The cost to attend the Summit was £250.

The Chief Executive had been invited to an Executive Reception hosted by Belfast City Council and Department for Communities in Belfast City Hall on the evening of 7<sup>th</sup> June. That provided an opportunity to network with senior summit delegates, Public Sector and Council officials, local and international Business leaders, and Political Representatives.

RECOMMENDED that the Council considers sending a Member(s) to the Harkin Summit in Belfast on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at a cost of £250 per person.

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

## **15.2 NAC UK Summer Conference Southport 24-26 June 2022 (Appendix XV)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive detailing that the National Association of Councillors Conference on Emergency Planning and Resilience would be hosted in Southport from 24-26 June 2022.

The Association existed to promote and enhance the role of councillors and to help elected members to be as effective as possible in carrying out their responsibilities.

Attendance was at a cost of £350 +VAT for a delegate, plus travel and subsistence.

RECOMMENDED that the Council consider nominating Members to attend the NAC UK Summer Conference in Southport from 24-26 June 2022.

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

## **16. NOTICE OF MOTION STATUS REPORT (Appendix XVI)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive detailing that the Status Report in respect of Notice of Motions was attached.

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

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

## **17. NOTICES OF MOTION**

### **17.1. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Edmund and Councillor Adair**

That this Council task officers to enter into discussions with the Education Authority concerning the redevelopment of the play area fronting Victoria Primary School (which is a shared facility between the school and public) as a potential Peace Plus project to enhance recreation and sports facilities for Ballyhalbert.

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

### **17.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman McIlveen and Councillor Kennedy**

That this Council notes that 2028 will mark the centenary of the internationally renowned Ards TT Races and tasks officers to prepare a report in relation to options on events to best commemorate this sporting anniversary and celebrate the area's rich motorsport heritage.

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

### **17.3. Rescinding Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman McDowell, Councillor Cummings, Councillor P Smith, Councillor Greer, Councillor McRandal, Councillor Walker and Councillor McKee**

That we the undersigned propose that the decision of the Council taken on 30 March 2022, that the Council purchases equipment to support 2 semi-permanent installations, 1 in Bangor Chamber and 1 in Ards Chamber for hybrid Council and Committee meetings going forward at a total 5-year cost of £120k (subject to permanent legislative change). Running costs from year 2 of £17.5k per year to be included in district rates, is rescinded and that the Council purchases equipment to support 2 semi-permanent installations, 1 in Bangor Chamber and 1 in Ards Chamber for hybrid Council and Committee meetings going forward at a total 5-year cost of £120k. Running costs from year 2 of £17.5k per year to be included in district rates, be approved by the Council.

The Mayor explained that the Notice of Motion would be taken at the Council meeting due to the time pressure in respect of the item.

Councillor P Smith proposed the Motion with a small addition at the end to include;



'In that context it is further proposed that all Council and Committee meetings move back to on site hybrid meetings from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022'. That was seconded by Alderman McDowell

Councillor P Smith explained that this was a rescinding Motion to replace the original which had been brought to the Council previously and which required legislation to be in place. He felt that it was important for the Council to progress the investment to return to normal pre Covid-19 meetings as soon as possible and particularly since Stormont was not acting. It was known that the lead in time to acquire the necessary equipment was approximately eight weeks to procure and install so the timescale should be achievable and there was a desire being expressed to get back to as much normality in life as possible. The hybrid situation would be of benefit to those who could not attend meetings due to health or other reasons. He explained that most Councils were already using such a system and September was a realistic date to give this Council an opportunity to catch up.

Alderman McDowell was happy to second the Rescinding Motion and thought it would be a wise long term investment for the Council. The return of normal life was very much welcomed but it was important to remember those who were vulnerable, and it was unknown if Covid would return in the Winter. He added that most Councils were using similar systems and thought that they provided a better service to members of the public, and particularly for those accessing the Planning Committee meetings.

Alderman McIlveen pointed to the amendment of the Motion which had been brought by Councillor P Smith and wondered if the Mayor considered it to be minor in nature and if the signatories of the Motion were in agreement to the amendment. He indicated that something unforeseen could arise meaning that the equipment could not be in place before 1 September and what would that mean for the Council. By being specific on the date any delay would result in the need to hire equipment at a further cost. He suggested that Members be updated at the August Council meeting on the progress of the system's implementation and was happy to support the Motion on condition that the Council would not be restricted to a specified date.

The Mayor confirmed that he considered Councillor P Smith's amendment to be an unsubstantial change and it was his understanding that all of the signatories of the rescinding Motion were in agreement.

Councillor Cathcart welcomed the introduction of hybrid meetings and thought that they worked especially well for the Planning Committee, where planning professionals and other members of the public were present. Those meetings often ran late in to the night and engagement from home would be welcome.

Councillor Edmund thought the hybrid system would work well for those who struggled to attend in person meetings due to being in a high risk health category and he thought that the Council had a responsibility to keep people safe.

Councillor T Smith strongly disagreed pointing to the cost of the hybrid system. He asked how such an expense was justified when, in his opinion, Council owned

facilities were falling apart and thought that the Council was going out of its way to waste money. He asked to be recorded as against the recommendation.

(Councillor Boyle entered the meeting at 7.58 pm)

Councillor McKimm thought that it was warming to see the compassion being shown towards those who were vulnerable or had health conditions and he hoped that the hybrid approach may be applied more broadly in terms of supporting those who had caring responsibilities and that technology would permit new ways of working. The Chief Executive confirmed that remote access would be open to any Member for any reason.

Alderman Irvine asked about what the upfront cost would provide and was informed that it would be for two systems in the Bangor and Newtownards Council Chambers which would permit a full broadcast and have provision for any Member to interact fully in the meeting and vote if using remote access. It would involve extra cost for staff to support the system for every Council and Committee meeting.

Councillor Greer suggested that the wording of the amendment should be slightly changed to state 1 September 2022 or as soon as possible thereafter. Signatories were asked in turn if they were content with the changes and all agreed that they were.

Councillor P Smith stated that he was more than happy to amend the rescinding Motion to reflect that.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor P Smith, seconded by Alderman McDowell, that the Council purchases equipment to support 2 semi-permanent installations, 1 in Bangor Chamber and 1 in Ards Chamber for hybrid Council and Committee meetings going forward at a total 5-year cost of £120k (subject to permanent legislative change). Running costs from year 2 of £17.5k per year to be included in district rates, is rescinded and that the Council purchases equipment to support 2 semi-permanent installations, 1 in Bangor Chamber and 1 in Ards Chamber for hybrid Council and Committee meetings going forward at a total 5-year cost of £120k. Running costs from year 2 of £17.5k per year to be included in district rates, be approved by the Council.**

In that context it is further proposed that all Council and Committee meetings move back to on site hybrid meetings from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 or as soon as possible thereafter.

#### **Circulated for Information**

(Appendix XVII – XXI)

- (a) Census 2021 Update – Intent to Publish,  
[www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/census/2021-census](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/statistics/census/2021-census)
- (b) National Association of Councillors UK Conferences
- (c) Listed Building Notice – Lime Kilns Ballywalter



- (d) Extension of Consultation on Minimum Unit Pricing for Alcohol in NI – now closes 27 May 2022 – [www.health-ni.gov.uk/MUP-consultation](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk/MUP-consultation)
- (e) Northern Ireland Housing Council Bulletin and March Housing Council Minutes

Proposed by Councillor Thompson, seconded by Councillor Adair, that the items be noted.

Referring to the Listed Building Notice at Lime Kilns Ballywalter, Councillor Adair welcomed the confirmation from the Department for Communities and he paid tribute to Council officers and the Ballywalter Community Group which had worked to achieve that outcome. He thought it was wonderful to see it restored and protected and Listed status would protect the Lime Kilns for many years to come.

**RESOLVED**, on the proposal of Councillor Thompson, seconded by Councillor Adair, that the items which were Circulated for Information be noted.

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

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

#### **18. REDEVELOPMENT OF KINNEGAR LOGISTICS BASE**

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

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

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

#### **19. APPLICATION TO LEVELLING UP FUND ROUND 2**

**\*\*\*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)**

#### **20. UNITE INDUSTRIAL ACTION SUSPENDED UPDATE**

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

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

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

**READMITTANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED**, on the proposal of Councillor McKimm, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that the public/press be readmitted to the meeting.

**TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 8.49 pm.

## ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Annual Meeting of the Ards and North Down Borough Council was held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bangor on Wednesday, 1 June 2022 commencing at 11.00 am.

### PRESENT:

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

**Aldermen:** Gibson M Smith  
McDowell

**Councillors:** Adair Gilmour  
Blaney McRandal  
Douglas P Smith  
Dunlop T Smith  
Edmund Walker

**Officers:** Chief Executive (S Reid), Democratic Services Manager (J Wilson) and Democratic Services Officer (P Foster)

### 1. PRAYER

The meeting commenced with the Chief Executive reading the Council prayer.

**NOTED.**

### 2. APOLOGIES

At this stage the Mayor, Councillor Brooks, commented that the Chamber could only accommodate a small number of Members in order to comply with the risk assessment that the Covid Regulations required the Council to carry out. This, he stated, had meant that the Members who were not able to attend in person, had to voluntarily tender their apologies for the meeting. He thanked them for giving up their place in order to allow the meeting to go ahead, adding that he was sure most of them would be watching remotely through the live stream. For the record, he read the apologies out as detailed below:

Alderman Carson	Councillor Irvine
Alderman Girvan	Councillor Johnson
Alderman Irvine	Councillor Kendall
Alderman Keery	Councillor Kennedy
Alderman McIlveen	Councillor Irwin
Alderman Wilson	Councillor McAlpine
Councillor Armstrong-Cotter	Councillor McArthur
Councillor Boyle	Councillor McClean
Councillor Cathcart	Councillor McKee

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Councillor Chambers  
Councillor Cooper  
Councillor Cummings  
Councillor Greer

Councillor McKimm  
Councillor Moore  
Councillor Thompson

NOTED.

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

NOTED.

### 4. MAYOR'S REVIEW

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the Ards and North Down Borough Council's Annual Meeting and noted that it would be the last meeting of the Council that he would Chair as the outgoing Mayor. He indicated that he did not intend to provide a review of the year as that would be well documented in the local press.

Councillor Brooks thanked his party colleagues for nominating him to the office of Mayor and expressed thanks to the Chief Executive for his help and support throughout the year. Continuing, he also thanked the staff within the Mayor's Office, his team of drivers and all the Town Hall staff including the Town Hall Supervisor.

Highlights of his Mayoral term included the granting of City status to Bangor and attendance at Windsor Castle to see the Irish Guards receive their new colours. Referring to his charitable work, Councillor Brooks confirmed that his work remained ongoing with plans well underway for his cross channel paddle board bikeride.

On behalf of the Ulster Unionist Party, Councillor P Smith congratulated Councillor Brooks on his great work during what had been an excellent Mayoral term. A term which had thankfully been less impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic than the previous one but which had meant his first in person engagement in the Mayor's Parlour had been on 1 April 2022. Continuing, he acknowledged that Councillor Brooks had still retained his role as a chef in a care home throughout his term which involved daily 5.30am starts and led to him becoming known as 'chef by day, Mayor by night'. He reiterated his thanks and encouraged him to gather memories of the year for reflection in the future.

In the absence of Alderman McIlveen, Councillor Gilmour on behalf of the DUP Group congratulated Councillor Brooks on his Mayoral term which he had undertaken with great dignity and decorum. She too noted the restrictions the Covid 19 pandemic had on his year, however, congratulated him on the many events which had been held, including his installation reception in the Walled Garden at Bangor Castle. Continuing, she stated that she looked forward to his coming trip on his water bike and took the opportunity to pay tribute to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Adair on his successful term in office too.

On behalf of the Alliance Party Group, Alderman McDowell, thanked Councillor Brooks for his hard work throughout his Mayoral term, adding that he had been an ambassador for all. He acknowledged the weekly press coverage in the local papers which had included many Mayoral photographs which, he added, were only a small snapshot of the work which Councillor Brooks had carried out throughout the year. Alderman McDowell also noted that the Covid 19 Pandemic had impacted everyone and that the chairing of Council meetings via Zoom was not an easy task at times. As such, he congratulated the Mayor on his term on behalf of everyone at the Council.

At this stage, the Mayor, Councillor Brooks expressed his thanks to his Deputy Mayor, Councillor Adair who had excelled in his role sharing Mayoral responsibilities and worked well with him.

On behalf of the Green Party Group, Councillor Dunlop congratulated Councillor Brooks on his fantastic Mayoral term and thanked him for all of his help and support.

The Chief Executive also expressed his thanks on behalf of the Council staff to the Councillor Brooks on his successful Mayoral term.

**NOTED.**

## **5. APPOINTMENTS TO POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY (FILE CX210)**

### **5a Appointment of Mayor and Deputy Mayor**

The Chief Executive explained that there was a report which had been circulated to Members outlining the process of appointing to Positions of Responsibility which was set out in legislation. The process of nominating to the position of Mayor fell to the Nominating Officer of the Alliance Party, Alderman Alan McDowell.

At this stage, Alderman McDowell rose to nominate Councillor Karen Douglas to the office of Mayor for the incoming year. He stated that Councillor Douglas had been co-opted to the Council in 2016, following which she had successfully topped the poll in 2019. She had already served for a year in the office of Deputy Mayor and as such her training had been put into place before taking on the office of Mayor. Continuing, Alderman McDowell referred to her very strong views on environmental issues, noting that she participated in beach cleans on a weekly basis, recalling her Notice of Motion on rewilding projects, which he had initially been sceptical about but was now fully converted to that cause. Councillor Douglas came from a health and social care background and this was something which he was aware she was very passionate about. As such, he pledged his full support for her in the role of Mayor for the incoming year.

Councillor Brooks congratulated the new Mayor on taking up the role and invited her to wear the chain of the office and sign the Register. He then invited the new Mayor, Councillor Douglas, to take over the chairing of the meeting.



Thanking the outgoing Mayor, Councillor Brooks, the incoming Mayor, Councillor Douglas, expressed her appreciation to him for his kindness and help shown towards her and congratulated him on what had been a very successful year. She added that she knew she would have big shoes to fill.

Continuing, the Mayor, Councillor Douglas, stated that it was a great honour to have been nominated to the position of Mayor by her colleague Alderman McDowell and she thanked him for that. She provided members with a brief synopsis of her background in public service, her role in social services, supporting families and children in need, and her role within the Criminal Justice Service. Councillor Douglas acknowledged the current issues affecting so many those being the cost of living, access to hospitals and schools and access to open spaces.

Councillor Douglas recalled that during 2019 she had served as Deputy Mayor and had enjoyed meeting so many people across the Borough and was able to shine a spotlight on them. Therefore, she acknowledged there was much to be done in respect of social justice and the environment and she hoped to be able to recognise all of those involved. Continuing she recognised that the Borough had much to offer and looked forward to working closely with local businesses and the Chambers of Trade. As one of four female Alliance councillors she also looked forward to inviting all the women on Council to come together and form a caucus. In summing up she reiterated her intention to give the role of Mayor her all and be an ambassador for all and she paid thanks to her children and grandchildren who were her inspiration.

On behalf of the DUP Group, Councillor Gilmour offered her congratulations to Councillor Douglas on her appointment as Mayor, adding that she looked forward to her working with all the parties and those within the Bangor Central District Electoral Area. She also noted the great start she would have to her Mayoral term with the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations and the Sea Bangor event that weekend.

Expressing his thanks on behalf of the UUP Group, Councillor P Smith wished Councillor Douglas every success and encouraged her to enjoy every minute. He agreed that her time as Deputy Mayor would have provided her with an insight into the role adding that he was sure a busy diary awaited her.

Likewise, Councillor Dunlop on behalf of the Green Party Group wished Councillor Douglas every success adding that he looked forward to collaborating with her throughout the incoming year.

The Mayor, Councillor Douglas, invited the outgoing Deputy Mayor, Councillor Adair, to address the Council at this stage.

The outgoing Deputy Mayor, Councillor Adair, rose to congratulate Councillor Douglas on her appointment as Mayor. Continuing he expressed his thanks to the outgoing Mayor, Councillor Brooks, for his hard work throughout his term adding that it had been both an honour and a privilege to serve alongside him. Councillor Adair also took the opportunity to thank his long suffering family as well as his DUP colleagues, in particular Alderman McIlveen and Michelle McIlveen MLA. Continuing he stated that it had been his pleasure to represent the Council as Deputy Mayor



during the Centenary Year of Northern Ireland. He encouraged Councillor Douglas to enjoy her role as Mayor and took the opportunity to congratulate the incoming Deputy Mayor, Councillor Blaney. Councillor Adair expressed his thanks to God as well as all Council staff, particularly those members of Democratic Services. He also expressed grateful thanks to his colleague Alderman Gibson, whom he fondly referred to as the 'father of the house' whose help and support over the years had been invaluable. In summing up he stated that he looked forward to returning to the back benches of the Council and the up and coming celebrations for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

At this stage both the Mayor and Chief Executive congratulated Councillor Adair on his successful year in office.

The Chief Executive asked the Nominating Officer for the UUP, Councillor P Smith, to nominate to the position of Deputy Mayor.

Councillor P Smith indicated that he wished to nominate Councillor Blaney for the position of Deputy Mayor. He stated that Councillor Blaney while in his first term as a Councillor had hit the ground running particularly with his Notice of Motion for the Freedom of the Borough for Gary Lightbody. He noted that he had also recently become a father and therefore would likely have his hands full with these two new roles. Continuing, Councillor P Smith noted the power there would be this incoming year within the Bangor Central DEA which he added was particularly appropriate given the town's recent promotion to City status. He encouraged Councillor Blaney to enjoy every moment in his year in office as Deputy Mayor.

The Mayor congratulated Councillor Blaney on his appointment adding that they would work well together particularly given their success in respect of the Freedom of the Borough motion for Gary Lightbody.

At this stage the Mayor invited the new Deputy Mayor to wear the chain of office and to address the Council.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Blaney, stated that it was both an honour and a privilege to take on this role and he thanked his UUP colleagues for their support particularly during his first term in Council. Continuing, he stated that it had been a dream of his to be able to fulfil this role and as such he looked forward to working with the Mayor to replicate the good working relationship which the Mayor's office had enjoyed the previous year.

On behalf of the DUP Group, Councillor Gilmour congratulated Councillor Blaney on his appointment, adding that he would undoubtedly have a busy year with a new baby in the house. She wished him well for his year ahead adding that she looked forward to him working for the entire Borough.

Councillor Dunlop commented that it was great to have Councillor Blaney in Office as Deputy Mayor and he looked forward to working with him alongside his fellow Bangor Central DEA colleagues.

Also offering his congratulations to Councillor Blaney, Alderman McDowell wished him every success for his year in Office, adding that the Council's Mayoral office had a great team to bring the Borough to the fore. He added that it would be a very exciting and interesting year, particularly given the recent granting of City status to Bangor.

At this stage Councillor P Smith took the opportunity to congratulate the Deputy Mayor for his term in office acknowledging the great support he had provided to the outgoing Mayor throughout the year.

**NOTED.**

**5b Appointments to Other Positions of Responsibility**  
(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive advising that appointments to Positions of Responsibility were governed by Part 3 and Schedule 1 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014. In accordance with the Act, the Council agreed at its Annual Meeting on 22 May 2019 a list of 91 positions to be appointed as Positions of Responsibility, and that such appointments would be made using the d'Hondt method. Party Nominating Officers and Independent Members thereafter proceeded to select Positions of Responsibility in the order determined by the d'Hondt calculation.

Where Positions of Responsibility were not for the full four-year term of the Council, Party Nominating Officers were only required to specify the individual Party Members taking Year 1 (2019/20) Positions. Year 2 – Year 4 Positions were allocated on a Party basis and individual Party Members were appointed to those by the Nominating Officers at the Annual Meeting in the relevant year, with year 2 and 3 appointments being made at the Annual Meetings on 3 June 2020 and 2 June 2021 respectively.

**Year 4 Positions of Responsibility to be appointed**

Party Nominating Officers should identify the members to be appointed to the year 4 (2022/23) Positions of Responsibility as follows:

<b>Position</b>	<b>Year 4</b>
Mayor	Alliance
Deputy Mayor	UUP
Corporate Services Committee - Chair	UUP
Corporate Services Committee – Vice Chair	DUP
Regeneration and Development Committee - Chair	Alliance
Regeneration and Development Committee - Vice Chair	DUP
Planning Committee - Chair	DUP
Planning Committee - Vice Chair	Alliance
Environment Committee - Chair	Alliance

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Environment Committee - Vice Chair	Green
Community and Wellbeing Committee - Chair	DUP
Community and Wellbeing Committee - Vice Chair	Alliance
Audit Committee - Chair	DUP
Audit Committee - Vice Chair	Alliance

Should any Party or Independent not wish to avail of a Position of Responsibility to which they were entitled, the Position would be allocated using d'Hondt to the next Party in line for making a choice, which at present was the DUP (see list attached).

RECOMMENDED that the following Party Nominating Officers confirm the members to be appointed to the Positions of Responsibility as outlined in the table above:

- Alderman McIlveen (DUP)
- Alderman McDowell (Alliance)
- Councillor P Smith (UUP)
- Councillor McKee (Green Party)

The Mayor invited Party Nominating Officers to make their nominations to the positions of Chair and Vice Chairs of the Committees as per the report.

- Alderman McIlveen (DUP) (absent but provided a letter to confirm his nominations.)
- Alderman McDowell (Alliance)
- Councillor P Smith (UUP)
- Councillor McKee (Green Party) (absent but provided a letter to confirm his nomination.)

<b>Position</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Member</b>
Mayor	Alliance	Councillor Douglas
Deputy Mayor	UUP	Councillor Blaney
Corporate Services Committee - Chair	UUP	Councillor P Smith
Corporate Services Committee – Vice Chair	DUP	Alderman McIlveen
Regeneration and Development Committee - Chair	Alliance	Councillor Walker
Regeneration and Development Committee - Vice Chair	DUP	Councillor Cummings
Planning Committee - Chair	DUP	Alderman Gibson
Planning Committee - Vice Chair	Alliance	Councillor McRandal
Environment Committee - Chair	Alliance	Alderman McDowell
Environment Committee - Vice Chair	Green	Councillor Kendall

Community and Wellbeing Committee - Chair	DUP	Councillor Edmund
Community and Wellbeing Committee - Vice Chair	Alliance	Alderman Wilson
Audit Committee - Chair	DUP	Councillor Gilmour
Audit Committee - Vice Chair	Alliance	Councillor Greer

**RESOLVED, that the nominations be noted.**

## **6. ELECTION OF ALDERMAN**

(Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive advising that Section 4 of the Local Government (Transitional, Incidental, Consequential and Supplemental Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 provided for the appointment of Aldermen to Councils. The Council may elect up to one quarter of the total number of members as Aldermen (i.e. up to 10). Appointments normally took place in election year only and were for the full four-year term of the Council. The only exception to this was in the case of a casual vacancy in the office of Alderman, in which case the vacancy was to be filled by an election at the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

At the Annual Meeting on 22 May 2019, Council appointed the following 10 Members as Aldermen for the four-year term:

- Alderman Carson
- Alderman Gibson
- Alderman Girvan
- Alderman Irvine
- Alderman Keery
- Alderman McDowell
- Alderman McIlveen
- Alderman Menagh
- Alderman Muir
- Alderman M Smith

Members would recall that, at the Annual Meeting in June 2020, Councillor Scott Wilson replaced Andrew Muir as Alderman, following his appointment to the NI Assembly.

### **Vacancy to be Appointed**

In May 2022 Jimmy Menagh's position as Alderman became vacant when he sadly passed away. As above, this position is to be filled by election at the Annual Meeting on 1 June 2022.

At the Council Annual Meeting on 22 May 2019 the allocation of positions for Alderman followed the d'Hondt method.

Using the d'Hondt calculation, this vacancy would fall to the Green Party for nomination. Should the Green Party not wish to avail of the position, this would be

allocated using d'Hondt to the next Party in line for making a choice, which at present was the DUP (see list attached at Appendix).

RECOMMENDED that the Council agree to elect an Alderman.

At this stage the Chief Executive advised that there was a report before Members which set out the mechanism of the election of an Alderman. This followed the death of Alderman Menagh which had created, what was referred to as, a casual vacancy. At the Council Annual Meeting on 22 May 2019, the allocation of positions for Alderman followed the d'Hondt method. Using the d'Hondt calculation, this vacancy would fall to the Green Party for nomination. Should the Green Party not wish to avail of the position, this would be allocated using d'Hondt to the next Party in line for making a choice, which at present was the DUP (see list attached).

He advised that he had received a letter from the Green Party Nominating Officer Councillor McKee, declining to make proposal for nomination. The next party to nominate would be the DUP.

Councillor Gilmour proposed, seconded by Councillor Adair, that Councillor Armstrong-Cotter, be elected as an Alderman.

The proposer, Councillor Gilmour, noted that Councillor Armstrong-Cotter had first been elected to Council in 2010 and was very passionate and enthusiastic in her role as a Councillor. She acknowledged the hard work which she put in often behind the scenes for residents of the local community.

Commenting as seconder, Councillor Adair, stated that it gave him great pleasure to second this proposal, adding that Councillor Armstrong-Cotter was one of the most generous and kind people he was fortunate enough to call his colleague. He also acknowledged the great friendship there had been between her and their former colleague the late Alderman Menagh and as such he commended members to support the proposal.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Councillor Adair, that Councillor Armstrong-Cotter, be elected as an Alderman.**

## **7. CLOSE OF MEETING AND PLAYING OF NATIONAL ANTHEM**

The Mayor, Councillor Douglas, thanked members for attending, officers for supporting the meeting and to all of those who had been watching the livestream. She advised that the meeting would now be closed with the playing of the National Anthem. Members were asked to stand if able.

## **TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 11.50am.



## ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Planning Committee was held virtually on Thursday, 19 May 2022 at 7.00 pm via Zoom.

### PRESENT:

**In the Chair:** Councillor Cathcart

**Aldermen:** Gibson Mcllveen

**Councillors:** Adair Kennedy (7.01pm)  
McKee Smith, P  
McRandal Walker

**Officers:** Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning (S McCullough), Principal Planning and Technical Officer (G Kerr) and Democratic Services Officers (M McElveen and S McCrea)

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for inability to attend were received from Alderman McDowell and Councillors McClean, Brooks and Thompson.

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

Councillor P Smith later declared an interest prior to discussion of item 4.2:LA06/2022/0130/O - Lands immediately South of 84 Crawfordsburn Road, Bangor - Dwelling (Renewal of LA06/2018/0938/O)

### **3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF 5 APRIL 2022**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND**, on the proposal of Alderman Mcllveen, seconded by Alderman Gibson, that the minutes be noted.

### **4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

**4.1 LA06/2021/1136/O - Lands between 61 Cloughey Road and 17 Ballygalget Road, Portaferry - Dwelling and garage on an infill site**  
(Appendix I)

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 (Councillor Adair)

**Proposal:** Dwelling and garage on an infill site

**Site Location:** Lands between 61 Cloughey Road and 17 Ballygalget Road, Portaferry

**Recommendation:** Refusal

The Principal Planning and Technical Officer outlined the particulars of the application, advising members to note that as this was an outlying application, it would be the principal of development that was to be considered and that further details might be produced should the recommendation have been overturned at the meeting. None of the statutory consultees had objection to the proposal, but there had been one objection from a third party relating to the application, stating that the proposal did not represent a gap-site and that houses in line for development ran onto different roads. The objector also protested that if the houses had been considered as part of the same frontage, an entire field with a hedge would require removal for site lines and thus would cause detrimental effect on rural character. The Case Officer had accessed the principal of development in the report and agreed with the views expressed by the objector. The site was located in the countryside between the settlement limits of Portaferry and Cloughey. There were no designations upon the land and the general area was characterised by agriculture, associated buildings and dispersed dwellings. The application site was located along the eastern-side of Cloughey Road whilst immediately south of the site was 17 Ballygalget Road (henceforth referred to as '17'); a single-storey semi-detached dwelling & outbuilding. To the north lay 61 Cloughey Road (henceforth referred to as 61); a single detached dwelling.

The Principal Planning and Technical Officer referenced slide imagery of the location(s) to members, including the application site and abovementioned adjacent dwellings. She advised that the policy states the definition of a substantial and continuously built-up frontage would include a line of three or more buildings. When such is applied to the application in conjunction with the location of 61 fronting to the Cloughey Road, whilst 17's frontage was upon the Ballygalget Road. The three buildings would have required the same frontage to the same road without any breaks otherwise frontage would not be considered continuous. The dwelling of 17 were angled to front onto the Ballygalget Road with only the corner of the plot abutting the Cloughey Road. Given that such signified two different frontages, the first criterion of the policy was not met as there was not a substantial and continuously built-up frontage. Gap sites within a continuous built-up frontage that exceed the local average plot-width may be considered as constituting an important visual break. Referencing the slide, The Principal Planning and Technical Officer was able to point out an important visual break. If both dwellings 17 & 61 were considered as bookends to the gap-site, the width of the gap-site would equate to 57.3 metres. The Case Officer had looked at several plot sizes in the locality to provide an average of 35 metres. The plot-width of the application site was measured to be approximately 52 metres, meaning it would have been much larger than other local plot averages. Due to this difference between the site's width and average plot sizes, the site could be considered as an important visual break. In considerations of the above, it was postulated that the proposal would result in the genesis of a suburban-style build-up of development when viewed with existing and

proposed buildings. This would mean that the proposed site would add to the ribbon of development between 17 & 61. The amplification texts of C2Y8 stated that ribbon development was always detrimental to rural character due to its contributions toward a localised sense of build-up whilst disrespecting the traditional settlement patterns of the countryside.

The Principal Planning and Technical Officer referred to an appeal reference within the Case Officer's report; appeal number 2017-AOO14, Glenavy Road. The report's commissioner had also referenced the policy's mention of one frontage. Members were asked to recall April's Planning Committee wherein approval was sought for planning permission approval regarding an infill site. Concerns had been raised with the prospect of infill sites in general, the possibilities of the future use of countryside and the precedent that might be set for such developments. The application had been called in with the recommendation of refusal. The proposal would clearly not meet the requirements of policy as set out in CTY8.

Councillor Adair advised that the area in question was locally known as Nutt's Bridge. With 17 & 61 presenting on different roads, Councillor Adair wanted to know if it would have made any difference to planning permission had the dwellings been situated on the same road. The Principal Planning and Technical Officer advised that the question was deeply hypothetical and additionally hard to answer due to the number of variables.

Councillor McRandal spoke of the numerous appeal examples provided whereby refusal was the end result and asked if any similar examples existed in which an appeal was upheld, however the Principal Planning and Technical Officer was unable to provide that information as the Case Officer had looked toward dismissed appeals in line with the refusal recommendation. With no other questions for The Principal Planning and Technical Officer, the Chairman asked for members a proposal.

Proposed by Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor McKee that the recommendation be adopted, and that Planning Permission be refused.

Alderman McIlveen believed it was a boon to bring forth the cases to Council to help members understand policies and how such were applied. He described the particulars of the visual gap, and the size of the site by comparison to other dwellings. Mirroring Councillor McRandal's references to alternative appeal examples, Alderman McIlveen believed it would have been useful to have seen both sides of an argument, such as upheld appeals which would allow members to more effectively exercise their discretion in accessing policy.

Councillor P Smith agreed with the decision to accept the proposal and spoke of numerous gap-site instances whereby the Council had been consistent in their approach.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor McKee, that the recommendation be adopted, and that planning permission be refused.**

**4.2 LA06/2022/0130/O - Lands immediately South of 84 Crawfordsburn Road, Bangor - Dwelling (Renewal of LA06/2018/0938/O)**  
(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's Report.

**DEA:** Hollywood and Clandeboye

**Committee Interest:** Application made by an elected member of the Council

**Proposal:** Dwelling (Renewal of LA06/2018/0938/O)

**Site Location:** Lands immediately South of 84 Crawfordsburn Road, Bangor

**Recommendation:** Approval

(Councillor P Smith declared an interest and was temporarily removed from the meeting at 19:17.)

The Principal Planning and Technical Officer explained the application was for outlying planning permission for a dwelling on the Crawfordsburn Road within the development limits of Bangor. It came before the Planning Committee as it had been placed by an elected member of the Council. This application was to be considered as a renewal, as in March 2019, a previous application had been placed for the same site where members had agreed with to grant permission. Due to it being an outlying permission only, members were asked to consider their decisions solely on a dwelling at the site location. Particulars of the dwelling were to be conditioned and would be received at reserved matter stage if approval was granted.

The Principal Planning and Technical Officer provided further details alongside associated slides. The lands in question were located in the front-garden area of 84 Crawfordsburn Road which was well screened and consisted of a lawn and landscape planted areas. The ground level dropped down into the site from the northern boundary with frontage that consisted of a red-brick wall & hedging whilst a high hedge defined the eastern and western boundaries with the property backing onto the Carnalea Golf Club grounds. The surrounding area of the site was residential and consisted of a mixture of housing types. Photograph references were supplied showing the site in question alongside access to 84 Crawfordsburn Road & its frontage as well as the dwelling and garden adjacent.

The Principal Planning and Technical Officer explained that the position of the site at 84 Crawfordsburn Road was planned to mirror the lay of the adjacent 84a property which was granted under reference W-2004 0823 for a split-level bungalow. The ridge height of the dwelling would stand at no more than six metres to lessen the impact of loss of light or dominance. By comparison, the dwelling of 84a was split-level and had a ridge height of five metres from ground level at the highest point. There would be room for parking of in-curtilage vehicles on site. No objections had been received to the proposal and all consultees were content.

Proposed by Councillor McRandal, seconded by Councillor McKee that the recommendation be adopted, and that Planning Permission be granted.

Councillor McRandal believed the acceptance of a renewal appeared straightforward given no issues were raised by the planners and no objections had been received.



Councillor McKee concurred with his colleague and spoke of the pattern of establishment of dwellings in front of dwellings in the area.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McRandal, seconded by Councillor McKee, that the recommendation be adopted and planning permission be granted.**

(Councillor P Smith returned to the meeting at 19:22.)

**4.3 LA06/2022/0118/LBC - Ards Arts Centre, Town Hall, Newtownards - Emergency repairs to the south pediment, comprising stone repairs, re-rendering of the tympanum and installation of lead weathering details**  
(Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's Report.

**DEA:** Newtownards

**Committee Interest:** Application made by the Council

**Proposal:** Emergency repairs to the south pediment, comprising stone repairs, re-rendering of the tympanum and installation of lead weathering details

**Site Location:** Ards Arts Centre, Town Hall, Newtownards

**Recommendation:** Consent

The Principal Planning and Technical Officer advised the application sat before the committee as it had been placed by the Council. It was explained in conjunction with slides that the Town Hall was a listed building that sat at the primary retrieval core of Newtownards. It was of historical importance to the town and, being listed, Historic Building Branch were contacted regarding the minor repairs would in terms of development and detailed drawings had been submitted and assessed by Historical Environment Division. The proposed alterations to the building had been deemed as acceptable and would not detract from the listed building.

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

**5. UPDATE ON PLANNING APPEALS**  
(Appendix IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning attaching decision notice. The report detailed that the following enforcement notice was quashed on the 31 March 2022

<b>Appeal reference:</b>	2020/E0028
<b>Application Reference:</b>	LA06/2018/0403/CA
<b>Appeal by:</b>	Mr Mervyn and Julie Philips
<b>Subject of Appeal:</b>	Alleged unauthorised residential dwelling, access laneway and associated hardstanding.



<b>Location:</b>	Land at 80m South of 12 Drumawhey Road, Newtownards
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The Commissioner determined that the building, which formed the focus of the appeal, was not being used a residential dwelling.

The enforcement notice was served during the initial stages of the global COVID 19 pandemic and at this time the owner of the property would not allow the Council access to the site to complete an internal site inspection. Given the unprecedented times the Council was not able to enforce an internal site inspection, and as a result of an approaching immunity date the Council had to serve the EN to protect its position.

The Commissioner determined that the building was being used as a tack store, home office and artist's studio ancillary to the residential property at No. 12 Drumawhey Road and therefore did not constitute a breach.

### New Appeals Lodged

1. The following appeals were submitted on 23 February and 23 March 2022 respectively.

<b>Appeal reference:</b>	2021/A0227
<b>Application Reference:</b>	LA06/2021/0413/F
<b>Appeal by:</b>	Mr James Morley
<b>Subject of Appeal:</b>	Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of 4 no.2 Bed apartments
<b>Location:</b>	115 Station Road, Craigavad, Holywood

<b>Appeal reference:</b>	2021/E0077
<b>Application Reference:</b>	LA06/2020/0019/C
<b>Appeal by:</b>	D Graham
<b>Subject of Appeal:</b>	Alleged unauthorised removal of two trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO)
<b>Location:</b>	Lands adjacent to 5 Bennett House and to the rear of 2b Fort Road, Helens Bay

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

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

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

**6. UPDATE ON NOTICE OF MOTION ON REVISION OF MINERAL PLANNING PERMISSIONS (ROMPS) (FILE RDP39/RDP14)**  
(Appendices V, VI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning attaching correspondence from Council to Minister for Infrastructure dated 04.03.2022 and response from Chief Planner to Council dated 06.04.2022. The report detailed In February 2022 Council adopted a Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor McKee and Councillor Kendall:

That Council notes with concern that, since Local Government Reform in 2015, the Department for Infrastructure (and the Department for the Environment before that) has failed to commence Section 129 of the Planning Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 on the review of Old Minerals Permissions (ROMPs). Such delays in legislating for the need for historic minerals permissions to comply with robust environmental standards has already given rise to significant harm and places undue liabilities and responsibilities on public authorities resulting from repeated Ministerial decisions since 2006 not to commence ROMPs legislation.

In recognition of the considerable pressures that the implementation of ROMPs will place on the financial and staffing resources of this Council, this Council considers the imposition of these responsibilities and liabilities upon our resources as unreasonable. Therefore, this Council calls on the Minister for Infrastructure, to urgently legislate for the removal of responsibility for the implementation, administration and delivery of ROMPs from this, and all local authorities, and for her Department to implement, administer and deliver ROMPs.

**Progress**

Council subsequently wrote to the Minister for Infrastructure on this matter (see letter attached). The Department for Infrastructure (Dfi) had now responded, and a copy of which was also attached.

It read that Dfi would proceed with passing ROMPs over to Councils for implementation, administration and delivery. It stated that, with regard to concerns raised by this and other councils, the Department would consider a phased approach to implementation, the introduction of a fee for ROMPs applications, and the provision of guidance and model conditions.

Officers strongly disagreed with the approach outlined by Dfi and it was proposed that Council wrote back to the Department in this regard.

RECOMMENDED that Council writes back to the Minister for Infrastructure and the Chief Planner, opposing the Department's approach.

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

In proposing the recommendation, Councillor McKee explained that when both he and his colleague spoke on the Notice of Motion when brought to committee, they

had felt strongly that ROMPs becoming Council issue was not the correct path to take and that the Department should have taken more responsibility. He professed his disappointment of the decision by the Department to pass responsibility to the Council. Though a promise had been made of support and skillsets to carry out the function, Councillor McKee was not confident the level of support that may be offered would prove sufficient and thusly, agreed with the recommendation.

Alderman McIlveen recalled support for the Notice of Motion which reflected views of Council Officers in the response they had been making in the past, and so was happy to second the proposal and proceed to write back to the new Minister, Mr O'Dowd who he would hope might have a different approach to the situation by comparison to his predecessor.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor McKee, seconded by Alderman Gibson that the recommendation be adopted, and the Council writes back to the Minister for Infrastructure and the Chief Planner, opposing the Department's approach.**

### **TERMINATION OF MEETING**

This meeting would spell the end of Councillor Cathcart's charge as Chairman for the Planning Committee. Councillor Walker thanked the Chairman for his engagement in issues over the course of the past year whilst Alderman McIlveen concurred, applauding the lead taken by the Chairman in some of the issues of the year and the challenges faced. Councillor P Smith congratulated Councillor Cathcart on his chairmanship over the course of the year and echoed the sentiments of his colleagues.

The meeting terminated at 7.32 pm.

## ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Planning Committee was held virtually on Thursday, 7 June 2022 at 7.00 pm via Zoom.

### PRESENT:

**In the Chair:** Alderman Gibson

<b>Councillors:</b>	Adair	Brooks (7.05pm)
	Cathcart	Kennedy
	McKee	Smith, P
	McRandal	Walker
	Moore	Thompson
	McClean	

**Officers:** Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning (S McCullough), Principal Planning and Technical Officers (G Kerr and L Maginn), Senior Professional and Technical Officers (P Kerr and C Rogers) and Democratic Services Officers (M McElveen and R King)

### CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chair welcomed Councillor Moore following her appointment to the Council. He advised members she would be observing the meeting ahead of a formal induction.

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for inability to attend were received from Alderman McElveen and Councillor McAlpine.

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

The following Declarations of Interest were notified:

Alderman Gibson – Item 4.1 – LA06/2021/0905/F – Retention of existing agricultural shed 230m north of 121 Manse Road, Ballygowan

Councillor Cathcart – Item 4.5 – LA06/2021/1364/F – Change of use (temporary for 3 years) of parking spaces to parklet (consisting of planters and area for public seating) to front of 2-4 Seacliff Road, Bangor

#### **3. 19TH MAY PLANNING COMMITTEE MINUTES TO BE RATIFIED BY JUNE COUNCIL AND ANY MATTERS ARISING CONSIDERED AT JULY PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, that the item be noted.**



#### 4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

(The chair withdrew from the meeting having declared an interest in Item 4.1. The Vice Chair, Councillor McRandal, assumed the chair in his absence – 7.05pm)

(Councillor Brooks joined the meeting – 7.05pm)

##### 4.1 LA06/2021/0905/F – Retention of existing agricultural shed 230m north of 121 Manse Road, Ballygowan (Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Case Officer's Report.

**DEA:** Comber

**Committee Interest:** A Local development application 'called-in' to Planning Committee from the delegated list w/c 25 April by a member of that Committee - Called in by Alderman McIlveen:

*"For this matter to be called in for the Planning Committee to consider whether the evidence submitted by the applicant is sufficient to confirm that his agricultural business is currently active and established, whether the new building is necessary for the efficient use of the agricultural holding and the efficient functioning of the business, and that no suitable alternative buildings or sites are available pursuant to CTY 12 of Planning Policy Statement 21"*

**Proposal:** Retention of existing agricultural shed

**Site Location:** 230m north of 121 Manse Road, Ballygowan

**Recommendation:** Refusal

The Principal Planning and Technical Officer (G Kerr) outlined the above planning application, explaining that it was for the retention of an existing agricultural shed at 230m north of 121 Manse Road, Ballygowan.

The application was before members due to a call in by Alderman McIlveen.

The recommendation was to refuse planning permission.

An agricultural shed existed on the site which was the subject of the application.

Providing context, she added that the site was subject of a previous planning application under planning ref. LA06/2018/0817/F – Lands 220m NE of 121 Manse Road, Ballygowan for an Agricultural building.

This application was recommended for refusal on 31 January 2019 as the proposal was contrary to CTY 1 and CTY12 of PPS21 of Planning Policy Statement 21 Sustainable Development in the Countryside, in that the applicant had not provided sufficient information to confirm that the existing agricultural business was currently active and established; the new building was necessary for the efficient use of the agricultural holding and there were no suitable existing buildings on the holding or enterprise that could be used.



Following recommendation to refuse, the application was withdrawn on the 26 February 2019.

Following that recommendation to refuse permission, an agricultural building was then constructed on the site without the benefit of planning permission and was currently subject to enforcement proceedings.

An image showed the site was located in the countryside and consisted of part of a large agricultural field. The site occupied a roadside position and was fairly flat throughout. The roadside boundary is defined by post and wire fencing. The northern boundary was defined by a hedgerow and the remaining boundaries were undefined as they made up part of the larger field. An area of trees and overgrown hedges had been included within the site in the southern section.

The officer showed further images of the site to members and explained the relevant policy in the consideration of a proposal such as this one was CTY12 of PPS 21. CTY12 stated that planning permission would be granted for development on an active and established agricultural or forestry holding where it was demonstrated that a list of criteria was met.

The starting point for the assessment of this policy was establishing if there was an active and established business and holding.

The SPPS at paragraph 6.73 provided clarity when dealing with proposals for agriculture and forestry development – it stated that “provision should be made for development on an active and established (for a minimum of six years) agricultural holding or forestry enterprise....”

PPS 21 also referenced what constituted an active and established holding, Paragraph 5.56 of PPS21 referred to criteria set out in CTY10.

The P1C form submitted as part of the planning application stated that the farm business was established in June 2017 and a Category 3 business ID was allocated on 17 April 2018. Category 3 Business IDs were allocated to enable keepers of small number of animals (less than five cattle / 10 sheep) to operate a herd or flock.

No farm maps had been made available during the processing of the application. DAERA had confirmed that the business referred to on the P1C form had not been established for more than six years and that the business had not claimed SFP in the last six years.

It was considered that the agricultural holding had not been established for more than six years and therefore did not meet this initial part of the policy test.

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

Members would be aware of previous applications brought for farm sheds.

In a lot of those instances it was demonstrated that while the farm business had been in existence for six years the holding had not been in possession of the applicant for six years.

This application before you this evening had neither – the business had not been in existence for six years and the 'six-year test' requiring proposals for farm buildings to be located on an active and established agricultural holding could not be satisfied and the proposal was considered to be contrary to planning policy.

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

Refusal of planning permission was therefore recommended.

Councillor Cathcart asked if further evidence had been submitted by the applicant in terms of demonstrating it had been an active agricultural business for the required six years. He referred to the applicant's Business ID and queried if that was sufficient.

The officer advised that DAERA had confirmed in a consultation response that the business had not been established for more than six years and that the business had not claimed SFP in the last six years. Therefore, further evidence was required to show it was an active business and the officer advised that nothing had been submitted despite a request made by the case officer on April 5<sup>th</sup> 2022.

Councillor Cathcart queried the CAT 3 ID status of the farm and if that would have been sufficient evidence. The officer explained that it would be acceptable provided the business had been operational for at least six years but that had not been the case. The officer understood that the shed had been erected in order for the applicant to get a herd number but this business had been allocated category 3 because it was for a small number of animals and DAERA had since clarified that it applied to five cattle/10 sheep which would give members an idea of how small the operation was.

The Vice Chair invited Mr Edwin Poots MLA and Mr Johnson to the meeting in order to speak in support of the application. He advised they had five minutes to address the committee.

Mr Poots MLA advised that his interest in the application was that Mr Burton had an agricultural business within five miles of his own property and he had used the business many times over the years. The applicant had always wanted to farm himself and after some delays in purchasing the land in question he had taken control of the land in 2017 and had spent a few years organising it for use and that had included an application for a herd number.

The issue faced by the applicant was that to have a herd number he required covered space in order to meet animal welfare requirements to protect livestock from the weather.

He referred the committee to a successful appeal in relation to a similar application – this had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. He explained that the PAC, in relation to that appeal, had seen the building as a necessary part of the business and had granted permission. At that point the applicant did not have a shed and needed to obtain a herd number.

He advised that Mr Burton now had a herd number but needed a shed to keep the animals in. It was a chicken and egg situation and the conundrum that the applicant now found himself in. The application site was the most secluded site on the land he owned. He added that the applicant was in his retirement years but had always wanted to carry out farming. In conclusion, he said that if members were to read the planning appeal which set out the PACs consideration of policy then they would see that this application met the policy.

The agent, Mr Johnson, added that the decision to withdraw the original application had been taken too soon and he had withdrawn it without Mr Burton's permission. He added that without the shed, the applicant would lose his farming business.

The Chair invited questions to the speakers from members.

Councillor Cathcart accepted that officers and the committee could only be guided by planning policy but asked the speakers if there was further evidence beyond the current ID that had been referred to earlier.

It was advised that Mr Burton had an ID and Herd Number, along with herd equipment and machinery. He had carried out drainage and tidied up the land and had spent considerable time and money doing that. The applicant regarded this as evidence and Mr Poots argued that all those things were previously regarded as evidence and the SFP was not a requirement as evidence. He encouraged members to read the PAC appeal.

Councillor Cathcart asked for further detail on the planning appeal and Mr Poots explained that it dated back to November 2014 and then read out the commissioner's response stated below:

"Although the appellant does not have herd of cattle at present no evidence was presented to dispute his future intentions. I note that the drawings which formed the basis for his application for planning permission indicate that the proposed shed would be used for silage and the housing of ten calves.

"I accept that it is the appellant's intention to develop his farming enterprise in the direction he has stated. In order to do so he is bound by statute to provide a facility for the isolation of cattle. This proposed shed would provide such a facility and without it the appellant would be unable to expand his farm enterprise in the direction which he intends. Therefore, it is my view that the proposed shed is necessary for the efficient use of the holding. As the evidence from both parties' states that there are no other buildings on the holding, the appeal site cannot be considered as an alternative site away from existing farm buildings, and the Department's objections to the proposal under this part of the policy are misplaced."

Mr Poots MLA said that the appeal decision made no reference to six years. Councillor Walker advised that the problem was the application before members related to an application for retrospective planning permission and officers were asking for evidence that the business had been in place for more than six years.

That evidence had not been provided so Councillor Walker was asking again for that evidence. He also queried if there was any reference to the business in the PAC case having proof of existence of six years.

Mr Poots MLA explained that the applicant had acquired the farm in 2016 and had gone through the process of clearing the farm and suitable for its purpose. He had acquired equipment over the years and now had a herd number along with livestock. The building contained hay and food stock and there was considerable evidence that the individual had been engaged in farming activity since acquiring the land. Mr Johnson argued that there was no reference in the appeal document that it had been a farming business for more than six years and said that while the business ID number was only to link the farm with DAERA around herd activity, farming activity had taken place before that but aside from a statement it was not possible to provide evidence of those farming practices.

Councillor P Smith had sympathy with the applicant but agreed with Councillor Walker that there was difficulty in granting permission given that DAERA had confirmed that it had not been an active farm business for the required six years. He recognised there was a consistency element given previous decisions made by the committee in similar cases. He felt the objections in terms of the appeal had been around visual integration and necessity, but it had been accepted that the exampled applicant had operated as a farm business for at least six years. He asked how the committee could accept further evidence.

Mr Poots advised that the applicant had farm machinery for a long number of years and had carried out a large amount of work. The building was there for animal welfare reasons and it was not appropriate to keep sick animals in a field. He was aware of situations of that and complaints. It was not DAERA's role to find whether there has been an active farm for six years but it was up to the committee to decide on the information provided.

The vice chair thanked the speakers and they were returned to the public gallery. He invited questions of clarification to the officer.

Councillor P Smith referred to the crux of the argument being the six-year rule and the criteria not met by the applicant. He asked the officer to explain the process with regards to testing for that particular requirement.

The officer explained that it had been clarified by DAERA that the six-year rule was not met and no evidence to show otherwise being submitted as part of the application. The example appeal provided in the planning application dated back to 2014. She disagreed that it was a similar case as it had already been acknowledged that the applicant was a farming business and it was not the case with this particular application. There were other more recent appeal decisions she pointed to which had been consistent with this approach and recommendation taken at this meeting.



They were all accepting though that the applicant in question had been an established farm business for more than six years and the objections related to integration.

In terms of animal welfare legislation, this was not planning policy and there was guidance in relation to farmers not meeting the criteria to rent sheds in order to house their animals until they met the six-year requirement.

Councillor Cathcart asked for clarity that the PAC had accepted the case referred to by the applicant was a business that had been active for six years. The officer said that was accepted as a starting point and then the PAC had to assess whether the shed was necessary for the business and in that case, it was deemed so. Evidence had also been submitted with that case.

Councillor Cathcart's understanding was that a shed was required for a herd number, but the applicant could not get planning permission without a herd number so it was a catch 22. The officer advised that planning legislation was separate and there were other ways to acquire a herd number through renting a shed until the business had been active for the required six years.

Councillor Cathcart felt that in this particular case having to rent a shed to build up a six-year existence was ridiculous. He asked what evidence could be submitted to show the farm had been in operation for six years. It was advised that invoices, for example for hedge cutting, needed to refer to the specific site but the planning officer reiterated that no evidence had been submitted as part of the application.

Proposed by Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor P Smith, that the recommendation be adopted, and that Planning Permission be refused.

The proposer, Councillor Walker shared the compassion of Councillor P Smith but felt that the Council had to follow the rules set down and pointed to the fact that no further evidence had been provided to show it had been an active business. Another factor that had not been considered was if the shed was even necessary for the business and if other options were available. Unfortunately on the aspect of the six-year rule, members had no choice but to refuse.

The seconder, Councillor P Smith echoed the sentiments and was sympathetic to the applicant's predicament but the committee's hands were tied without any further evidence being provided.

Councillor Cathcart added his sympathies and believed the rules around development around agriculture and the countryside were strange and needed to be reviewed going forward. He felt the rules had been brought in to prevent unruly development in the countryside but he felt there was a difference between someone adding a dwelling in the countryside as opposed to a shed which was for the welfare of animals. He would have liked further evidence though but he appreciated the difficulties in showing it and felt that guidance needed to be provided on what was required. He felt it difficult to go against the officer's recommendation.



Councillor Adair wished to be recorded against the officer's recommendation to refuse planning permission.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor P Smith, that the recommendation be adopted, and that planning permission be refused.**

(Alderman Gibson was returned to the meeting and assumed the chair – 7.50pm)

**4.2 LA06/2019/0518/O – Off-site replacement dwelling and garage. Existing building to be retained for ancillary use to the main house. 25m north of 22 Lisbane Road, Comber**  
(Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's Report.

**DEA:** Comber

**Committee Interest:** A Local development application 'called-in' to Planning Committee from the delegated list w/c 3 May by a member of that Committee - Called in by Alderman McIlveen:

"I would like to call in the above application to allow the committee to determine whether the building meets the test of displaying the essential characteristics of a dwelling (and thereby meets the criteria of CTY3 of PPS21) and whether it complies with the requirements of Policy CTY1 (as a replacement dwelling) and CTY14 of PPS 21 in that it does not have an adverse impact on rural character and meets one of the exceptions set out in Policy CTY 1"

**Proposal:** Off-site replacement dwelling and garage. Existing building to be retained for ancillary use to the main house

**Site Location:** 25m north of 22 Lisbane Road, Comber

**Recommendation:** Refusal

The Principal Planning and Technical Officer (G Kerr) explained the application was for an off-site replacement dwelling and garage. The existing building was to be retained for ancillary use to the main house 25m North of 22 Lisbane Road, Comber.

The application was before members due to a call in by Alderman McIlveen.

The recommendation was to refuse planning permission.

There was a previous application submitted in 2018 Planning ref - LA06/2018/0868/F for an off-site replacement dwelling and garage. Existing building to be retained for ancillary use to the main house - 40m East of 22 Lisbane Road Comber BT23 6AF which was withdrawn.

An image showed the site was located in the countryside as shown in the Ards & Down Area Plan 2015 and the surrounding area had a typical rural and agricultural character. The site was also located within the Strangford and Lecale Area of outstanding Natural Beauty.

The site was in grassland and a gravel area. The rear boundary of the site was defined by hedging and the boundary shared with No. 22 was defined by 1m high ranch style fencing. The topography of the site fell to the north boundary.

Further slides showed that the building subject of the application was located within an existing farm courtyard.

Moving inside, the building consisted of a singular room and did not contain separate rooms which again would have been associated with a dwelling. At the time of the site visit there appeared to be no original chimney or fireplace but there was a modern oil burner and flue has been installed in the building.

The building did not appear to have been designed for use as a dwelling and now appeared to be used for ancillary accommodation/store to the adjoining dwelling at 24 Lisbane Road and farm. It also appeared to be used to store various domestic and agricultural items as seen in the images.

Turning to the policy consideration, the officer added that the SPPS referenced replacement dwellings and allowed for such proposals where the building to be replaced exhibited the essential characteristics of a dwelling and, as a minimum all external structural walls were substantially intact.

Replacement dwellings needed to be located within the curtilage of the original dwelling where practicable, or at an alternative position nearby where there were demonstrable benefits in doing so.

CTY 3 of PPS 21 contained a list of criteria to be complied with and it was considered that the building did not meet the initial test of being a dwelling and had been altered and adapted to be used for agricultural purposes/ancillary living accommodation and as such was not acceptable for replacement under Policy CTY 3.

From evidence submitted by the agent, whilst the original use of the building may have been used as dwelling, it was clear it had been physically adapted for ancillary/storage used in the present day.

The policy was clear - If a building no longer had the essential characteristics of a dwelling or if it had been physically adapted for another use either internally or externally i.e. storage/agriculture, it could not be accepted as a genuine replacement.

In addition, it was considered that the proposal would result in a suburban style build-up of development when viewed with existing and proposed buildings.

The addition of this proposed dwelling, along with the existing neighbouring dwellings, would have adverse impact on the rural character of the area as it would create a suburban style cluster of dwellings.

Given the above summary of the proposal refusal of planning permission was recommended.

The Chair invited questions from Members.

Councillor P Smith felt that the suggested replacement building appeared to be an outbuilding of an existing farm and asked if there was justification for it being a dwelling based on the historical information provided.

The officers advised that the applicant had provided information that suggested the building had been used as a dwelling in the 19th century. While the original use of the building may have been a dwelling it was clear that it had been adapted for use in the present day and no longer had the characteristics so therefore could not be accepted as a genuine replacement. She referred members to the case officer's report and relevant legislation covered under CTY3.

Councillor P Smith queried the curtilage and asked what the norm was in terms of distance from the main site. The officer explained that it depended on the individual case and sometimes an offsite was justified because the curtilage could be so limited. This building was in an existing farmyard and it could not be replaced directly on site. It was felt in this case it would result in a suburban build up. Speaking in support of the application, Chris Cassidy, an agent representing the applicant, began by explaining the planning history of the site.

An application had been submitted in 2018 for an offsite replacement for the same building under reference LA06/2018/0868/F. The building was accepted as a replacement opportunity but the Council had an issue with the chosen location. Mr Cassidy said that a case officer had contacted him and advised if the application was resubmitted in an alternative location it could be approved. The case officer emailed a location map suggesting a site which would be acceptable.

On this advice the applicant withdrew the 2018 application and resubmitted it after agreeing an alternative location which was acceptable to the Council. This was the current application LA06/2019/0518/O and the one in front of members.

In terms of the current building, the Council accepted it was once a dwelling. The applicant had provided evidence of its use as a building as far back as 1840. It had been established that the occupant of the building was a man called William Mitchell. PPS 21 stipulated that for the replacement policy all references to 'dwellings' would include buildings previously used as dwellings. The policy indicated that there could be intervening uses of the building to be replaced.

The wording of Policy CTY3 allowed buildings which were now repurposed to be replaced if the current building still exhibited the essential characteristics of a dwelling. Guidance within Policy explained as a minimum requirement of characteristics all external structural walls should be substantially intact.

The building here retained all the original external walls. Original windows, heads and sills were evident on the southern elevations. Original floors were evident throughout the building. Original timbers to the roof remained in place along with evidence of electrical fittings from the 1950s.

The current structure did exhibit above the minimum essential characteristics required to identify it as a former dwelling and therefore represented a replacement opportunity in accordance with Policy.

He said the appellant raised concerns regarding the Council's handling of the case, and in particular with regard to email correspondence where it was indicated that officers were 'minded to approve' the original application if the location was amended.

Following the original advice, the new application was submitted. The location was amended as agreed and a new fee enclosed. Since then he said the applicant had submitted over 20 requests for updates. The majority of emails, he claimed, went unanswered with the file passed around at least four different officers.

He found it strange that the same case officer dealing with the application now was the same case officer that accepted the building was a house in 2018 and now contended it was not, yet nothing had changed.

When submitting the new application, the applicant had a legitimate expectation that they would be granted Planning Permission. A copy of emails from the case officer confirmed the chain of events.

The building, he believed, conformed to all policy and he would ask members to reconsider the recommendation.

Councillor P Smith asked about the potential around ribbon development and asked for his views on why he thought it was not over development of the area. Mr Cassidy said it was one dwelling replacing another dwelling and therefore no intensification of dwellings. He pointed to the map explaining that it was located between two houses so could almost be considered an infill site. It would not bring any detriment to what was there at the moment.

The Chair thanked Mr Cassidy and he was returned to the public gallery.

Councillor P Smith sought clarity from the officer on claims that the proposed dwelling was potentially an infill site and therefore no overdevelopment would occur.

The officer said she had considered the infill element but was of the opinion that it was not an infill opportunity as that would require it to be where the site abutted the laneway. She showed images of the site to confirm that.

Councillor P Smith asked for the officer's thoughts on claims made by Mr Cassidy around the handling of the case and previous indications from an officer that the proposal would be granted planning permission.

In terms of the speaker's claims that emails had been left unanswered, the officer wished to apologise for any inconvenience and did not like to hear of any dissatisfaction with the processing of a case. Members were there to either accept or reject a recommendation by officers however and there was a separate complaints procedure open to the applicant.



She explained that officers were there to give advice and guidance on the information they were provided with but decisions were always reached through group discussion and signed off by three officers including a senior planning officer. The facts given at the time were for a replacement dwelling but it was only later discovered that the intervening use had changed to a storage facility.

Councillor P Smith referred to the speaker's claims that, historically, the building met all the criteria of a dwelling. He asked why the view of officers differed.

It was advised that the applicant had made no reference to the change of use of the building. It was only on internal inspection that this was identified and there were no internal walls or other characteristics of a dwelling, there was also evidence of a large agricultural sliding door.

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

The proposer, Councillor Walker, felt that any suggestion of the building resembling a dwelling was a stretch and accepted the officer's recommendation.

Councillor Adair wished to be recorded as against the recommendation to refuse planning consent and the Chair asked to be recorded as abstained.

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

- 4.3 **LA06/2021/1293/F – Demolition of existing primary school to accommodate erection of new 8 classroom primary school incorporating multi-purpose hall, associated outdoor play areas, landscaping and enhanced parking, drop-off and pick up areas Lands at and to the east of Crawfordsburn Primary School, 4 Cootehall Road Crawfordsburn**  
(Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's Report.

**DEA:** Holywood and Clandeboye

**Committee Interest:** A Major Planning Application

**Proposal:** Demolition of existing primary school to accommodate erection of new 8 classroom primary school incorporating multi-purpose hall, associated outdoor play areas, landscaping and enhanced parking, drop-off and pick up areas.

**Site Location:** Lands at and to the east of Crawfordsburn Primary School, 4 Cootehall Road Crawfordsburn

**Recommendation:** Approval

The Senior Professional and Technical Officer (P Kerr) outlined that the proposal was for the demolition of the existing Crawfordsburn primary school to accommodate erection of new eight classroom primary school incorporating multi-purpose hall,



associated outdoor play areas, landscaping and enhanced parking, drop-off and pick up areas.

The site was located at Lands at and to the east of Crawfordsburn Primary School, 4 Cootehall Road Crawfordsburn

The proposal was being presented at committee this evening as it was a major application. The submission of an environmental statement was not required.

There were no public objections received with respect to this proposal

All consultees were content with the proposal subject to conditions.

A pre application discussion was held in 2020 prior to submission of this planning application.

A PAN was received in respect of this application in line with legislation and PACC carried out as required and a report subsequently submitted with the application.

Turning to the Development Plan within both the Extant North Down and Ards Area plan 1984-1995 and Draft BMAP 2015, the Officer explained the site lay within both the settlement limit and the countryside. Within Draft BMAP the site was also affected by designations for an area of existing open space, rural landscape wedge, and within an Area of Village Character

The relevant policy considerations were SPPS PPS2 Natural heritage PPS3 Access Movement and Parking PPS6 Planning Archaeology and the Built Heritage and APPS6 Areas of Townscape Character PPS8 Open Space Sport and Outdoor Recreation PPS15 Planning and Flood risk and PPS21 Sustainable Development in the Countryside.

The existing primary school was located at this site and continued to operate on site. The existing school site consisted of the main school building, associated buildings, play areas and parking and access arrangements.

The proposal involved the erection of a low lying main school building and associated hall of simple design and finishes. There would be associated play areas/pitches as well as parking, drop off/pick up area to the front of the building.

APPS6 – The proposal lay within an area of village character. With regard to the demolition of the existing primary school, as the existing building was thought to make no positive contribution to the AVC its removal was deemed acceptable. With regard to the application proposal, due to modest design and appropriate scale the proposal would maintain the distinctive character of the AVC.

PPS3 – The current site had issues with traffic and parking which resulted in unsafe and obstructive parking along the Cootehall Road. This proposal would alleviate traffic, parking and pedestrian issues and would result in a safer and more appropriate parking and access layout which would have wide reaching benefits for the school users and the local community.

PPS21 – With regard to the portion of the site that involves encroachment into countryside, this proposal was considered a necessary community facility to serve the local rural population. This proposal required the use of the adjacent field in order to have safe and appropriate access arrangements for both traffic and pedestrians. The building was required to be positioned behind the parking and access area to provide a safe environment for children staff and parents entering and exiting the school. Due to the location of the main school building and a suitable landscape buffer the distinction between the settlement limit and the surrounding countryside would not be marred.

PPS8 – As there were areas of existing open space identified in Draft BMAP the loss of these areas had been considered alongside the community benefit. The community benefit was thought to outweigh any loss of open space considered alongside the fact that the new school brings with it both informal and formal areas of open space.

There would be no significant impact on natural and built heritage

With regard to the impact of the proposal on visual amenity, this was considered taking into account of what already existed on the site. The proposed building had a low ridge and was of an appropriate scale and design surrounded by associated lands and landscaping which softened the impact. Also, the fact that the proposal was set back further from the road than the existing building meant that the visual impact would also be softened. There were appropriate boundary treatments proposed which would aid visual integration. As the site was also affected by a Rural landscape wedge the fact that there was a local community need and that the proposal was sensitively located and integrated into the landscape was assessed and was deemed acceptable. Visual separation between the site and settlement was maintained.

Impact on residential amenity would be minimal and would not be significantly greater than what already existed at the existing school site. The surrounding residents would benefit from the improved access and parking arrangements.

In conclusion the proposal would result in wide reaching community benefit due to a new and improved primary school serving the local population and due to a vast improvement to access and parking arrangements at the school site. The simple design and sensitive landscaping were appropriate for the character of area and no loss of residential amenity would be suffered. Approval was recommended.

The Chairman invited questions from Members.

Councillor McClean acknowledged that this had been a long awaited and necessary development and it was notable that no objections had been received. He brought attention to the notorious parking issues at that location and wondered if the three additional parking spaces and a layby would be sufficient in totality as a provision to completely alleviate those problems. On a technical matter, he also asked how the development complied with countryside policy, querying if it met a necessity for a rural population. Also, he pondered if the Officer considered enough had been done

in terms of the visual aspect, recognising that it was an area of village character and abutted the countryside. He further commented that it would have been helpful to have had more visual details as it was difficult to assess the elevation from the black and white drawings displayed.

The Planning Officer explained that there would be a significant increased parking provision with two large laybys at either side alleviating the issues at pick up and drop off times and taking existing parking problems away from Cootehall Road. The school benefitted both the rural and settled community and visually, she described how the school would be built with high quality finishes including painted sandstone and laminated cladding. It would sit far back from the road and it was lower lying in many areas than the existing building. The landscape buffers would ensure that it would integrate well on the site.

Councillor Cathcart sought clarification if the additional land shown on the site map had always been owned by the school or if it was newly purchased. He was informed that the land had been acquired by the Education Authority. Councillor Cathcart understood the concerns raised about the visual impact but the Planning Officer reiterated that the development was low lying and well landscaped with buffers around all boundaries and hence the visual impact would be minimal.

(At this stage, Mr Sean Sloan, Mr Adam Larkin and Ms Abigail McConville were admitted to the meeting to speak in support of the application – 8.37pm)

Thanking the Chairman, Mr Larkin confirmed that there were currently 32 parking spaces but the new development would increase that to 50 together with a new layby for an additional 10 vehicles. That would achieve a substantial improvement and prevent congestion on the Cootehall Road at drop-off and pick-up times. He added that hard work had been carried out on some images to show the integration into the countryside but those images had not been included in the presentation.

In terms of the previous queries raised around visual impacts, Mr Sloan explained that there was always a requirement for an increase in size in order for the school to remain viable. Accordingly, 27% of pupils lived within one mile and 52% lived within two miles of the school which had been the reasoning for the school to remain on its existing site. There was no current provision for buses or drop-off which was the predominant cause of the problems and the current plan would alleviate the congestion on the Cootehall Road. The phasing required additional land to permit development whilst the existing school was still in operation. Another key element was pupil safety and it meant that once pupils were within the school site, they did not have to cross any traffic route. Aesthetically the building would be constructed from materials used locally including some elements on neighbouring buildings. He spoke about the sustainable aspects of the building and remarked that he had extra images of the design of the building.

Following on, Councillor Cathcart questioned the rear construction site and if a separate access for that would be created.

Mr Sloan clarified that the contractor would have ownership of the northern entrance of the site and once construction was complete after 15 to 18 months, that entrance

would be handed back to the school. The plans had mitigated against any potential cross over by the contractor and the present school operations.

There were no further questions for the speakers and the Chair thanked them for attending.

(Mr Sloan, Mr Larkin and Ms McConville were returned to the public gallery – 8.46pm)

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

Although accepting of the reassurances around parking, sustainability and design at face value Councillor McClean would have liked to have seen more pictures of the proposed design. He held some reservations about the designs of modern buildings, referring to the Officer's previous comments about minimal visual impacts. That was an indication, he felt, of modern standards and how it was deemed preferable for a building to be hidden from the road in order to cause less offence to the eyes. However, voicing satisfied with the assurances received, he said he was happy to support the recommendation. He argued that the Old Inn was the most handsome building in Crawfordsburn and it was the most visible, and he hoped modern design could edge towards that standard.

However, Councillor McRandal's stance differed from that of the previous speaker as he outlined how it had been made clear that the proposed construction was sympathetic to its surroundings. Furthermore, no objections were received and he assumed that this was the proof that local people were happy that the plans offered a much needed upgrade for the school.

Councillor McClean recognised however that it was a hugely needed development and the issues with parking were well known.

Councillor Cathcart recognised the significance of the decision that the Planning Committee was about to make on building in the countryside. Nevertheless, he thought that it was a necessary development for the community as the existing facilities were no longer fit for modern use. Making a final brief point, Councillor Cathcart highlighted that previously the school struggled to gain pupil numbers but in recent times it had become fully subscribed. He was delighted with the proposed new school facility that would be welcomed by the community and hoped to see approval of the application.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McClean, seconded by Councillor McRandal that the recommendation be adopted and planning permission be granted.**

**4.4 LA06/2022/0231/F – Retention of Open Space (Two year Time Extension to Temporary Permission issued under LA06/2020/0113/F)**  
(Appendix IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's Report.  
DEA: Bangor Central



**Committee Interest:** Application made by the Council

**Proposal:** Retention of Open Space (Two year Time Extension to Temporary Permission issued under LA06/2020/0113/F)

**Site Location:** Land immediately east of 41 Hamilton Road and south of 1 Springfield Avenue, Bangor. (Site of former Hamilton House & Sea Scout Hall)

**Recommendation:** Approval

The Principal Planning and Technical Officer (G Kerr) outlined that the application was for the Retention of Open Space for a further Two-Year Time Extension to a Temporary Permission issued under LA06/2020/0113/F.

Members would recall the previous application brought before Committee in March 2020 for the demolition of what was Hamilton House for an area of temporary open space.

The application was before members as it is a Council application.

An image showed the site occupied a triangular plot of land opposite the junction of Hamilton Road and Park Avenue. Ward Park lay to the south east on the opposite side of the road, whilst Springfield Avenue, which housed several private residential properties ran parallel to the rear of the site.

Further slides showed images including the layout of the site. It was situated within the proposed Bangor Central Area of Townscape Character (ATC)

The continuation of the site for temporary use as an area of open space, was acceptable in context of the surrounding area was a suitable 'mean-while' use until such time as an appropriate replacement proposal was submitted.

From an enforcement point of view Councillor Cathcart asked what would happen if permission was no longer granted for that open space and if the Council would be required to eventually build upon it.

The Planning Officer established that if a decision was not made in respect of building on the site, it would just continue to apply for the retention of the open space for an additional period until such times as a planning application was brought forward. As there had been incidences of anti-social behaviour and vandalism, this interim arrangement had been favourably received.

Councillor Cathcart said that it was preferable by residents in the area, to keep the site as open space until longer term plans were decided upon. He was happy to propose the recommendation.

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

The seconder, Councillor Brooks, emphasised that it was very rare to see a town centre site returned to a green open space and he would be happy for that situation to continue for as long as possible.

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

## **RECESS**

The meeting went into recess at 9.00pm and resumed at 9.14pm)

(Councillor Adair left the meeting at this stage – 9.00pm)

(Councillor Cathcart withdrew from the meeting having declared an interest in the next item – 9.14pm)

### **4.5 LA06/2021/1364/F – Change of use (temporary for 3 years) of parking spaces to parklet (consisting of planters and area for public seating) to front of 2-4 Seacliff Road, Bangor** (Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's Report.

**DEA:** Bangor Central

**Committee Interest:** An application made by Council

**Proposal:** Change of use (temporary for 3 years) of parking spaces to parklet (consisting of planters and area for public seating)

**Site Location:** To front of 2-4 Seacliff Road, Bangor

**Recommendation:** Refusal

The Principal Planning and Technical Officer advised the application was for a change of use of three parking spaces to a parklet (for a temporary period of three years) consisting of planters and an area of public seating to the front of 2-4 Seacliff Road in Bangor.

The application was before Planning Committee as it was a Council application. The recommendation was to refuse planning permission

10 letters of objection from nine addresses had been received. The main areas of concern were the potential for the parklet to create a gathering point for outdoor socialising and consequential impact on residential amenity, as well as impact on parking and roads safety.

A slide showed the site was in Bangor town centre and in Bangor Central ATC. The site occupied a corner location between Seacliff Road and Victoria Road. There were commercial and residential properties adjacent to the site. Residential apartments could be seen to the left along Seacliff Road and terraced dwellings to the right along Victoria Road.

A further slide showed a view from Seacliff Road towards the site and the terraced dwellings along Victoria Road. The Tower House and Boathouse were visible to the right. The slide also showed the site layout and elevations. The proposal was 7.3m long and 3.3m wide.

The SPPS made good neighbourliness a yardstick with which to judge proposed developments and it was important that residential amenity was protected from 'unneighbourly' developments.

Environmental Health had confirmed that there was a history of noise complaints in this area, and it objected to this application due to the adverse impact to local residents in terms of noise and disturbance. The parklets would be available to use by the public 24 hours a day. The parklets were not enclosed and there was little that could be done to mitigate potential noise levels. Furthermore, it was not possible to control the potential noise impact by a restriction on the hours of use.

Environmental Health suggested consideration be given to alternative sites in order to increase the separation distance between the parklet and dwellings. The parklet would be a short walking distance from High Street, and given the very close proximity to commercial eateries, it was clear the proposal had the potential to exacerbate noise and nuisance late at night. The Planning Department was in agreement with EH that the proposal had the potential to adversely affect the living conditions of local residents.

HED Historic Buildings considered that the proposal would detract from the setting of the listed buildings. However, given it was for a temporary period it offered no objection to the application. Similarly, it was considered that the parklet would not detract from the character of the wider area or the appearance of the Bangor Central ATC due to its scale and temporary nature.

The impact on road safety and parking had been fully considered in the case officer report. The proposal would result in the loss of 3 existing parking spaces. Given the temporary nature of the development and the proximity of the site to alternative parking provision (both on-street and across the road at the marina), on balance, it was considered that the loss 3 parking spaces was not of such significance to warrant refusal of the application. DFI Roads had been consulted and did not consider the proposal to prejudice the safety of road users and pedestrians (subject to a number of conditions).

To conclude, having considered all material planning matters it was recommended that planning permission was refused on the basis that the application was contrary to The SPPS (para. 2.3) as it had not been demonstrated that the proposal would not result in a detrimental impact on the residential amenity of properties on Seacliff Road and Victoria Road.

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

Councillor McRandal conveyed to the Committee that he had reluctantly proposed the recommendation, recognising that it was difficult to get past the evidence from Environment Health in terms of the noise impacts on local residents.

In a similar vein, Councillor P Smith sympathised with those residents living in close proximity and understood why they would have concerns. He recognised that the challenge was that the parklets were proposed during the heart of the pandemic and

certain elements were now redundant, although he appreciated that they would be beneficial for some areas.

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

(Councillor McClean left the meeting at this stage – 9.19pm)

(Councillor Cathcart returned to the meeting – 9.19pm)

**4.6 LA06/2021/1372/F – Change of use (temporary for 3 years) of parking spaces to parklet (consisting of planters and area for public seating) 15m east of Donaghadee Sailing Club, 20 Shore Street, Donaghadee**  
(Appendix VI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's Report.

**DEA:** Bangor East and Donaghadee

**Committee Interest:** An application made by the Council

**Proposal:** Change of use (temporary for 3 years) of parking spaces to parklet (consisting of planters and area for public seating)

**Site Location:** 15m east of Donaghadee Sailing Club, 20 Shore Street, Donaghadee

**Recommendation:** Approval

The Planning Officer advised that the above was an application for a change of use of land to a parklet for a temporary period of 3 years (consisting of planters and an area for public seating). The site was 15m east of Donaghadee Sailing Club – 20 Shore Street, Donaghadee.

The application was before Planning Committee as it was a Council application. The recommendation was to approve planning permission.

A slide showed the site location. The site consisted of a small area of informal open space along the shore front in Donaghadee.

A further slide showed a photograph of the site as well as the site layout and elevations.

The Parklet was 7.3m long and 3.3m wide and would complement the existing use of the land as open space.

The proposal would supplement existing seating provision in the area and the overall scale was such that the proposal would not cause harm to the character of the surrounding area.

The closest housing was on the opposite side of Shore Street (approximately 20m to the south-west). Given the separation distance, and existing use of site it was not considered that the proposal had the potential to adversely impact the amenity of



residents. As matter of good practice, Environmental Health was consulted, and no objections were raised.

The proposal would have no impact on parking or roads safety. DFI Roads provided no objection to the application. No objections were received from members of the public.

The parklet was proposed for a temporary period and a condition could be added to ensure the parklet was removed and land restored to its former condition within three years.

Having considered all material planning matters it was recommended that the application was approved.

The Chairman sought questions from Members.

Councillor Brooks was of the understanding that the Council was not going to go ahead with this particular parklet and asked for clarity.

The Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning notified the Member that the application had been submitted some time ago, when the Town Advisory Group had wanted it to be positioned at this location. However, she was cognisant of the fact that the Town Advisory Group had since changed their decision on this, however this was out-with the Planning Application decision.

Proposed by Councillor McRandal, seconded by Councillor McKee, that the recommendation be adopted and planning permission be granted.

Councillor Brooks and Councillor Walker indicated that they wished to be recorded against the recommendation.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McRandal, seconded by Councillor McKee, that the recommendation be adopted and planning permission be granted.**

**4.7 LA06/2021/1371/F – Change of use (temporary for 3 years) of parking spaces to parklet (consisting of planters and area for public seating) to front of St Mary's Parochial Hall, 24 The Square, Comber**  
(Appendix VII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's Report.

**DEA:** Comber

**Committee Interest:** An application made by the Council

**Proposal:** Change of use (temporary for 3 years) of parking spaces to parklet (consisting of planters and area for public seating)

**Site Location:** To front of St Mary's Parochial Hall, 24 The Square, Comber

**Recommendation:** Approval

The Principal Planning and Technical Officer detailed that this was a change of use of land to a parklet for a temporary period of three years (consisting of planters and an area for public seating) located to the front of St Mary's Parochial Hall, 24 The Square, Comber.

The application was before Planning Committee as it was a Council application. A slide showed the site location. The site was within the town centre and 'The Square' Area of Townscape Character.

A further slide showed a photograph of the site as well as the elevations and site plan. The parklet was the same scale as those previously presented.

There were a number of public benches and planting in the immediate vicinity and the area was a natural hub for locals and visitors to sit out (the proposal would actually involve the re-siting of an existing bench). Given the scale and temporary nature of the proposal, it was not considered that the proposal would have a detrimental impact on the character of the wider area or the ATC.

The closest residential properties were approximately 30m from the site. Given the separation distance and the existing public seating around the square, it was considered that the proposal would not have any significant additional impact on residential amenity. As a matter of good practice, the Council's Environmental Health Department had been consulted and no objections were raised.

Only one letter of representation was received from the adjacent Church which offered broad support for the proposal.

The parklet was proposed for a temporary period and a condition can be added to ensure parklet is removed and land restored to its former condition within three years.

Having considered all material planning matters it was recommended that the application was approved.

Proposed by Councillor P Smith, seconded by Councillor McKee, that the recommendation be adopted and planning permission approved.

Councillor P Smith articulated that the parklet application had been discussed at length by the Comber Town Advisory Group and there was much support for it. It would be sited in an area that would be beneficial with numerous coffee shops nearby and it was also adjacent to the Comber Farmer's Market.

In concurrence, Councillor McKee welcomed the parklet noting that its concept had been embraced by the community and it would undoubtedly be an asset for that location.

The Chair added his support.

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

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

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing that the following appeal was withdrawn on 07 April 2022.

Appeal reference: 2021/E0077  
 Application Reference: LA06/2020/0019/C  
 Appeal by: D Graham  
 Subject of Appeal: Alleged unauthorised removal of two trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO)  
 Location: Lands adjacent to 5 Bennett House and to the rear of 2b Fort Road, Helens Bay

### **New Appeals Lodged**

The following appeal was submitted on 28 April 2022.

Appeal reference: 2022/A0023  
 Application Reference: LA06/2021/0698/LBC  
 Appeal by: Mr James Woods (Castlereagh Ltd)  
 Subject of Appeal: Demolition of structurally unsound and dangerous listed building HB24/01/139  
 Location: 2-4 Church Street, Portaferry

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

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

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

## **6. RETENTION AND DISPOSAL SCHEDULE** (Appendices VIII, IX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing the undernoted:

### **Retention and Disposal Schedule for Planning Service**

1. Following transfer of the majority of planning powers to local Councils on 1 April 2015, the Council's Retention and Disposal Schedule (RADS) for planning files remained in line with the previous DOE Planning schedule, pending review.
2. All 11 Councils, through the Planning Senior Administrative Officer Group, and in liaison with representatives from PRONI, reviewed the position and a revised

RADS schedule (copy enclosed) consistent across all Councils was presented and agreed in February 2021. The RADS schedule allowed the Council to comply with both the current Data Protection Act 1988 and the General Data Protection Regulations which came into operation in May 2018. The revised RADS was also envisaged to be taken into account in the specification for the new Planning Portal system to enable Councils to apply the retention and disposal requirements to both hard copy and electronic files.

3. The revised RADS remained broadly in line with the previous DOE Planning schedule. The main changes were noted as:
  - Preliminary Enquiries and PADs had been called out as non-statutory and for destruction after six years from the date of the last paper/action on the file once it was closed/concluded.
  - Invalid cases had been noted for destruction six years from the date of the last paper/action on the file once it was closed/returned.
  - Third party representations on planning application files had been noted for destruction three years from the date of the last paper/action on the file once it was closed/concluded.
  - The retention period for Enforcement files had been increased from one year to two years (from date of last paper/action on the file once case was closed/concluded). This increase was because the annual statistical reports were usually not pulled from the system until June at the earliest i.e. month 15, and may have needed to be pulled again later in the year should a fault be noticed during the analysis of the data. Therefore, if the 1-year rule was applied, enforcement cases that had been closed with no action having been taken during the first three months of the reporting period would be destroyed and consequently missing from the statistical data. (Note - Cases that proceeded to Notice stage would be unaffected as they would be retained for the Enforcement Notice Register).
4. Members were asked to note that Section 242 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011 required the permanent retention of a Public Register and, therefore, the main documents from planning application files such as the application form, decision notice and stamped drawings, and any other documents relevant to Section 242 of the 2011 Act, were to be permanently retained.
5. Once approved, this Schedule would be sent to PRONI for notification.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees the revision to the RADS schedule for planning files.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor P Smith, seconded by Councillor McRandal, that the recommendation be adopted**



**7. NEIGHBOURING COUNCIL'S (BELFAST CITY COUNCIL)  
CONSULTATION IN RELATION TO MODIFICATION TO DRAFT  
PLAN STRATEGY AND SUITE OF SUPPLEMENTARY  
PLANNING GUIDANCE**  
(Appendices X, XI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing that following Independent Examination and subsequent direction from Department for Infrastructure, Belfast City Council had prepared an additional policy for inclusion in a final adopted plan in relation to phasing of development in line with infrastructure provision. Public consultation was now taking place and closed on Thursday 7 July 2022. (Item 8a – letter received by Chief Executive's office on 18 May 2022 referred).

Planning officers would be reviewing the PAC report along with the report from DfI and the wording of the new policy. It may have been that there were no issues to raise, and to simply acknowledge the modifications to the plan or, following review, a response may have been required.

In addition, in advance of the adoption of a final version of a Plan Strategy, Belfast City Council had issued for consultation, a suite of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to accompany the policies as set out in the Strategy. (Item 8b letter refers). The 17 SPG were available to view online from the Belfast City Council website and consultation closed on 4 August 2022. Topics included Retail and Main Town Centre uses, Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, Affordable Housing and Housing Mix, Loss of Zoned Employment Land, Sensitive uses (full list was set out on letter).

Planning officers would be reviewing the 17 SPG documents to ascertain if any response was required. However, Members were asked to note that it was out with any further scrutiny as SPG was not subject to IE scrutiny so it was unclear how any comments would lead to effectual change and it may not have been beneficial to comment, unless being challenged.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council:

1. notes the consultation, and
2. Members provide any comments to Planning that they wish to address, and that delegated authority is given to Planning Officers to respond or not, as appropriate, with an update report provided to Council in due course.

The Planning Officer outlined the report and the attached appendices.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor P Smith, seconded by Councillor Walker that the recommendation be adopted**

## **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

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

### **8. UPDATE ON ENFORCEMENT MATTERS**

(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)**

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

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

## **TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 9.40pm.

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

A meeting of the Environment Committee was held remotely via Zoom on Wednesday, 8 June 2022 at 7.00 pm.

### **PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Alderman McDowell

**Aldermen:** Armstrong-Cotter  
Carson  
M Smith

<b>Councillors:</b>	Boyle	Johnson
	Cathcart	Kendall
	Cummings	MacArthur
	Edmund	McAlpine
	Greer	McKee
	Irwin	

**Officers:-** Director of Environment (D Lindsay), Head of Waste and Cleansing Services (N Martin) and Democratic Services Officer (H Loebnau)

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Smart.

**NOTED.**

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

The Chair asked for Declarations of Interest and he himself declared an interest in:

Item 9 – Shared Island Initiative – Development Funding Application, Coastal Erosion Management.

He explained that the Vice Chair would take on the role of Chair for that item.

**NOTED.**

### **3. REPLACEMENT OF KERBSIDE GLASS COLLECTION VEHICLES AND NEW KERBSIDE WASTE TEXTILE RECYCLING SERVICE**

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:-** Report dated 5 May 2022 from the Director of Environment detailing that Members may recall that the Council received a capital grant from DAERA to procure vehicles for the commencement of its new kerbside

glass recycling service back in 2017. That service was ground-breaking for Councils in Northern Ireland and officers used best knowledge at the time to specify vehicle designs that would meet service needs, experience had shown aspects that could be improved upon to promote greater operational efficiency and effectiveness.

The original fleet of glass collection vehicles had reached a point where it needed to be replaced, with existing vehicles now displaying a sharp rise in breakdowns and maintenance demands. That was having both cost and service continuity/quality impacts that were moving beyond acceptable limits.

As the original vehicles procured in 2017 were financed wholly from DAERA grant support, they did not yet feature in the Council's vehicle capital programme.

### **Summary Business Case**

A business case was prepared using the Government's recommended '5 Case Model'. In line with best practice, the case for the replacement glass collection vehicles considered a range of options, namely:

1. Keep existing vehicles and operational model.
2. Replace vehicles on like for like basis and keep existing operational model.
3. Replace vehicles with fewer larger vehicles and revise operational model; and
4. Replace vehicles with fewer larger vehicles to accommodate combined glass and clothes recycling operational model.

Following the assessment of both costs and benefits, Option 4 produced the best value for money, having both the lowest net cost and highest benefits. That preferred option was estimated to cover a five-year period to produce a reduction in budget of £389k.

### **Kerbside Clothes Recycling Service**

Officers were aware that there was a level of demand for a kerbside clothes recycling service, and indeed that was something that had been raised by some Members as part of the discussions on the Council's Sustainable Waste Resource Management Strategy. An analysis of the last kerbside bin composition survey indicated that around 850 tonnes of waste textiles were discarded in the Borough's grey bins. That often included lower quality clothing that householders perhaps did not bring to a charity shop or textile bank for 'reuse', but which if presented as clean and dry, could have a 'reuse' or 'recycling' value.

#### *Cost Savings*

The income currently being achieved from sale of textiles was significantly depressed due to prevailing global market circumstances. However, even in that context, the business case showed that the extra cost of the new styled, larger vehicles could be more than offset by income from the sale of kerbside collected textiles, collected through the additional service, combined with the consequent savings in landfill costs – estimated at around £108k at current market value and landfill gate fee. The business case assumed a modest 50% capture rate, and at current rate of income/tonne it was projected that the redesigned service would yield



a net reduction in service cost compared to the existing budget. It was likely that the value of waste textiles would ultimately recover at least to some degree, from the current unprecedented lows – and that along with any kerbside capture rate above the estimated 50%, would yield an even greater cost saving for the Council and its ratepayers.

#### *Carbon Savings*

The proposed new styled vehicles would allow for a reduction in miles travelled, necessitating fewer return trips to the depot mid collection to offload full loads. That would result in carbon emissions savings through lower fuel consumption. Furthermore, the recycling of textiles collected in the new vehicles/service model, instead of landfilling through the grey bin service, would also result in further significant carbon emission savings.

Overall, it was estimated that the proposed new service model facilitated by procurement of the new styled vehicles, would result in a reduction of around 1300 tons of CO<sub>2</sub><sup>e</sup>.

#### **Proposed Way Forward**

It was proposed that officers proceed with the procurement of the new styled larger glass and clothing recycling collection vehicles described in the report and to revise the vehicle replacement schedules to accommodate future replacements in due course, currently anticipated in 2030.

It was further proposed that in the lead up to acquisition of the new vehicles, officers would develop and launch a communications and marketing campaign to promote the new kerbside clothing recycling collection service.

It was anticipated that proposed savings would be used to mitigate other cost pressures during the 2023/24 estimates process.

RECOMMENDED that the Council grants approval to proceed as outlined in this report for the procurement of vehicles to replace the existing glass recycling vehicles and launch of the new added value kerbside clothing recycling service.

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

Councillor Cummings approved the recommendation and questioned the design and fuel type of the new vehicle. It was the Director's understanding that there was only a standard diesel-powered vehicle available at this time and currently the lead in time to acquire that was approximately 6-9 months. Officers would continue to search for low emission vehicle options as they came onto the market, but it was noted that these were large vehicles and the market had not yet developed to a point where the likes of electric or hydrogen powered models were viable to effectively and efficiently meet service demands.

The Head of Waste and Cleansing Services explained that the vehicles covered the entire Borough on a regular basis and a trial of an electric vehicle previously had been disastrous since it was unable to cope with the Council's requirements.

Councillor MacArthur noted the approximate £108k savings on landfill and asked about the costings for the vehicle which were not included in the report and where those funds would come from in terms of the budget and how the system would work in practice.

The Director highlighted the predicted savings figure of £108K referred to in the report was a net figure, reflective of the costs of vehicle purchase. He went on to explain that the Council had received funding to introduce the glass collection service but the vehicles now required replacement, and a capital investment from the Council. Officers had taken the opportunity to explore options for further innovation in service delivery and believed that value would be added by integrating the new kerbside textile recycling collection service along with the existing glass collection. Even with the currently depressed market value for textiles the business case showed that the Council could offset the costs of new vehicles and also achieve a net financial saving, in addition to the obvious environmental benefits.

The Head of Waste and Cleansing suggested that households would be provided with a small number of clear plastic sacks per year which could be delivered alongside caddy liners. The sack would be labelled with the range of textiles that would be suitable and what was unacceptable such as soft furnishings. It was planned that those materials would be placed in a pod at the front of the vehicle and that the average household might recycle textiles approximately three or four times annually in this way via the new kerbside service. The textiles would be unloaded into a suitable container at the Council depot and the current service provider was interested in taking those along with textiles from the existing bring banks. Councillor MacArthur agreed that it presented an opportunity to the Council which could build on that by sending out a message particularly in respect to the market for fast fashion which was very environmentally damaging.

The officers stressed that this was not intended to replace the need to use charity shops for many people but that the new collection was intended capture primarily lower grade textiles which were currently ending up in grey bins.

Councillor McKee welcomed the report and was encouraged to read about the financial savings the initiative would bring as well as the increased service to residents. He referred to the analysis which had been undertaken in relation to grey bin waste and when that had taken place and if any other Councils in Northern Ireland had adopted a similar approach. He also hoped that the new vehicles would be adapted to make them as sustainable as possible.

The Director was unaware of any similar textile collection service by a local Council in Northern Ireland but noted that some did exist in Great Britain. Those Councils at the top end of the recycling performance table generally did offer a kerbside textile recycling service as part of their waste management services. He explained that

the previous bin analysis survey had taken place several years ago after Ards and North Down had introduced some major kerbside recycling service changes, therefore it was deemed fairly representative of what might be found presently in grey bins. Of grey bin content, approximately 5-6% of waste was found to be textiles. It was for that reason that kerbside textile collection was expected to make a more significant difference to reducing landfill waste, compared to the likes of small WEEE which comprised a much lower percentage of grey bin waste at around 1.5%. He added that in terms of sustainability of vehicles the transport unit had a rolling procurement programme and sustainability was a standard part of the Council's requirement. At the very least at this stage, solar roof panels would be specified to reduce diesel consumption for the powering of the vehicles' hydraulics systems and driver telemetry systems to moderate driver behaviour and enhance fuel efficiency.

Councillor Greer welcomed the Council's initiative and commended officers for the innovation being shown which would result in improvements to the Council's recycling rates. She agreed with Councillor MacArthur that it was key to get the right messages out to householders by encouraging them to reuse as much as possible. She added that it was indeed an improved service to ratepayers since it was not always convenient for some people to make their way to a household recycling centre for the small amounts of textiles they were disposing.

Councillor Cathcart also appreciated the Council's innovation and intention to improve services to ratepayers while simultaneously helping to protect the environment. He referred to the vehicles which had been procured in 2017 and were already in need of replacement and asked for the reason to that relatively short working life. The Head of Waste and Cleansing indicated that there was an issue with glass since it was a very heavy material and the Council had chosen a vehicle with a low weight chassis to maximise payloads. The vehicles were heavily used and some roads particularly on the Peninsula were in a poor state of repair, and those factors had shortened the life span which was normally about seven years for larger service vehicles. The Councillor asked if waste electricals could also be collected at the kerbside.

The Head of Waste and Cleansing advised that the new vehicles would be specified better in light of our initial experience of delivering the kerbside glass recycling service and were anticipated to perform better. He stated that they would have a chassis similar to standard refuse collection vehicles with hydraulic springs which would stand up better in the context of the service in which they were being used. The Director explained that waste electricals made up approximately 1.5% of grey bin waste so it was sensible to prioritise textiles as those were liable to give a better improvement in recycling yield.

Councillor Edmund asked about potential grants available and if there was value in selling the old vehicles. He also asked if the plastic bags would also be recycled. The Head of Waste and Cleansing said the Council would look at all sources of funding available to it and perhaps small parts could be sold from the vehicles but there was not expected to be a significant resale value. One of the smaller existing



vehicles would be retained to assist with service delivery in harder to reach properties. It was explained that the plastic sacks would be essential to keep the textiles dry and officers would look to ensure that the contractor who processed the textiles sought to recycle end of use sacks at the end of the textile handling chain. The Director confirmed that those points would be communicated to the public as part of the campaign to launch the new service.

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

#### **4. NORTHERN IRELAND LOCAL AUTHORITY MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STATISTICS, OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2021**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report dated 16 May 2022 from the Director of Environment detailing that the official waste management statistics for the third quarter of 2021/2022 (October to December 2021) had been released by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

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

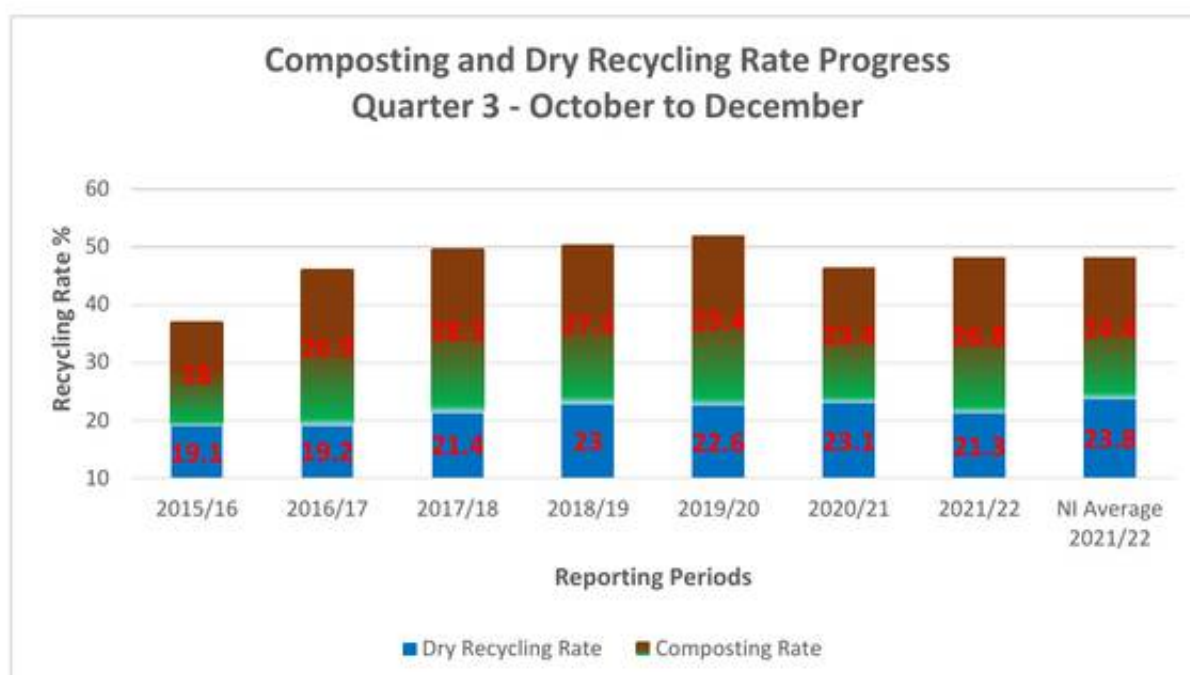
- i. The Council's household waste recycling rate **rose by 2%** compared to Q3 last year, (from 46.5% to 48.5%) but **fell by 3.6%** compared to Q3 the previous (2019/20) year (from 52.1% to 48.5%).

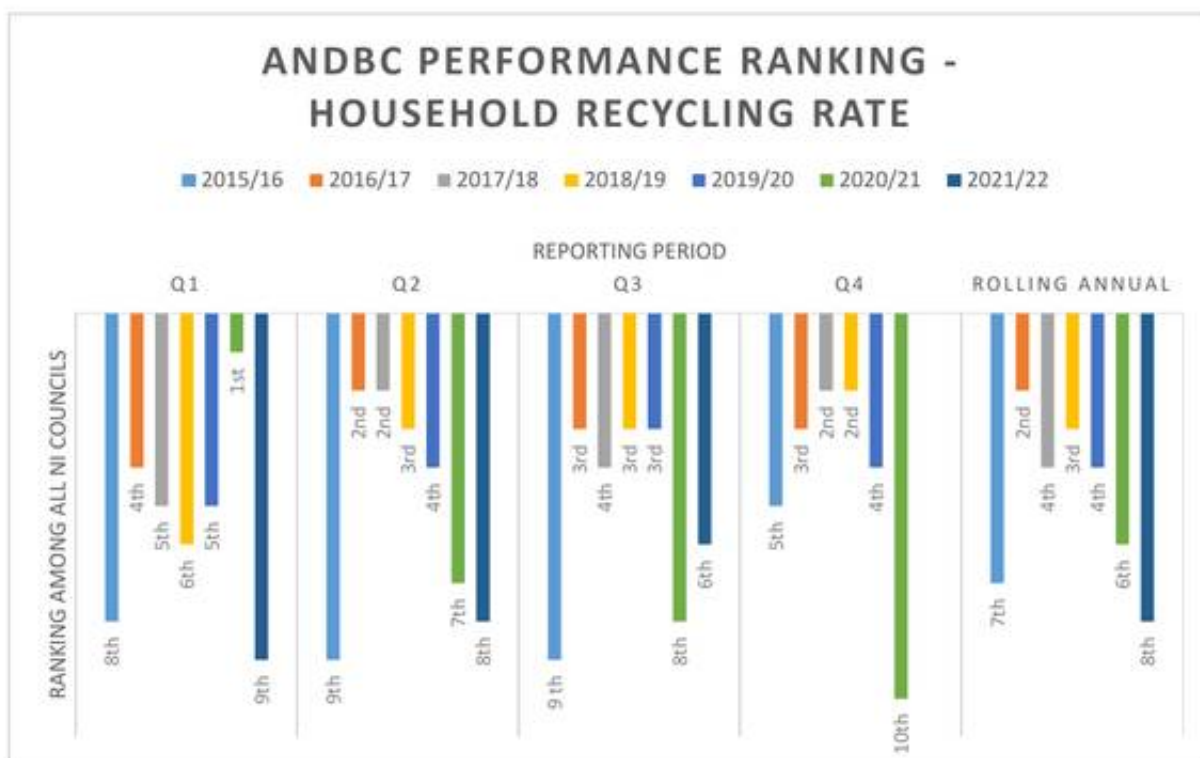
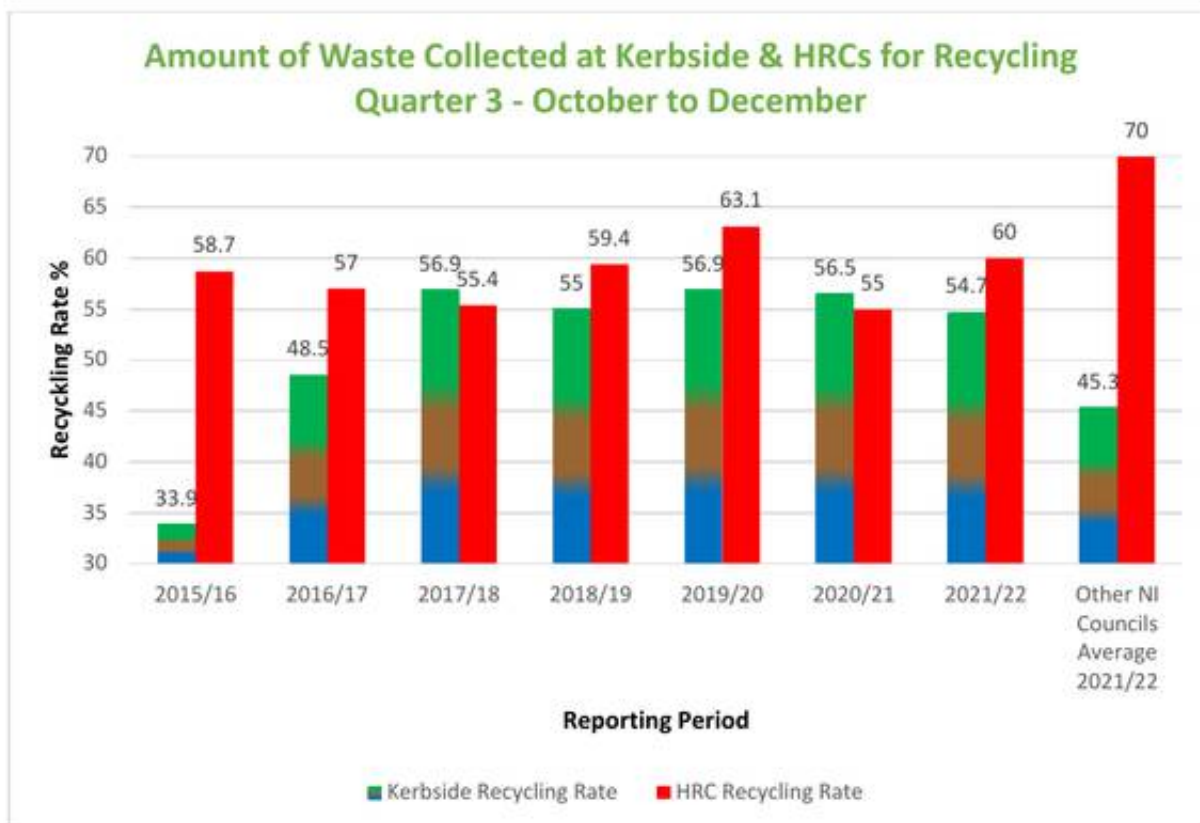


- ii. The Council's household waste recycling rate of 48.5%, was 0.1% higher than the NI average of 48.4%.



- iii. The Council was ranked 6<sup>th</sup> out of the 11 NI Councils for its household waste recycling rate.
- iv. The Council's household waste composting rate rose by 3.4% - from 23.4% to 26.8%. The household waste dry recycling rate fell by 1.8% - from 23.1% to 21.3%.
- v. The Council's household waste composting rate of 26.8% was 2.4% higher than the NI average of 24.4%.
- vi. The household waste dry recycling rate (i.e., recycling of items other than organic food and garden waste) of 21.3% was 2.5% lower than the NI average of 23.8%.
- vii. The Council's kerbside recycling capture rate of 70.6% for household compostable waste materials compared to a NI Council average of 63.8%.
- viii. The Council was at the bottom end of the performance table for 'dry' recycling rate, ranking 9<sup>th</sup> out of eleven Councils.
- ix. The Council received 38% more waste per capita at its HRCs compared to the average for other NI Councils.
- x. The amount of waste collected at the Council's HRC sites for recycling was significantly less than the average for other Councils – 60%, compared to an average rate of 70% for other Councils.
- xi. The amount of waste collected for recycling through the Council's kerbside bin collection system was higher than the average for other Councils – 54.7%, compared to an average of 45.3% for other Councils.





This latest official Municipal Waste Management Statistics report presented further clear evidence that the Council's performance in relation to waste resource

management had suffered a significant sustained deterioration, both in absolute and relative terms.

**The Council's rolling 12-month average recycling rate of 48.2% had fallen back and remained below the current statutory minimum of 50%; it was some 17% lower than the new UK circular economy recycling target of 65% by 2035. The Council's rolling 12-month landfill rate of 45%, was 35% higher than the 10% landfill limit set out in the circular economy package target of 10% by 2035.**

Officers had been working on proposals for changes to service models designed to contribute more effectively to the achievement of new statutory recycling and landfill targets whilst at the same time improving levels of customer service, for consideration by Members in due course.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

Councillor Boyle had been disappointed to read the report which he suggested showed that the Ards and North Down Borough was in a bad place and possibly getting even worse and he thought that the Council was now struggling in its efforts to make further recycling progress. He knew that Members were aware of the difficulties in this area and many reports had been brought forward in recent years showing that the Council was continuing on a slippery slope, and simply to accept that position and move on was not an option to him and he thought that changes could not come soon enough. The situation would only be addressed when Members agreed to make tough decisions.

The Director explained that a series of consultations with party group leaders and independent Members had taken place and those had been helpful to discuss propositions for developments in both kerbside and HRC recycling services. It was hoped that proposals would be finalised over the summer with a view to bringing them to the Council in September and plotting a timetable for the way forward.

Councillor Boyle thanked the Director and was wary of delay since the Council was almost at the wall now and Members needed to show bravery in doing what was right and necessary.

Councillor McKee echoed those concerns and agreed that the figures made sobering reading. He was aware that most residents were keen to recycle and were environmentally conscious, but some others showed resistance and that needed to be addressed not least because there were more useful ways to spend ratepayer income than landfill charges.

Councillor Greer thanked officers for the report even though it made disappointing reading. Many of her questions had been addressed earlier in the meeting and she asked if social distancing was still taking place by members of staff on the bin

collection routes. Everyone was aware that the risks from Covid-19 had now fallen significantly, and she asked if officers were examining the structure and working patterns of those staff. The Director agreed and stated that reviews of risk assessments were taking place and the target date of the end of June had been set to discontinue the use of support vehicles. He said there was ongoing dialogue between management and unions through the Local Joint Forum on that subject.

Councillor Cathcart also considered the report to be sobering aside from a few minor positives, but it was nowhere near where the Council needed to be and therefore looking at a cost benefit analysis it would be hard to maintain the status quo. He asked at what point the figures would trigger action to be taken against the Council. The Director explained that DAERA was nervous about high rates of landfill by any Council and would challenge a failure to meet statutory obligations. The auditor was also scrutinising the Council's position on the subject and asking what steps were being taken/planned to address it, not least because the statutory waste management targets featured prominently in our statutory Performance Improvement Plan. For those reasons it was critical that Members needed to be aware of the seriousness of the ongoing problem.

The Director went on to state that every Member was acutely aware of the scale of Council expenditure in delivering its waste management services, which were the single group of services provided by the Council that everyone could relate to and felt that they benefitted from. He considered that it was for those very reasons that ongoing review and development of waste management service models was crucial, and that must not be considered or allowed to be characterised as equating to reduction or dilution of services - but rather improving services to allow the Council to adapt to environmental and financial challenges, and deliver the best value, most sustainable outcomes.

Members were in agreement that doing whatever the Council could to support separating recyclable waste at the point of collection was absolutely of benefit in reducing costs to ratepayers.

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

## **5. PROPOSED STREET NAMING – OLIVET COURT, BALLYGOWAN**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report dated 10 May 2022 from the Director of Environment detailing that a small development comprising of 11 dwellings was currently under construction on lands at 112 Comber Road, Ballygowan.

The developer, in association with Radius Housing, ran a street naming competition involving the Year 5 pupils in Alexander Dickson Primary School to suggest a street name and the reasons for their suggestion. The developer then chose the name that they preferred, which was Olivet Court due to the historical research the pupil carried out and its association with Ballygowan.



The church hall at Comber Road, Ballygowan was once a children's home during 1884 -1907 and was called the Olivet Home. The church hall also served as the village primary school before the Alexander Dickson Primary School was built in the 1980's. The name was in keeping with the general neighbourhood and reflected a part of local history in Ballygowan.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the adoption of the name Olivet Court. It is further recommended that the Council accepts the general name and delegates acceptance of suffixes to the Building Control department.

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

## **6. PROPOSED STREET NAMING – WHITEHEM GARDENS, KILLINCHY**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report dated 9 May 2022 from the Director of Environment detailing that a development comprising of 24 dwellings was currently under construction on lands at 69-79 Ardmillan Road, Killinchy. The developer suggested the name Whitehem Gardens for several reasons:

'White' corresponded to the traditional Ulster and Irish countryside vernacular, where cottage style homes had been finished in that bright and attractive render for centuries. 'Hem' is a common European reference to 'home' and gave the overall naming a more contemporary feel which reflected the sleek, yet sympathetic house designs. Those also included a grey brick to mirror the stone walls of the surrounding area. When combined, Whitehem provided for a pleasant sounding and befitting rural development name on which there had been an abundance of positive feedback from focus groups and neighbouring residents alike.

The Building Control department did request an alternative name for the development to reflect the local area, however, the developer had persisted with the name Whitehem Gardens due to the reasons stated above.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the adoption of the name Whitehem Gardens. It is further recommended that the Council accepts the general name and delegates acceptance of suffixes to the Building Control department.

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

## **7. PROPOSED STREET NAMING – STATION SQUARE, HOLYWOOD**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report dated 11 May 2022 from the Director of Environment detailing that a small retail and office development currently comprising

of eight retail units, with future development planned for additional offices, was currently under construction on lands behind 31 Hibernia Street, Hollywood.

The main access would be from the existing Redburn Square roundabout, where a new road would serve the retail units.

The developer had suggested the name Station Square due to the retail units being near the railway station and was in keeping with the general neighbourhood.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the adoption of the name Station Square. It is further recommended that the Council accepts the general name and delegates acceptance of suffixes to the Building Control department.

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

## **8. NET Q4 ACTIVITY REPORT (1 JANUARY 2022 TO 31 MARCH 2022)**


(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report dated 24 May 2022 from the Director of Environment detailing that the information provided in this report covered, unless otherwise stated, the period 1 January to 31 March 2022. The aim of the report was to provide Members with details of some of the key activities of the Team, the range of services it provided along with details of level of performance.

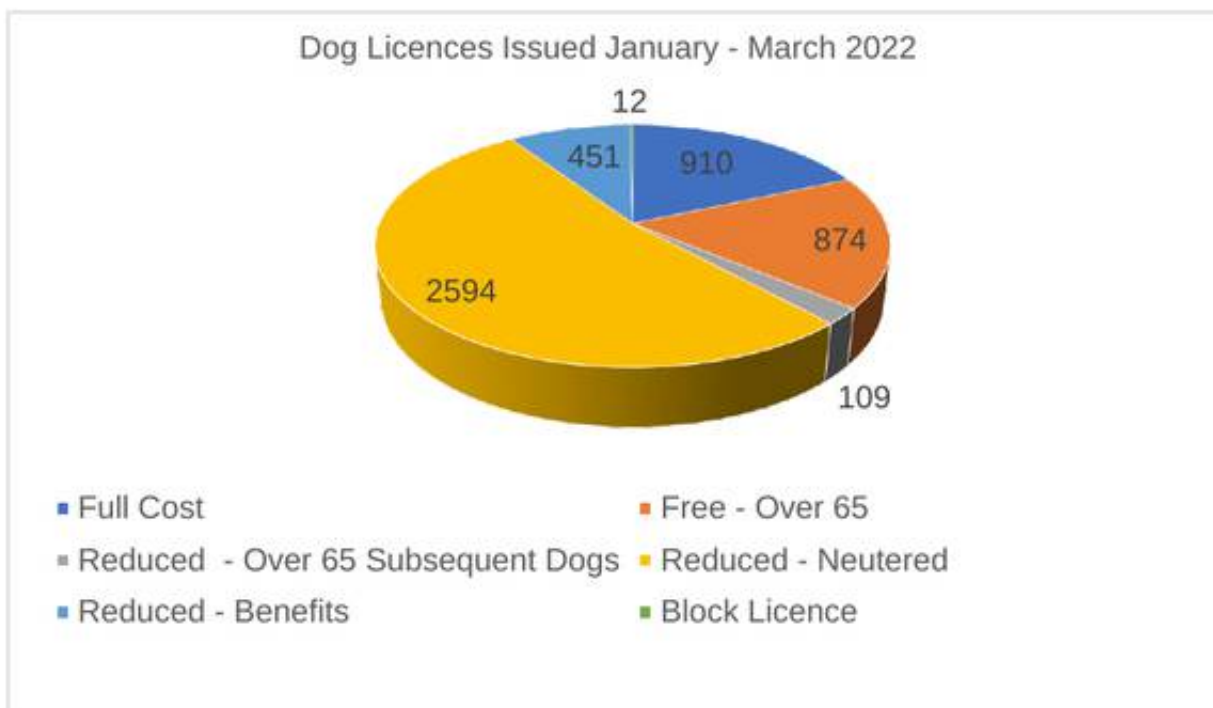
### **Applications to the Neighbourhood Environment Team**

The Dogs (NI) Order 1983

It should be noted that these figures included block licences where one licence could be issued for multiple dogs in specific circumstances.

	Period of Report January – March 2022	Same 3 months 2021	Comparison
Dog licences issued during the three months	4950	4802	

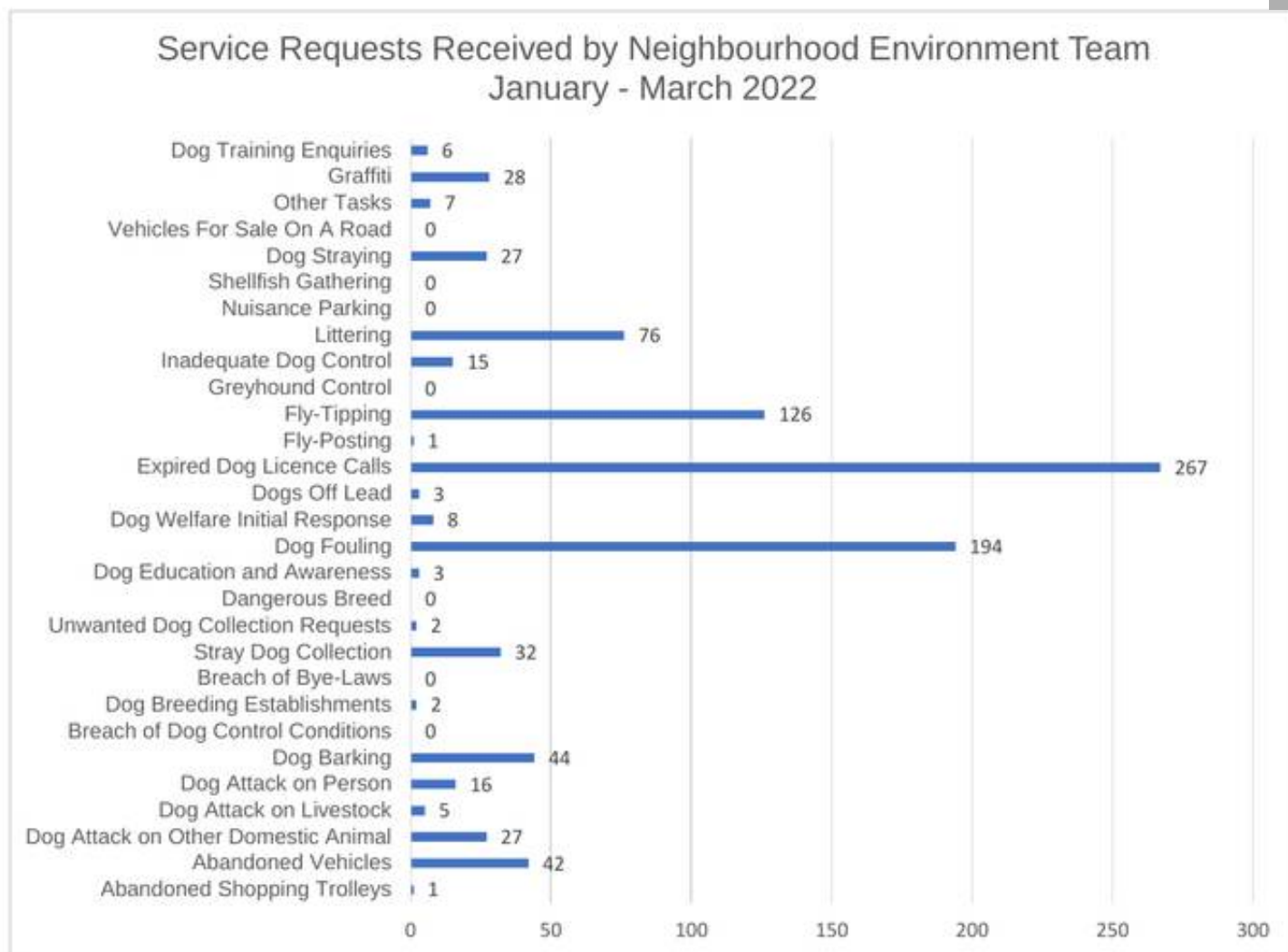
Concessionary licences remained at 82% of dog licences issued over the period. That included the categories of neutering (£5) / over 65 (Free – 1<sup>st</sup> dog) / over 65 subsequent dog (£5) and income related benefits (£5). Standard dog licence £12.50 and block licence £32.



**Investigations**

The Neighbourhood Environment Team responded to a range of service requests. In terms of time spent, some types of service requests would be completed immediately whilst others required a longer-term strategy to find a resolution. The total number of service requests had been outlined together with a sample of the types of requests received.

	Period of Report January – March 2022	Same 3 months 2021	Comparison
Service Requests received the three months	932	660	▲



### Non-Compliance

#### Prosecutions

	Period of Report January – March 2022	Same 3 months 2021	Comparison
Total Prosecutions	10	37	▼

### Fixed Penalty Notices

In addition to cases being prosecuted through the court, **143** fixed penalty notices had been issued in respect of various matters. That continued to demonstrate a sustained Council focus upon detecting and punishing those who persisted in committing environmental offences in the Borough and highlighted the effective patrolling regime of the Neighbourhood Environment Enforcement Team who were responsible for enforcement detections. In addition, they had responsibility for the opening and closing of cemeteries and play parks during the period of report.



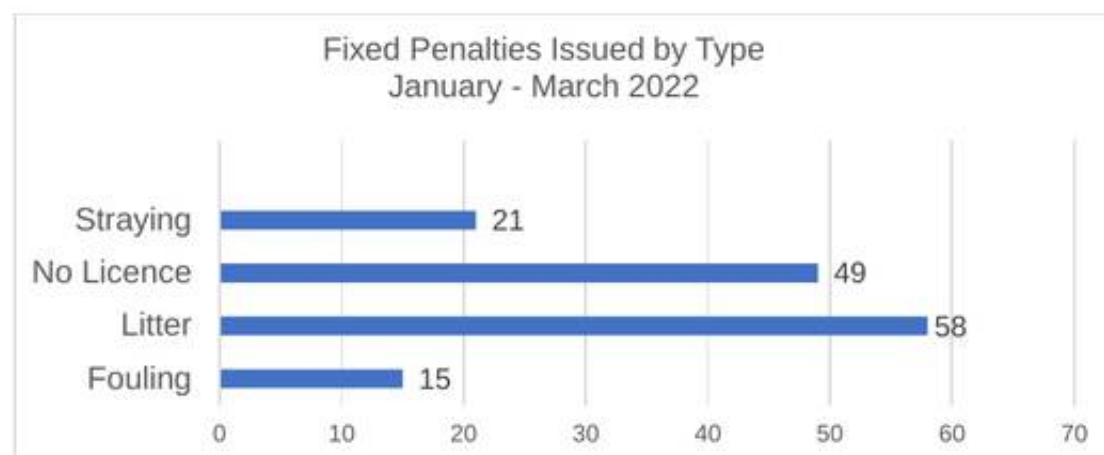
The main categories of fixed penalties were shown below. Other categories existed i.e., breach of dog control conditions, exclusion order and off lead offences. The offer of an £80 Fixed Penalty Fine was an opportunity to discharge liability to prosecution.

A payment period of 28 days was permitted. If paid within 14 days, the fine was discounted to £60. As staff recruitment and retention remained a challenge that had impacted significantly on the number of notices issued.

	Period of Report January – March 2022	Same 3 months 2021	Comparison
Fouling	15	39	↓
Litter	58	78	↓
No Dog Licence	49	1	↑
Straying	21	1	↑

The following graphs demonstrated:

1. the total number of fixed penalties issued by the Neighbourhood Environment Team during each month of the period of report
2. the fixed penalties issued during the period of report by type



Appendix A to the report provided a street level location for each of the penalty fines issued during the period of report 1 January to 31 March 2022.

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

Proposed by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor MacArthur, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter referred to a recent matter that had been brought to her by a member of the public where a young child had been witness to a dog attack. That child was now required to provide a written statement on the attack before an investigation could take place. The Director explained that there were procedures and protocols in place when dealing with the public and for people who could be considered more vulnerable, such as children. However, he assured the Member that serious issues of attack would be investigated and not delayed where a danger existed to the public or other animals. Officers were experienced and knew how to deal sensitively with the people they came in to contact with. He urged the Alderman to make direct contact with the officers in the NET about the specifics of the case.

Councillor MacArthur referred to some of the data in the report relating to fixed penalties and how the figures were compared to the previous year. It was noted that during the same period the previous year Covid-19 lockdown restrictions were prevalent so it was not a like for like comparison. Councillor McKee agreed thinking that the figures created a false representation of the true service provision, and a little extra historical information would be beneficial in future for such reports.

Councillor Kendall suggested that the Council could share information with the public when it came to taking responsibility for dogs. There were many expired dog licences and an alarming number of dog attacks on people and domestic animals and requests for dog training services. She thought that the Council should help dog owners to access services and support particularly since the numbers of dogs as family pets had grown significantly during the period of lockdown and Covid-19. The Director assured Members that the Council did provide a great range of services to the public in terms of advice on dog ownership, training etc. and accepted that the recent pandemic had derailed the usual campaigns to a large extent, but that was now getting back on track and contact was being re-established with schools and organisations within the community to re-engage.

Councillor McAlpine and Councillor Edmund spoke about dog fouling incidences on the southern part of the Ards Peninsula and urged officers not to forget rural areas by concentrating on more highly dense populations. The Director assured those Members that no part of the Borough was immune from fines. Some of the areas were routinely problematic and proactively targeted on a planned recurring basis and much of the enforcement surveillance work was intelligence led – relying upon good quality reports from concerned members of the public about specific problem locations, providing days/times/offender details etc. where possible so that officers could target enforcement in the most efficient and effective way to catch and fine culprits.

Following on from those points Councillor Boyle thought that was worth emphasising that the public could play its part helping to address dog fouling problems. The Council should send out the message that all reports of dog fouling would be managed in confidence. If the problem was to be addressed the public had a

responsibility to help in that process by giving relevant information. The Director agreed that the effectiveness of the Council's work in that respect depended upon evidence from the public and said that confidentiality would be highlighted.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor MacArthur, that the recommendation be adopted.**

(Having declared an interest in Item 9 Alderman McDowell was removed from the meeting at 8.44 pm and Councillor Kendall took the position as Chair for this Item).

## **9. SHARED ISLAND INITIATIVE - DEVELOPMENT FUNDING APPLICATION, COASTAL EROSION MANAGEMENT**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report dated 18 May 2022 from the Director of Environment detailing that the Shared Island Initiative came from the Office of the Irish Prime Minister, aimed to harness the full potential of the Good Friday Agreement to enhance cooperation, connection, and mutual understanding on the Island, and engage with all communities and traditions to build consensus around a shared future.

The Shared Island initiative involved:

- working with the Northern Ireland Executive and the British Government to address strategic challenges faced on the Island of Ireland.
- further developing the all-island economy, deepening North/South cooperation, and investing in the Northwest and border regions.
- fostering constructive and inclusive dialogue and a comprehensive programme of research to support the building of consensus around a shared future on the Island.

A funding call had been issued inviting cross border applications for revenue funding to assist in the development of applications to either Shared Island or Peace Plus for proposed capital projects. Project development funding of up to 150k/250k Euros was available, with applications due by 27 May 2022 and decisions by July/August 2022.

### **East Border Region – Coastal Erosion Project Proposal**

Officers from the East Border Region Councils of Ards and North Down, Newry Mourne and Down, Meath and Louth had partnered with other key stakeholders/partners, including the NI Coastal Forum and the Office of Public Works in the Republic of Ireland, to submit a Shared Island Development Funding Application. That had been facilitated by East Border Region with Meath County Council designated as the lead Council for the purpose of the application.

The subject of the application was coastal erosion, with funding being sought to appoint suitably qualified and experienced experts to develop a capital project

proposal that aimed to explore innovative and sustainable options for coastal erosion management across the four Council areas north and south of the border.

That was an area that Ards and North Down Borough Council had been working on for some time both locally (through the Ards Peninsula Coastal Erosion Group) and regionally (through its membership of the NI Coastal Forum). The opportunity to secure funding for the development of coastal erosion management capital projects that could subsequently be supported through the Shared Island and/or Peace Plus Capital Programmes was very significant given the ever-increasing awareness of how important the issue was for all coastal authorities in the context of the climate change agenda. The Shared Island and Peace Plus grant programmes provided a unique and welcome opportunity to collaborate efficiently and effectively on a subject which was of huge importance to coastal authorities both north and south of the border.

### **Next Steps**

The Shared Island Development Funding application had been submitted by Meath County Council as the Lead Authority, and a decision was due to be issued by July/August 2022. If that was successful, it was proposed that Ards and North Down Council would be a full partner in the project – with the cross-border partnership then overseeing the development of a capital funding project proposal. The timeframe for completion of that was twelve months, the intention being that it would subsequently lead to submission of an application by the cross-border partnership to the Shared Island and/or Peace Plus capital programme when funding calls were issued for those, in relation to the coastal erosion management capital project proposal that had been identified.

Updates would be brought to the Council in due course regarding the progress of this potential funding opportunity.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council approves the actions set out in this report.

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

Councillor Boyle welcomed the shared island initiative that had come from the government in the Republic of Ireland and thought that the matter was a no brainer since coastal erosion was something that both jurisdictions would face and all initiatives to address that were welcome. He was pleased that the Council was a member of the East Border Region but was concerned that the matter could be stalled due to the lack of a working Assembly at Stormont.

The Director reassured Members that the Northern Ireland Executive had no bearing on the progress of the grant application; it was a local authority led process and if successful, Councils would be able to meet the relatively modest 10-15% required contribution through benefit in kind (Council officer input to management of the planned project).



In seconding the recommendation Councillor McKee welcomed and echoed many of those comments. The protection of coastal communities was a priority and indeed essential given the knowledge that the coastline was expected to change significantly over the next 30 years.

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

(Alderman McDowell was readmitted to the meeting at 8.52 pm)

#### **10. NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS MCRANDAL AND DOUGLAS**

That this Council recognises the environmental damage caused by modern day packaging, much of which is disposed of in landfill or as litter. This Council agrees that producers, not ratepayers, should be responsible for the net costs of managing packaging waste and that litter payments must be included in any Extended Producer Responsibility scheme.

This Council tasks Officers with bringing back a report detailing what initiatives Council have undertaken to encourage businesses within the Borough to review, change and/or reduce the packaging they use. The report should include analysis of achievements and challenges encountered to date and outline further initiatives that could be undertaken to encourage businesses to change or reduce the packaging they use.

Councillor McRandal spoke to the Motion explaining that in April 2022 the Council had considered a letter which had been received from Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful. The decision was taken that the Council write to the relevant Government Ministers in Northern Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales expressing Ards and North Down Borough Council's support for inclusion of 'polluter pays' responsibility within the forthcoming Extended Producer Responsibility system.

He considered that if the polluter paid principle was included, as the Council wished, it would mean that a financial burden would be lifted from consumers, many of whom were the Council's ratepayers. However, that burden then would fall on the businesses who choose to use the packaging and that would include businesses, large and small, within the Borough. Having expressed Council support for the 'polluter pays' principle it was his view that businesses within the Borough should be helped to understand what that meant for them and what positive actions they could take to reduce the amount, and change the type, if appropriate, of packaging they used.

If the Council wanted businesses to reduce the amount and change the type of packaging they used, the result would be obvious environmental and financial benefits:

- Fewer single use plastic and other waste going to landfill or otherwise ending up as litter or waste within the environment;

- A reduction in the overall cost of dealing with waste.

The Motion called for a report to be brought back to the committee for further consideration about what actions could be taken to help businesses to change the amount and type of packaging they used.

At this point Councillor Douglas reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Kendall gave her support for the Motion and thanked the Members for bringing it forward. She was reassured that the Ards and North Down Borough Council had taken a stand for sustainability and felt it disappointing that the polluter did not already pay. She referred to the powerful lobby of businesses which had won over in the lack of strong government intervention to address this pressing environmental concern. She stated that in 2017 The Green Party had proposed a Motion to reduced single use plastics and while change had begun there was absolutely more to be done in the implementation of a circular economy. She stressed the importance of partnering with organisations such as Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful to bring about change.

Councillor Cathcart welcomed the Motion coming to the Council. He was aware that some businesses had already brought about changes by introducing compostable packaging and he believed that the Council should be encouraging those businesses. Alternatives now existed which the Council should encourage businesses to use more widely. As had already been discussed at the meeting there was far too much waste being generated currently in the Ards and North Down Borough and it needed to be brought down.

Councillor Boyle also gave his support suggesting it was a matter the Council did not really have a choice on. In his own fast food takeaway business customers had helped in the drive away from the use of polystyrene trays asking for their food to be wrapped simply in paper. That was no doubt environmentally more acceptable, but he stated that the absolute cost of buying in more sustainable packaging was quite unbelievably high and that would ultimately need to be passed on to the customer. Businesses quite simply may not be able to hold out to those high costs and he asked for the industry to be given any assistance that was available to help them make the changes necessary.

In seconding the Motion Councillor Douglas put on record her thanks to officers who had embraced the environmental challenges that everyone was facing and considered that the Council had a significant role as an influencer for change.

Councillor McRandal thanked Members for their positive comments and Members were in agreement.

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

**RECESS 9.05 pm**

**RECOMMENCED 9.15 pm**

## **11. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

There were no items of Any Other Notified Business.

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

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

## **12. ARC21 RESIDUAL WASTE TREATMENT PROJECT**

(Appendix II)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

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

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

## **TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 9.33 pm.

**ITEM 8.1.**

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**ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

A meeting of the Regeneration and Development Committee was held remotely via Zoom on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022, 19:00.

**PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Councillor Walker

**Aldermen:** Armstrong-Cotter                      Girvan  
 McDowell    Wilson  
 Smith

**Councillors:** Adair    Blaney  
 Brooks    Cummings  
 Dunlop    Gilmour  
 Irvine    Kennedy  
 McClean    McKimm

**In Attendance:** Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning (S McCullough), Head of Regeneration (B Dorrian), Head of Tourism (S Mahaffy), Head of Economic Development (C McGill) and Democratic Services Officers (S McCrea)

**1. APOLOGIES**

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

Apologies had been received from Alderman Armstrong-Cotter and Alderman Wilson.

**NOTED.**

**CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

Councillor Walker welcomed members to the meeting, passing on congratulations for appointments of Deputy Mayor to Councillor Blaney and Aldermanship to Alderman Armstrong-Cotter and gave thanks for Councillor Cummings for serving as Vice Chair this year. In addition, he thanked Alderman McDowell for his chairing of Regeneration & Development Committee last year.

**NOTED.**

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman sought Declarations of Interest at this stage and the following declarations were made.



Councillor McKimm: Item 12: Rural Development Programme Funding Update – a declared interest in the Rope-Walk. Councillor McKimm outlined that if the conversation included this subject he would have to leave.

Councillor Dunlop: Item 9: Donaghadee Commons Masterplan Update

Alderman Girvan: Item 20: Shared Island Local Authority Development Funding

Councillor Walker reminded members that they could declare interests as the meeting continued in the event that any had been forgotten.

**NOTED.**

### **3. TOURISM PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR QUARTER 4 (JAN TO MAR 2022)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning providing the undernoted detail:

Members would have been aware that Council was required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements that secured continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil this requirement Council approved the Performance Management Policy and Handbook in October 2015. The Performance Management Handbook outlined the approach to Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan Towards 2024 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually (for publication 30 September 2021)
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2021)

The Council's 17 Service Plans outlined how each respective Service would contribute to the achievement of the corporate objectives including, but not limited to, any relevant actions identified in the PIP.

#### **Reporting approach**

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

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

The report for Quarter 4 2021-22 is attached.

Please note that, unfortunately, due to the timing of reports, some financial information was not updated.

**Key points to note:**

- The Events service was not able to meet end of year targets due the ongoing impact of Covid-19 throughout the year. A restricted and reduced programme was delivered.
- Staffing had remained problematic throughout the year for the entire service. A post continued to remain vacant in the VIC which resulted in limited outreach activity when the opportunities arose. The Marketing service had a reduced complement of staff with one post remaining vacant due to an unsuccessful recruitment exercise.
- Events had a full complement of staff, filling a maternity cover post on a second recruitment exercise.
- Target not met for Event organiser training. The second cohort was delayed until March and was due to be completed in June.

**Key achievements:**

- The Tourism service had completed two funded programmes, enabling local experience development. These were: Tourism NI Market Led Experience Development Programme and DAERA Rural Tourism Collaborative Experience Programme. Combined, the programmes had supported the development of 20 experiences, with two progressing to the 'Embrace a Giant Spirit' portfolio level with Tourism NI.
- Delivery of a new visitor website, enhancing the presentation of the Borough as an appealing destination to potential visitors, and growth across tourism social media channels extending the reach to digital audiences.
- 3 campaigns delivered: 'Ready to Welcome you', 'Ours in the place' and 'Make it Yours'.
- Completion of Events Toolkit.

**Emerging issues:**

- VIC staffing was a continuing issue and would likely impinge on plans for outreach in Q1 and Q2 for 2022. It had the potential to impact opening schedules at both Ards and Bangor VIC throughout the 2022 season.
- Securement of businesses in both experience and event programmes continued to remain challenging and would likely continue into 2022.
- The Events service were to include contingency plans regarding changeable weather patterns in events management plans.

**Action to be taken:**

- Progress final recruitment for outstanding vacant posts and keep options under review for VIC staffing.
- Continue to work closely with businesses and experience providers within the development/delivery of the Summer and Autumn Food Festivals.
- Monitor web performance cumulative to date.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

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

Councillor Adair welcomed the new chair and paid tribute to Alderman McDowell's previous appointment. With regard to the report, he commended council staff who had worked hard in the tourism sector and paid particular heed to the advent of the Portaferry Town Heritage Trail; a walk that includes a digital guide on mobile devices providing history of the town.

Councillor McKimm also welcomed those individuals on their newly appointed roles and gave thanks to the Head of Tourism and her team for the report. In reference to page three, he asked for more information on the correlation between footfall and interest in the VIC in Newtownards and Bangor. The Head of Tourism advised this was a question that should be reserved for Item 4.

Alderman Girvan spoke of the difficult year(s) that had preceded 2022 with Tourism and Coronavirus. She drew attention to Item 3 on page 3, bullet point 2, quoting, "*Securement of businesses in both experience and event programmes continues to remain challenging and will likely continue into 2022,*" asking for further information and if it had been difficult for organisations. The Head of Tourism explained that staffing and resources could be issues, providing an example of taste festivals wherein local producers such as café owners would desire to be involved but struggled with challenges of staffing to commit alongside the daily running of their business. The Tourism team had been working hard to keep in contact with business owners throughout, though it had still proven challenging as was outlined in the report.

Councillor Gilmour asked if the difficulties in sourcing of posts for VIC and marketing were due to a lack of interest from prospective applicants and if there would be any way to alleviate the issue. The Head of Tourism advised that both the marketing and VIC jobs suffered from similar issues in that they were both reduced hours contracts which had led to limited responses. The marketing job had been advertised again, whilst the solution to the VIC position had been to seek secondment, a temporary arrangement which could also be considered a drawback for garnering attention.

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

#### **4. VISITOR INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22** (Appendix 1)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning providing the undernoted detail:

The Tourism unit managed two permanent Visitor Information Centres (VICs) located in the towns of Bangor and Newtownards. Both Centres open daily, Monday to Saturday servicing visitor and local enquiries, encouraging longer dwell time, and



more spend in the Borough. The VICs serviced both those who make contact prior to visiting, and those who did so during their time here. They also offered information on “what’s on” locally and a retail/box office ticket service for events – services used by both visitors and residents.

Throughout the year, members of the VIC team, worked alongside marketing, assisting with the content build of the new Visit Ards and North Down website, maintaining, and updating content, as well creating digital content for social media. The VIC team was also active in supporting the wider tourism team with ‘call outs’ to trade for campaigns, experiences and food and events programming, and the ticketing of the walks, tours, and experiences.

Numbers of visitors and types of enquiries changed radically during the global pandemic. In March 2020, travel was restricted, and many businesses closed for several months. Initially, the VIC teams worked from home for a short period continuing their administrative duties, however this was followed with furlough or redeployment for the VIC team.

This report provides an overview of the Newtownards and Bangor Visitor Information Centres as their services emerged from this period.

Newtownards VIC reopened to the public on Thursday 6 May 2021 (having closed on 20 March 2020 with two short periods of reopening that year when restrictions allowed, from 9 to 26 November and 11 to 24 December). Bangor VIC reopened to the public on Tuesday 1 June 2021 for the first time since 20 March 2020. When the centre reopened, it operated on a traffic light system restricting the number in the centre to only one ‘bubble’ at a time.

### **May 2021 – March 2022**

#### **Visitors and enquiries**

The profile of visitors was dominated by the ‘Staycation’ and ‘Day trip’ market. There were very few out of state visitors initially, due to travel restrictions, and general unease regarding travel. The ‘We’re Good to Go’ scheme supported by Tourism NI, in conjunction with Visit Britain, Visit Scotland and Visit Wales, aimed to give a sense of reassurance regarding Covid-19 safety measures in businesses to visitors – both VICs were part of this scheme.

Overall, almost 84% of VIC customers visited the centres in person, this highlights that face-to-face interaction remains important in the visitor journey with 14,159 customers serviced face to face. Excluding self-service visitors or “browsers”, a total of 17,156 customers were serviced via various platforms - direct engagement at the counter, telephone, post, fax, and email.

<b>Newtownards and Bangor VICs</b>	<b>May 21 - March 22</b>
Total footfall to the Centres	15,469
<b>ENQUIRY TYPE</b>	
Face to face enquiries	14,159
Self service visitors/browsers	1,310



RDC 10.05.2022

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ENQUIRIES Post/Fax/Email	879
ENQUIRIES Phone	2,117
<b>TOTAL SERVICED</b>	<b>18,465</b>

\*Newtownards VIC reopened 6 May 2021 missing Easter period.

Enquiries by origin (where known)	May 21 – March 22 % of total
NI	85.5%
GB & ROI	12%
Rest of the World	2.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

In comparison to the 'pre pandemic' profile of visitors to the centres, the VICs serviced 14.5% visitors from GB, ROI and Rest of the World (a decrease of 3.8%).

### Income

Whilst visitor information provision was the core function of the VIC's, both had a retail offer comprising mainly souvenirs, books and gifts as per customer needs. Both VICs encouraged sales via special promotions, e.g., Christmas / Mother's Day / Valentine's Day, and regularly re-merchandised stock to attract new customers and increase footfall.

The VICs also actively advertised a ticket agent service for local events and operate as a sales agent for external events. Commission on tickets added to total income generated. Events, tours and performances returned for this season.

Income type	May 21 - March 22
Retail sales	£25,870
Booking fees	0
Ticket sales commission	£601
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£26,471</b>
<b>Total income ex vat</b>	<b>£22,744</b>

### VIC Performance Summary

It should be noted that while, not unexpectedly, footfall and enquiries were down in 21/22 by 58% compared to pre pandemic figures, this was during a challenging travel environment. It was also reflective of an overall number of reduced trading months - Newtownards operating for 11 months and Bangor operating for 10 months. It was encouraging to note that customers visiting the Centres continued to support the retail element with retail reducing by a lesser amount of 26%.

As Appendix 1 illustrated, there were some notable performance differences between Newtownards VIC and Bangor VIC. Newtownards VIC serviced approximately twice the number of enquiries as Bangor, however Bangor serviced more 'Out of Borough' (OoB) visitors. Explanations for that may include Newtownards VIC's more town centre location (on a shopping street beside the bus

station), and its larger retail and information space in comparison to 'bubble' restricted entry to Bangor. Bangor may attract more OoB visitors due to its additional public transport links from Belfast, its proximity to the Marina and Pickie Fun Park.

See Appendix 1 for full report.

### **Portaferry Local Visitor Information Office**

The Local Visitor Information Office (LVIO) was in the reception area of Exploris. A Service Level Agreement was in place with the operators and regular monitoring of this was undertaken. It offered visitor servicing 10am – 5pm daily, seven days per week, all year (except for limited Exploris closure at Christmas). With a footfall in excess of 100,000 per year in a normal operating environment, the exposure to visitors was significant.

Exploris reopened after lockdown on Monday 24 May, with the new LVIO opening in tandem. The Council provided literature racking for brochures on the local area and key attractions across NI. There was also an interactive touch screen, supplied by Tourism NI, for visitors to explore the Borough and extended tourism offering in a digital format. Prior to Exploris reopening, its staff were trained by ANDBC on the local tourism product and FAQs to enable them to address visitor enquiries directly.

The new LVIO has been well used so far by self-service visitors. Over 7,500 pieces of visitor literature have been taken away, alongside use of the touch screen. The Council's VIC staff have provided visitor servicing support at peak periods during July and August, Halloween and on Bank Holidays (total of 13 days). On these dates a Council Visitor Advisor serviced enquiries from 421 additional visitors. This was planned for the coming season, subject to availability of staff.

<b>Exploris LVIO</b>	<b>May 21 –March 22</b>
<b>ENQUIRY TYPE:</b>	
Exploris Face-To-Face Enquiries	1137
Exploris Phone Enquiries	227
ENQUIRIES supported by ANDBC Staff (13 Peak Visitor Days)	421
<b>TOTAL SERVICED</b>	<b>1785</b>

### **Cockle Row Cottages**

As previously reported to Council in April 2022 the Cockle Row Cottages remained closed to visitors in 21/22 due to the inability to reopen under Covid-19 restrictions and the associated Risk Assessment. It did however deliver one small scale event in October attracting just under 300 attendees (outdoor). Similar activity with one event per month was scheduled for the 2022 summer season. Two publicly advertised Expressions of Interest exercises, to seek private or community proposals for use of the Cottages were unsuccessful. However, Officers have been continuing to engage with third parties on potential joint activity and would update Council with a further report at the appropriate juncture.

### **Outreach Activity**



Literature was removed from public display during the pandemic in many locations for safety reasons. Further literature stock was not produced by the service, as the climate was ever changing with businesses opening and closing irregularly and at short notice, and some ceasing to trade altogether.

During 2021, the opportunity for outreach was limited with sites and events significantly reduced. However, some opportunities started to re-emerge with a mobile VIC presence at Portaferry Market on limited dates, the Europro NI Masters Golf tournament in August and at 'Back in Bangor' and 'Tide and Turf' in August and September, respectively. A total of 620 visitor enquiries were serviced.

### **Summary**

Although there continued to be a very challenging environment for the tourism industry in 21/22, the Council's visitor information service engaged with over 20,000 customers via its VICs, outreach and Local Visitor Information Office.

The VICs had adapted as necessary and serviced face to face enquiries and sales, demonstrating that visitors would still seek 'trusted' and 'personalised' visitor services.

A promotional campaign was set to take place during summer 2022 to generate awareness of the VICs and drive additional footfall. Plans to work with the local trade have been underway with both VICs rebuilding relationships.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council notes this report.

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

Councillor McKimm raised his previous point in regard to attendance between the two VICs; why it was that Newtownards appeared to be ahead of Bangor and what might be the resulting factor. The Head of Tourism explained that the Bangor Office did not open until June last year which had been a full month behind Newtownards. In addition, Newtownards had a larger space which, despite not being able to return to work normally, had offered the ability to allow more numbers through the doors whilst Bangor had a bubble-system in place meaning one customer/party could only enter at one time which would have impacted on numbers. The difference in enquiries and where the profile had come from were different in that there were a higher out-of-borough percentage in Bangor compared to the Newtownards Office.

Councillor Adair commended the work of the TIC staff. He spoke of the Exploris facility at Portaferry and how at a previous committee, a concern was raised regarding staffing. It had been stated that council staff would assist Exploris at busy times, though Councillor Adair professed he had never seen any in his visits and asked if there were plans to expand staff presence. The Head of Tourism agreed that the plan had been to have staff down at busy periods such as during bank holidays and this was being delivered.

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

## 5. **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR QUARTER 4 (JAN TO MAR 2022)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning providing the undernoted detail:

Members would be aware that Council is required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil this requirement Council approved the Performance Management Policy and Handbook. The Performance Management Handbook outlines the approach to Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (2015-2019 plan in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually (2018/19 plan published 30 June 2018)
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April 2018).

The Corporate Plan 2015-19 had set out 17 objectives for the plan period based on themes of People, Place, Prosperity and Performance. The Council's Service Plans outline how each respective Service will contribute to the achievement of the Corporate objectives including, but not limited to, any relevant actions identified in the PIP.

### **Reporting approach**

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

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

The report for the fourth Quarter of 2021-22 is below.

Please note that, unfortunately, due to the timing of reports, some financial information had not been updated.

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

- 2021-22 was a difficult year in many respects with difficulties in recruiting staff to fill posts that were either new or vacant due to staff taking up posts elsewhere, as well as instances of staff illness which had affected performance in some areas of service delivery. Work steams had to be prioritised in line with the resources available.
- Many businesses had concentrated on getting their business back up and running post Covid and therefore take up on some of the mentor-based programmes was slow.



- Some programmes had been delayed due to the impact of C-19 but Officers continued to work across Councils to secure funding and roll out procurement and delivery in the coming year.
- Despite having 28 businesses participate in the Virtual Jobs Fair, to date no new jobs were taken up. This reflected the difficulties across the board that employers have been facing in attracting talent.

#### **Key achievements:**

- Despite lack of staff the creation and set up of the Labour Market Partnership (LMP), with support from the Department of Communities, became a priority and the agreed Action Plan will help to address the issues employers and those seeking work are facing. The former Employability and Skills Sub-Group has been subsumed by LMP to take forward the work to support employment across the Borough.
- Delivery of support had worked well through digital channels which businesses reporting it offers them and their staff more flexibility.
- Despite closures and restrictions due to C-19, Exploris and Pickie Fun Park had recovered well and were seeing numbers return to and even exceed pre C-19 figures.

#### **Emerging issues:**

- At the time of writing, the phase of EU Funding was drawing to a close, officers continued to work with other Councils and bodies to ensure that appropriate successor funding was identified and secured. However, given the lack of clarity on UK Shared Prosperity Funding alternative plans might have been needed to be put in place to ensure we were able to meet our statutory targets.
- The establishment of a Local Labour Market Partnership (LMP) and the creation of an Action Plan was approved and submitted to the Department of Communities however, until DfC could confirm the budget for implementation delivery was restricted.
- In addition to the difficulties with recruiting for the LMP posts, there remained several vacancies within the ED team. While the replacement of required posts took place, there would have been challenges for team members in continuing to respond to all the work requirements across the broad spectrum of tasks. Workloads would require careful monitoring & management.

#### **Action to be taken:**

- Officers worked to ensure sufficient plans and partnerships would be in place to provide continuity of support for new businesses. An 11-Council working group was established to work on progressing this important support.
- Recruitment of staff would remain a priority and officers would work with HR to fill posts as efficiently as possible.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

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

After welcoming Councillor Walker to the role of Chair, Councillor Cummings spoke of the emerging issues which had been somewhat of a pattern in the Council with staffing concerns and was concerned it could affect the organisation's ability to deliver objectives over the summer period. He questioned the possibility of calling upon the eleven councils for assistance.

The Head of Economic Development agreed that the recruitment of staff had been challenging and that it did have some effect on service delivery which had required prioritisation. She further outlined that a review of recruitment and retention processes via an internal working group across all services was ongoing. This included reviewing personnel specifications and attraction of applicants. Additional options had also been sought such as recruitment agencies and work with other Councils via the 11-Council working group. The latter has been beneficial but also challenging given the timelines of recruitment. The culmination of these efforts had provided progress but challenges still exist.

Councillor Cummings congratulated the team on their efforts through the Covid-19 pandemic. He asked if there was any insight into the opportunities that may arise via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The Head of Economic Development advised that the local team had been in communications with the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities. She believed they were working toward a Northern Ireland integrated implementation plan and further information would be brought back to Council on this when known.

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

**6. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT  
2021-22  
(Appendix I)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning providing the undernoted detail:

**Ards and North Down Business Support Services**

The role of the Economic Development Section (ED) was to promote and encourage local economic growth and to work to develop a pipeline of support from enterprise awareness, business start and business growth, employability and skills and sector development.

To encourage skills development, enterprise, growth and innovation, ED provided a suite of support, projects, interventions, and collaborations. Local businesses and entrepreneurs benefited from 1:1 confidential business advice, business intelligence service, signposting to other support agencies, workshops, advice sessions, networking opportunities and mentoring programmes.

RDC 10.05.2022

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Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, the ED Section had continued to deliver its support, as well as adapting quickly to what the business community required.

The team had worked in conjunction with colleagues across other service units to provide timely and crucial advice and support to assist businesses navigate the issues associated with both the pandemic and recovery period at the time of writing.

This annual report, as in previous years, provided a summary overview of the elements of the support services provided to local businesses between April 2021 - March 2022.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

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

Councillor McKimm thanked both officers and teams who had worked on the report. In drawing attention to page 4 employment/employability references, Councillor McKimm thought the training numbers appeared quite low which would affect sustainability and attrition. He asked if any information could be provided on how targets were not being met or what the barriers might be in helping individuals find their way into employment through training.

The Head of Economic Development did not have access to in-depth information on the subject due to such being held by the entities that the council supported. She explained that those entities worked with individuals on a bespoke basis and that the only feedback thus far had been more opportunities and interests being expressed by individuals to go into employment rather than training, but no breakdown existed as to why they had chosen particular paths. Councillor McKimm thought it beneficial if officers could enquire with agencies as to the barriers with regard to training and how the Council could support.

Alderman Girvan expressed gratitude to the team for their work on the weekly newsletters which provided great information for businesses. In regards to Appendix 6, page 23 regional job fair and expressed the disappointment of its results given the work that had gone into it; 62 businesses taking part and 150 jobs on offer yet only 4 positions being filled. She spoke of the report's reference to an excellent communication plan and requested comments.

The Head of Economic Development agreed, explaining that the team was also disappointed with the outcome. They had worked with partnerships which included the jobs & benefits office despite it not having been supported by the DfC. They had also worked via community groups, Ezines and social channels, believing all bases had been covered though feedback suggested the problems they had faced were systemic in the recruitment sector. It was suggested these difficulties in talent acquisition were perhaps in part due to individuals not wishing to leave their current places of employment.

Alderman Girvan suggested outcomes may be improved with the advent of in-person fairs in the future. She also enquired as to whether similar outcomes had been experienced by the ESB who had ran five other job fairs as it could provide a useful benchmark; something the Head of Economic Development agreed to investigate.

Councillor Walker commented on the range of economic development business support being provided to businesses within the Borough as outlined in the report and outlined that members may find it beneficial for a workshop in the autumn to understand the interventions being provided in this regard.

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

## **7. EAST BORDER WESTMINSTER EXCHANGE VISIT**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning providing the undernoted detail:

### **Background**

East Border Region (EBR) was a local authority-led cross-border network comprising six Local Authorities: Ards and North Down Borough Council; Newry, Mourne and Down District Council; and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon District Council in Northern Ireland with Louth; Monaghan; and Meath County Councils in the Republic of Ireland, encompassing a total population of 826,000.

To support capacity building activity of its Members, EBR had received funding from the Reconciliation Fund. One of the activities planned was an East-West Capacity Building Exchange visit to Westminster. As part of the visit, an official launch at Westminster was to take place to highlight the aim and commitment being undertaken across the region. A full schedule of events/meetings over two days would also be planned. EBR officers were still working out the detail of this visit, but the following provisional dates had been proposed:

### **Monday 19 September & Tuesday 20 September 2022**

It is anticipated that departure would be on an early flight on Monday, returning on Tuesday evening, and Members were requested to indicate their intention to participate.

The funding would cover the costs of hotel, travel and most meals for EBR Board Members, which for ANDBC were Alderman Carson, Alderman McDowell and Alderman Keery. Some additional subsistence, at approximately £150 per person, may have been required.

Participation in the Exchange Visit of other Members - who sat on the EBR Members' Forum and/or any officers - needed to be funded from individual Council budgets. The costs of hotel per person were approximately £200 and flights were approximately £100-£150, depending on how soon they were booked. Subsistence



might have been required as above. The ANDBC Members on the EBR Members' Forum were Councillor Boyle, Alderman Girvan, and Councillor Thompson.

Aside from the EBR annual subscription, there was no additional budget for EBR activity.

It is recommended that due to budget demands, Council approved travel and participation in the Westminster Exchange visit, as outlined above, for the three EBR Board Members to be funded predominantly by the Reconciliation Fund.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approves travel & participation in the Westminster Exchange visit, as outlined above, for the three EBR Board Members to be funded predominantly by the Reconciliation Fund.

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

Councillor Cummings believed the collaboration in matters outlined in the report had proven beneficial for local governments as had been seen recently in the city deal. Alderman Girvan agreed with the sentiments of her colleague and believed it to be a worthwhile investment sending three members across.

Councillor Gilmour was not in agreement, citing a cost of £450 per person at a minimum which she believed would be unlikely to offer any return.

Councillor Adair explained that he had seen the benefits of border funding within his district, such as the improvements made at Greyabbey with the building of carparking facilities last year which had increased footfall and the boardwalk at Cloughey. He concurred with the sentiments of Councillor Cummings and spoke of the resulting investment brought forth from sending EBR representatives to the Westminster Exchange visit and felt it would be in poor taste to do anything and given how it raised Ards & North Down's profile he was in support of the recommendation.

It should be noted that Councillor Gilmour and Councillor McClean were both against the proposal whilst other members were in support.

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

## **8. REGENERATION PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR QUARTER 4 (JAN TO MAR 2022)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning providing the undernoted detail:

### **Context**

Members would have been aware that Council was required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have arrangements in place to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil this requirement Council

approved the Performance Management Policy and Handbook in October 2015. The Performance Management Handbook outlined the approach to Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan Towards 2024 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually (for publication 30 September 2021)
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2021)

The Council's 17 Service Plans outlined how each respective Service will contribute to the achievement of the corporate objectives including, but not limited to, any relevant actions identified in the PIP.

### Reporting approach

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

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

The report for Quarter 4 of 2021-22 is attached.

Please note that, unfortunately, due to the timing of reports, some financial information had not been updated.

### Key points to note:

- The Business Adaptation and Improvement Grants Scheme had been completed with over £876K being delivered to businesses across the Borough.
- DfC had agreed an extension of the Recovery funding until 31 September 2022, however, a request was to be made for a further extension as there were still key projects that were due to be delivered.
- The Letter of Offer for the Small Settlements Grants was received and returned. Permission to commence with the projects was still being awaited from DfC.
- The two projects in Portavogie to be funded by SEAFLAG was still awaiting permission to proceed.

### Key achievements:

- The masterplan for the Commons in Donaghadee had been completed.
- Consultation on the Small Settlements projects had commenced.
- The tender for the works to Portavogie had been assessed and was within the budget available.

**Emerging issues:**

- Delivery of certain elements of the Covid Recovery programme was taking much longer than anticipated. Also, certain issues had emerged since the planning applications were submitted.
- Due to a number of vacancies in the unit the commencement of certain projects might have been delayed or deferred.
- The time frame for the delivery of the Small Settlement projects may not be achievable (March 2023) as permission to commence had not yet been given.

**Action to be taken:**

- To continue to monitor the implementation of all projects.
- To try and recruit key staff as quickly as possible.
- Open discussions with DfC about the Small Settlements programme.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

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

Councillor Adair commended the Regeneration team for their efforts and commented on the ability of such a small team's success in delivering large outcomes. He asked if a letter of offer had arrived for the Portavogie public realm schemes. The Head of Regeneration explained that his team had supplied all requirements to SeaFlag and that the Letter of Offer had not yet arrived which was causing some concerns, primarily that when the tender was submitted, the costings received were within budget, but as time goes on, it's possible the contractor may not be able to stay with the original quoted prices, given world inflation. Councillor Adair advised he would contact the relevant department to query the issue.

Councillor McKimm passed on both his, and the community's appreciation for the management of grants which had been of great help.

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

## **9. DONAGHADEE COMMONS MASTERPLAN UPDATE**

(Appendix I)

*(Councillor Dunlop temporarily left the meeting due to a declaration of interest)*

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning providing the undernoted detail, including copies of the Donaghadee Commons Masterplan:

**Background**

Members would have been aware that in the last financial year the Council agreed to undertake consultations with a view to developing a Masterplan for the Commons in Donaghadee. Aecom was appointed and, after a period of extensive consultation, had finalised a Masterplan for the Commons. A copy of the Masterplan is attached.



### **The Plan**

The Commons presented a great opportunity for Donaghadee to be seen as a successful sustainable growth town, with a contemporary mix of opportunities for all.

The Vision was that the Commons will offer enhanced walking, cycling, relaxing and outdoor play opportunities for all within the parkland that has biodiversity at its core. As a tourism, recreation and leisure destination defined by its wellness opportunities, the Commons Coastal Park, combined with the urban regeneration and development of the Town, would continue the revitalisation of Donaghadee and grow appeal as a visitor destination and a place to live.

### **Implementation**

Members would have been aware that to take forward the Masterplan, it would have needed to be considered in phases or even individual projects. Funding was needed to be sought to develop the Outline Business Case for each phase or project, which would have to determine how each would be funded and delivered in the long term. The following was an indicative phasing plan, but this was subject to change based upon the funding that might have become available in the future:

- Phase 1: Central. Transformation of the landscape, paths, and coastal boardwalks plus enhanced biodiversity.
- Phase 2: South. Recreational vehicle park, enhanced pavilion and natural play and recreational facilities.
- Phase 3: North. A mixed-use urban regeneration and development scheme, including the multifunctional visitor centre.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees with the vision of the Donaghadee Commons Masterplan and tasks officers to commence the seeking of funding opportunities based on a phased approach to deliver the masterplan.

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

Councillor McKimm was glad to see the report and looked forward to seeing future works on the project. Councillor Cummings agreed with his colleague and advised the phased approach and continued consultation with the community would be very much welcomed. Councillor Gilmore asked if a steering group existed for the masterplan like it had for Holywood and referenced potential works such as light-coloured footpaths as was used in public realms and disturbed flagstones due to sea swells. The Head of Regeneration advised each project would be analysed and brought back through the town advisory group. He believed there were three approaches to taking the project forth; to look at works in the Commons to understand what might be possible, to look for funding and to look for commercial elements within such which could provide income. He agreed that lessons would be taken from previous public realm schemes and that it would be looked at when taking certain project elements forward.



Councillor McClean expressed his belief that Councillor Brooks would have been the first person to propose Item 9 but that he was unable to attend due to having IT issues and asked that IT foresee potential computer related problems for members to avoid unnecessary absence. Alderman M Smith attested to the frustration Councillor Brooks may have felt.

Alderman Girvan referred to motorhomes the increase of usage in such vehicles over the pandemic, querying the possibility or existence of any such area whereby such automobiles might have access to charging points. The Head of Regeneration hoped that such could be one element linked into the pavilion and tea-rooms but advised that doing so would require careful consideration with regard to legislation.

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

## **10. COVID RECOVERY PROJECTS**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning providing the undernoted detail:

As previously reported, the Department for Communities (DfC) issued a Letter of Offer for c£1.75M for Covid 19 Revitalisation Projects. This funding comprised of DfC, Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DEARA) contributions in response to the impact of the pandemic on the local area and to assist the revitalisation of towns and rural areas.

Further to the update to Regeneration and Development Committee on 7 April 2022, the following projects were developed and internal consultation had been held on what could be reasonably delivered within the timescales required. These projects were supported by the appropriate Town Advisory Group and had met the criteria set by the three Departments. Approval in principle had been received.

### **Comber Town Improvement Scheme Phase 2 (Bridge Street/ Leisure Centre Car Park)**

Proposed budget: £82,074. Funding stream: DfC £61,859 | DfI £20,185.

The proposed project aimed to:

- Improve linkages between the existing greenway, leisure centre and the retail core of the town centre.
- Promote connectivity by enhancing the existing area to create a safe and attractive environment.
- Encourage and support active travel by providing a safe route for people to walk and cycle.
- Introduction of LED lighting which would support active travel in the evenings and improve residents' and visitors' safety and security.
- Provide infrastructure for the future installation of Electrical Vehicle Charging Points.

It should be noted that the proposed scheme was, at the time of writing, being costed and as such, they were indicative costs. It was felt that this scheme may have been enhanced if additional funding was available.

Project constraints to be aware of were statutory consents and external issues such as rising contractor and material costs.

### **Bangor Lighting Improvement Scheme (Castle Park/ Abbey Street)**

**Proposed budget: £30,000. Funding stream: DfC**

The proposed project aimed to:

- Improve linkages to the retail core of the Town Centre
- Promote connectivity by enhancing the existing area to create a safe and attractive environment
- Improve safety and accessibility for all users (pedestrians, wheelchair users, cyclists, parents with prams, etc)
- Encourage and support active travel by providing a safe route for people to walk or cycle
- Support active travel in the evenings and improve residents and visitor's safety and security

Although this was considered as a suitable project, the requirement for statutory consents was always a concern as the deadline for the completion of the project is September 2022. The Planning Section had advised that a number of consents were required. Therefore, it was deemed that this project could not be delivered in the given time period.

Other projects were being considered which would be brought to the Town Advisory Group.

### **Donaghadee Digital Information Screen (Donaghadee Toilets Foyer) Proposed budget £20,000. Funding Stream: DfC**

This project aimed to:

- Act as an information hub for the town.
- Allow for up-to-date information on events and offers.
- Can be linked to historical information for walking tours and heritage attractions (e.g., The Moat, Sir Samuel Kelly, the Harbour, Commons etc).
- Can be utilised for maps and wayfinding.

This project had replaced the Parklet, which the TAG agreed was not required. The TAG requested a different project that met the funding criteria and could be delivered on time. Fifteen projects were considered, and this was deemed the most suitable.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council notes this report & agrees to allocate £30,000 from Castle Park/Abbey Street project to the Comber Town Improvement Scheme Phase II.

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

RDC 10.05.2022

108

Alderman Smith referenced the subject of the Bangor Lighting Improvement Scheme and asked what issues resulted in the failure of plans as well as what other projects would be considered. The Head of Regeneration advised that works in areas such as parks require advice from the Planning Department who outlined the possible requirement of a bat survey. As the project is required to be delivered by September 2022, the project would never have succeeded as approvals and designs would not have been in place in time. Alderman Smith queried the statement and asked if the project were to, '*never,*' succeed, why was it put forward and asked what other projects might be in the pipeline. The Head of Regeneration reiterated that it was only after receiving advice from the Planning Department and that a proposal would not have been put forth if the initial belief of an unachievable goal was the case. He believed it would be wise to keep the project on the books so that in the event that revenue was found, the project could then be worked up further.

Councillor Cummings thanked officers for the report and professed delight at the prospect of funding for a carpark that would provide connectivity to the greenway as well as additional safety. He enquired as to when works might have been expected to start. The Head of Regeneration advised work to the car park as outlined in the report would go ahead via the covid recovery fund but that the Greenway was a separate project. Concerns had been raised of safety in the carpark at night and it would be hoped additional lighting would be beneficial in that regard. It was also hoped the project work would commence within the next six to eight weeks with an aim of being near completion by the end of September.

Councillor Gilmour understood proposals would be brought to the next steer group and was concerned if she supported this evening's recommendation on Item 10 that it would mean the money for the Bangor lighting scheme would be redirected to Comber, leaving little to no finance for the Bangor projects. The Head of Regeneration discussed the subject, predicting that from the overall budget, a number of underspends would occur in other projects that would allow for funds to be allocated. He hoped but was unable to guarantee that such monies would be similar to or equal to that of the monies redirected from Bangor to the Comber car park.

Councillor Dunlop recalled the subject of lighting at Castle Park being discussed at a previous meeting. Those details coupled with the proposed location being within council land and ownership led Councillor Dunlop to believe there should have been no issues. The Head of Regeneration explained the process of projects being agreed and placed through Planning for advice and, in the context of covid funds, it must be shown that a project helps with regeneration. He advised it may be possible to look at the Castle Park lighting situation as a standalone item which he would discuss with colleagues. Councillor Dunlop believed planning would not be an issue given electrical linkages existing at the location and that current lighting was not appropriate. Thusly, proposed lighting would provide broader illumination at a small cost which Councillor Dunlop asked this be seriously considered and put in place if possible. The Head of Regeneration advised he would have his colleague call Councillor Dunlop to make sure discussed parameters were accurate.

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

## **11. FIVE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE/TRADE PLANS 2022-24**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning providing the undernoted detail:

The Regeneration Unit continued to work closely with the Chambers of Commerce/ Trade in each of the five towns to engage and develop the capacity of the Chambers and was to improve the business environment in the towns. The Regeneration Unit had successfully developed a partnership approach aimed at assisting the Chambers to improve the profile of the Chambers and provide activities for the wider benefit of the towns, through an agreed programme of activities and the allocation of annual funding up to a maximum of £12,000 per Chamber. The purpose of the funding was to assist with the following:

*Initiatives aimed at growing the Chamber:*

- Drives to increase membership and attract new members
- Initiatives which help businesses/traders improve skills
- Initiatives to keep an updated Web and social media presence
- Initiatives which enable networking

*Initiatives aimed at increasing the profile of the town:*

- Shop Local initiatives
- Initiatives which add value to visitors/tourists to the town
- Bespoke Christmas activity
- Standalone events
- Covid recovery

*Administration support for the Chamber:*

- To assist with communication sharing news, events, and training opportunities
- To increase the use of the social media/digital presence of the Chamber
- To assist with the delivery of the Chamber yearly plans/ activities
- Collecting membership fees
- Liaising with Council in relation to funding support

The five Chambers had devised a 2-year business plan for 2022-2024 that clearly demonstrated the main issues in each town, alongside actions that would assist the Chambers to grow and develop with key deliverables, which demonstrated value for money. The following is a synopsis of some of the work that was to be undertaken during the year by the Chambers.

### **Bangor**

The 2021 financial year provided Bangor Chamber with opportunities not possible in the previous 'Covid affected' two years. Businesses began to re-open without major restrictions. The Chamber had the opportunity to engage with many of new traders who had started enterprises in the town. Coffee mornings and presentations resumed, and we had gained new members with some consistency. Aims:



- To increase and improve engagement with business and all stakeholders in Bangor.
- To increase membership and provide a platform for the business community in Bangor.
- To continue our support for major capital projects including Queens Parade and the Waterfront Scheme.
- To continue to provide free training opportunities for local businesses. We hope to extend this Borough-wide and share the benefits with the other four Chambers.
- To employ a part-time Administrative Assistant who can deal with day-to-day activities.

For this year, the Chamber intended to run a number of events which include:

- Regular monthly meetings / events for members.
- New Legislation events.
- Showcasing events for new members.
- Supporting Sea Bangor with our Gazebo and free merchandise (as well as future Council-led events).
- 2022 Business Awards – Details to be confirmed.
- Support the Bangor Christmas Lights switch-on.

### **Comber**

The Chamber continued to focus on helping businesses develop skills, promoting the town as a destination and identifying projects that were to assist with the economic development of the town.

The committee worked to increase membership of the Chamber and reach out to all businesses in Comber and surrounding area to offer support and networking opportunities.

An exciting pilot initiative was launched this year with Comber Chamber of Commerce opening a Pop-up shop in the town, taking a vacant unit and offering it out to small businesses on a weekly basis. This had proved an exciting and innovative project with the shop being filled every week and booked ahead for three months.

A Town Manager was recruited in February 2022 to help develop projects, seek funding, and professionally market the town via social media and advertising campaigns. The Chamber also had a website which was continually updated that has local business features highlighted.

Despite the restrictions and difficulties of the last two years, the Chamber had continued to work to ensure members and business in the area felt they were being supported and promoted.

Comber Chamber of Commerce aimed to promote Comber as a top visitor destination to eat, shop and explore. Comber has been home to great small independent businesses, amazing restaurants and cafes and tourist and historical attractions. In 2022/2023 the Comber Chamber of Commerce was to focus on helping small business reach their audiences and promote the wealth of fantastic

products available. It would focus on general promotion of the town as a whole including:

- Promotional activities
- Training for members
- Pop-up-shop
- Networking events
- Collaboration with other regeneration initiatives and partners

### **Donaghadee**

The Chamber would continue with the administration duties required for the delivery of initiatives aimed at growing the Chamber and at increasing the profile of the town. Some of the planned activity for the year included:

- To promote and retain membership across all categories. Current membership is Traders (83); Community Orgs (25) and Individuals (34)
- To organise additional public meetings.
- To organise a summer festival each year with a target of involving 35 different organisations and holding more than 75 events across the Summer.
- To organise and co-ordinate the Christmas Santa Parade.
- To involve the wider community in the Crommelin Wood Environmental Project and the Marine Litter Project.
- To continue to inform members, visitors and the general public on issues affecting Donaghadee via the website and social media
- To ensure businesses are informed of sources for advice and grants
- To help traders and businesses improve skills
- Increase the number of members in the trader category from (83) to (95)
- To develop at least two "shop local" campaigns each year
- To promote footfall at festival and other events by marketing events outside the town
- To take up and create opportunities for networking.
- To secure trader involvement in Ulster in bloom.
- To continue work on the restoration of Crommelin Wood.
- To support schools in the Marine Litter Project.
- To retain our Ulster in Bloom title.
- To maintain pressure on Elected representatives and officials to keep Donaghadee tidy.
- To examine the potential for community allotments.
- To examine the potential for a Sensory Garden incorporating a Mens Shed.
- To circulate material received from other sources to members.
- To promote and support well-being initiatives.
- To advise and support groups who require help with grant applications.

### **Hollywood**

After two years of limited activity due to Covid -19 Pandemic, the Chamber of Commerce had begun holding regular events and continued its work promoting the Town.

All activities were to be in line with pandemic restriction and would have been adjusted if needed. The objectives of the Hollywood chamber were:

- *Membership:*
  - Mapping exercise to establish current profile of Holywood Business sector and identify possible new members.
  - Drive to support current membership and attract new members.
- *Networking Events:*
  - Continue to offer a range of networking events to support the business community's as well as working in partnership with the Council and supporting events relevant for County Down.
  - To promote working in partnership by offering networking possibilities in formal as well as social setting.
- *Training/Information session:*
  - Support Initiatives which help businesses/traders improve skills.
  - To be guided by the membership of issues relevant to the business community.
- *Shop local initiatives:*
  - Support activities that increase the profile of Holywood.
  - Support Initiatives which add value to visitors/tourists to the town.
- *Seasonal Activities:*
  - Support activities that increase the profile of Town Holywood.
  - Bespoke Christmas activity as well as Standalone events or partnering with other events to add value.
- *Social media:*
  - To support initiatives to keep an updated Web and social media presence.

### **Newtownards**

The Chamber planned to return to regular networking events, training events, engagement on Council-led events and support for their members.

Some of the planned activity for the year included:

- *Initiatives aimed at growing the Chamber:*
  - Drives to support current membership and attract new members.
  - Initiatives which help businesses/traders improve skills.
  - Initiatives to keep an updated Web and social media presence.
  - Initiatives which enable networking.
  - Initiatives to aid in issues arising from Covid recovery and Brexit.
  - Initiatives to help businesses understand and achieve net Zero Carbon emissions green recovery.
- *Initiatives aimed at increasing the profile of the Town:*
  - Shop Local initiatives - Initiatives which add value to visitors/tourists to the town - Ensure that events do not detract from trade - Standalone events - Recruitment drive.
  - Partnering with other events to add value.

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- Easter /Halloween Family Orientated Event - Campaign for Council managed Christmas Event that encourages spend Identify and improve the Ards product through involvement in Council and subsequent groups (Steering and public realm TAG etc.)
- *Administration:*
  - To assist with communication sharing news, events and training opportunities.
  - To increase the use of the social media/digital presence of the Chamber.
  - To assist with the delivery of the Business Plan.
  - Collecting membership fees.
  - Liaising with Council in relation to funding support.
  - Business Awards.
  - Reward businesses within the Chamber for their Merit.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report & agrees to continue with funding.

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

Councillor Dunlop enquired as to how membership was obtained in respective chambers, what consistency existed and the insights as to memberships and fees, and if such would show a return on investment. The Head of Regeneration advised that the council had no input nor influence into how members were selected. He explained that all five chambers would frequent businesses who are not members to show the benefits of membership in a way that would be considered open. The council provides £12k to the chamber to enable them to carry out particular duties. The Head of Regeneration advised however that the money does not go into their coffers. Instead, the chambers would propose a task, carry it out and send invoices, therefore they would not receive money to do with as they saw fit; projects and tasks would be delivered first.

Alderman Girvan welcomed the report and appreciated the work that had been carried out. She believed it would be beneficial if a representative of different chambers were to attend a meeting at the town hall where reports could be provided of successes and provide more clarity to members of the work they carry out. Councillor Walker and Councillor P Smith agreed that it was a sound idea but advised if Alderman Girvan wished it to be a proposal, to raise it in time for the next meeting. In the meantime, The Head of Regeneration would carry out some research and talk to the Chambers to bring a report in time for the next meeting due in September 2022.

Councillor Blaney, having been to events held by the Chambers, proclaimed their work as being fantastic and useful for networking opportunities from which he believed job opportunities and business synergies were generated.

(Councillor Mark Brooks entered the meeting - 20:08)



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

## **12. RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FUNDING UPDATE**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning providing the undernoted detail:

Members would have been aware that, at the April 2022 meeting of the Council, it was agreed not to proceed with the Ropewalk Scheme and to advise the Local Action Group (LAG) accordingly. It was further agreed to ask that the LAG make representations to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to ascertain whether the funding allocated to the Ropewalk project (c£350K) could be diverted for use on other projects. It is important to remember that the funding was timebound and had to be spent by the end of September 2022. The LAG advised that DAERA had enquired which projects the Council was considering, and whether the time condition could be met.

A quick review of the Village Plans revealed that no projects had reached Outline Business Case stage, nor did they have the appropriate statutory consents in place to be taken forward within the timescale. As no project was suitably advanced, the Council had not made provision for the 25% contribution of the building costs.

It is important to note that the Rural Development Manager had resigned, with a further post that remained vacant, leaving one Assistant Regeneration Officer tasked with delivering the two SEAFLAG and six Small Settlement projects. In light of this change, there was no capacity to take on further project delivery even if suitable projects had been identified.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees in light of the above, to make no further applications to the Rural Development Programme and advises the LAG of this position.

Councillor Adair proposed, seconded by Councillor Cummings, that the recommendation be amended; That council contact The LAG asking they write to DEARA requesting the £350,000 Village Renewal Funding be secured for our Borough with an extension and permission to open a call for new applications for village renewal projects. Further Council tasks the Director of Community and Wellbeing to identify and work up an application to enhance and improve play parks with a view to submitting an application if the funding scheme reopens.

Councillor Adair expressed his concern that £350k could be lost to a project that would not be able to proceed and hoped that the amendment provided would perhaps negate the fact that new applications were closed by bringing the money back into the borough to be used on another project. He believed the council should exhaust all available options and that if such could be agreed, the monies could be used in order to refurbish or start works on projects that required no planning permission, with play parks being provided as an example.

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Councillor Cummings recalled how at times, the council and others had run out of time in using funding supplied due to various reasons, a common one being due to central government processes. Because of this, he believed it necessary to have projects at the ready for responses received from central government.

Alderman Girvan commended Councillor Adair's attempts to regain the £350k but believed it may be in futility with the application deadline having passed. With no government operating at Stormont at this time, she queried when or whether such application funds may be available again. The Head of Regeneration advised that the Rural Development Program was closed as indeed were applications but that if one does not ask, one does not get. As such, if members were in agreement at the next council meeting a formal request could be made through LAG to DAERA and await the outcome.

(Councillor McKimm was concerned the topic was too close to a Declaration of Interest and was removed temporarily from the meeting at 20:18.)

Councillor Adair apologised and explained that he had deliberately not made mention of the Portaferry scheme in the hope that it would allow all members of the committee to remain and discuss. He reiterated his point that the council should exhaust every avenue in trying to claw back the £350k to be allocated elsewhere.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor Cummings, that the recommendation be amended and adopted to reflect that council contact The LAG asking they write to DEARA requesting the £350,000 Village Renewal Funding be secured for our Borough with an extension and permission to open a call for new applications for village renewal projects . Further Council tasks the Director of Community and Wellbeing to identify and work up an application to enhance and improve play parks with a view to submitting an application if the funding scheme reopens.**

(Councillor McKimm returned to the meeting at 20:20.)

### **13. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

No other notified business.

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

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

(The recording was stopped at 20:21)

### **14. PICKIE QUARTER 4 REPORT 2021/22**

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

**15. EXPLORIS QUARTER 4 REPORT 2021/22**

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

**16. SINGLE TENDER ACTION, PICKIE FUN PARK**

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

**17. EXTENSION OF ENTERPRISE NI (ENI) CONTRACT FOR DELIVERY OF THE GO-FOR-IT PROGRAMME**  
(Appendix I)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

**18. UPDATE ON AND LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP**

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

## **19. COVID RECOVERY SMALL SETTLEMENTS REGENERATION PROGRAMME**

**\*\*\*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)**

## **20. SHARED ISLAND LOCAL AUTHORITY DEVELOPMENT FUNDING**

**\*\*\*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)**

(Alderman Girvan returned to the meeting at 20:54)

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

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

### **TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 20:54



Unclassified

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**ITEM 8.4.1****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	29 June 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regeneration and Development
Date of Report	17 June 2022
File Reference	RDP43
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/>
Subject	Addendum Report to Minutes of the Regeneration and Development Committee of 9 June 2022 - Item 19, regarding the Covid Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme
Attachments	None

**Background**

At the meeting of the Regeneration and Development Committee on 9 June 2022, the Small Settlements Regeneration Programme was reported under Item 19. A verbal update was given by the Head of Regeneration, regarding project delays due to awaiting sign-off for the procurement structure by the Department for Communities/CPD. It was recommended that, were this not received, Council write to the Department for Communities expressing concern with the timeframe for the scheme and reiterating the urgency to receive sign off on the procurement strategy.

**Update**

The Department for Communities have since confirmed CPD's approval of the Procurement Strategy, which enables the Scheme to progress as per Letter of Offer. No further action is, therefore, required at this time.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council notes this Addendum to the Minutes of RDC.09.06.2022(19).

## ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A virtual meeting of the Corporate Services Committee was held via Zoom on Tuesday 14 June 2022 at 19:00.

### PRESENT:

#### In the Chair:

**Aldermen:** Gibson            Irvine            McIlveen  
                  Girvan           Keery

**Councillors:** Blaney                    Irwin  
                  Chambers                McKimm  
                  Douglas                 P Smith  
                  Greer                     T Smith (19:12)  
                  Gilmour

**Officers:** Chief Executive (S Reid), Head of Finance (S Grieve), Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development (R McCullough), Head of Administration (A Curtis), Head of Strategic Transformation & Performance (S Denny), Community Planning Manager (P Mackey), Performance Improvement Manager (M McVeigh), and Democratic Services Officers (S McCrea)

### 1. APOLOGIES

Director of Finance and Performance (S Christie), Director of Organisational Development and Administration (W Swanston) and Councillor Cooper.

NOTED.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman sought any Declarations of Interest at this stage and the following declarations were made:

Councillor P Smith – Item 15b.

### 3. PERFORMANCE REPORTS Q4 2021-22 (Appendix 3a through 3g)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

The following excerpt preceded, '*Key points to note,*' within each report.

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

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan Towards 2024 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually (for publication 30 September 2021)
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2021)

The Council's 17 Service Plans outlined how each respective Service was to contribute to the achievement of the Corporate objectives including, but not limited to, any relevant actions identified in the PIP.

### Reporting approach

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

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

### 3a. COMMUNITY PLANNING Q4 PERFORMANCE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

#### Key points to note:

- Final budget information had not been made available to service. There would be an underspend due to maternity leave and the delay in printing a Big Age friendly Guide. This guide had been finished and was designed to ensure it was accessible to older people. It was to be launched in early Autumn to coincide with Age Friendly month.

#### Key achievements:

- Consider work undertaken to develop content for Big Age Friendly Guide to help people with limited digital ability to identify how to contact relevant services. Workshop with Elected Members as part of their Charter Plus project provided useful feedback on content of Guide. Follow up workshops/consultation with Age Friendly Alliance, Cedar Foundation, Youth Council and Comber Rotary also provided feedback on content and accessibility.

- Big Plan Part II | Our Big Priorities was published, and work started to produce an easy read version.

### Emerging issues:

- Lots of links being formed between food priorities – Social supermarket, Sustainable Food and outdoor learning.

### Action to be taken:

- Assessment of Wellbeing to be finalised. Easy read info graphics being developed.
- Performance Scorecards for priorities to be finalised.

### Quarterly Performance Report - Community Planning

Generated on: 31 May 2022

Last Update Q4 2021/22

Performance Data Traffic Light icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	Performance Scorecard (Big Plan Priorities)	3	5
	Performance Update Report	1	1
	No. of 3rd Sector CP Forum meetings per year	0	1
	Performance Scorecard for SCPP	1	1
	Publication of Assessment of Wellbeing	0	1
	Submission of Statement of Progress	No	No
	No. of SCPP meetings per year	1	1
	Facilitate 4 partner meetings per quarter	4	4
	Publication of 'engage' newsletter	1	1
	Big Conversation Panel	0	0
	Publication of Big Plan: Our Big Priorities	1	1
	% staff attendance	99.92%	95%
	Delivery of Team Briefings	100%	100%
	Pride and Performance interview completed and including review with all staff	100%	100%

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

## 3B. CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS Q4 PERFORMANCE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

### Key points to note:

- A significant focus during this period was lobbying activity in relation to DfI returning the Queen's Parade Planning Application to Council to determine. This was successfully achieved on 9 March 2022.
- Planning was ongoing for Communication and Marketing activity in support of key events including the Platinum Jubilee and Freedom of the Borough for the Irish Guards.
- Borough and Tourism Marketing changed reporting lines to create the new service unit of 'Communications and Marketing' in February 2022.

### Key achievements:



- Council's social media channels continued to perform strongly with growth across all platforms. Positive progress was being made on addressing issues raised in the recent social media audit including more effective cross-service working to identify/share key messages and tailored training for staff involved in managing social media accounts on behalf of Council.
- Borough Magazine produced and distributed to all households and businesses in the Borough. Digital version with links to further multi-media content had been made available online. Features on a number of key capital projects including Greenways and Bangor Waterfront.
- PR activity during the period included the launch of the Experiences programme, Guitar Festival, Confirmation of Complimentary Fund and Levelling Up Funding, Launch of Choose to Reuse and Freecycle Bulky Collection Schemes, Sustainable Giants Launch, Various Tree Planting Events, Apprenticeship Week, Marine Litter.
- Comms, Marketing, Technical support provided for several events including the Sports Awards, Food Showcase and Viking Festival.
- Make it Yours Campaign, featuring a number of attractions across the Borough, launched with significant profile on the Discover NI website.

**Emerging issues:**

- Some work was to be done to ensure the new Communications and Marketing team was working effectively together and sharing knowledge to help streamline marcomms activities.
- There was due to be an extremely busy programme of events in June, which would require significant resource. Some reprioritisation of other projects would have been required.

**Action to be taken:**

- Focus Groups were held with staff representatives to collate inputs into the Council's 'Our People Plan' for 2022-23. This had provided insights in relation to preferred engagement activity moving forward which was due to be actioned throughout 2022/23.
- KPIs in relation Consultation and Engagement have been rolled into the 2022-23 service plan and will be actioned by the new Bangor Regeneration Communication Manager.

Unclassified

## Quarterly Performance Report - Finance

Performance Date Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD Target
	To develop finance policies and procedures (cumulative)	0	0	0	0	1
	% Statutory deadlines met	23%	50%	70%	97%	100%
	To pay employees on time	98.1%	99.7%	99.5%	99.5%	100%
	% Debtors payments received within 30 days of invoice date	90%	77%	75%	78%	75%
	% Creditors paid within 30 calendar days	99%	97%	98%	98%	95%
	Digitise Employee Payment Processes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	To issue monthly budgetary control reports in a timely fashion	n/a	19	41	17	9
	Introduce Capital Budget Reporting	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
	% Satisfactory internal audit reports	0%	0%	50%	100%	100%
	To have an unqualified audit opinion	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Conduct Internal Customer Satisfaction Survey	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
	% Staff attendance	91.3%	90.1%	89.4%	89.5%	95%
	% Staff receiving Pride in Performance conversations	0%	0%	0%	21%	100%
	Investigate feasibility of centralising Leisure and Amenities invoicing and credit control	No	No	No	No	Yes
	To complete monthly account reconciliations within 3 working days of month end	6	6	5	6	9
	% Spend against budget (cumulative)	95.5%	95.9%	95.2%	97.2%	100%
	% Staff receiving team briefings	82%	62%	69%	70%	100%

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RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

### 3C. FINANCE Q4 PERFORMANCE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

#### Key points to note:

- 10 targets were met this year, despite continuing financial challenges and a significant dip in attendance. At one point during the year, only two thirds of posts were covered due to both vacancies and long-term sickness. Although this situation has been slowly resolving, there were significant operational challenges which had restricted the quality of service provided.

#### Key achievements:

- All core transactional targets were met throughout the year for the first time, with the exception of one statutory return being submitted late, early in the year.
- All significant regulatory deadlines were met during the year in respect of both the publication of the Financial Statements and setting of the district rates.
- The first phase of the new Core integrated Human Resources, Employee Payments, Time and Attendance system was successfully implemented with all staff working from home. Although there continues to be some operational challenges, this project had marked a significant step in the transformation of processes to a digital format in line with the Council's *Digital by Default* policy.

#### Action to be taken:

- These are set out in the Service Delivery Plan for 2022/23.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

### **3D. STRATEGIC CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT Q4 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

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

- Attendance levels remained at 100% exceeding the 95% Target.
- There continued to be good investment in staff briefings with regular fortnightly team meetings.
- Professional development had also been continuing as the unit continued to deliver a capital portfolio in excess of £170m over the next 10 years.
- PiP Conversations had been completed for all staff.
- There continued to be a good level of consultation with other Councils and Government departments through BRCD, Community Estates, the Greenways projects and individual meetings.

#### **Key achievements**

- Continued to share capital knowledge and allow a holistic approach to all large, small and maintenance capital projects undertaken by a wide range of directorates through CPAG.

#### **Emerging issues**

- DfI Greenways funding.
- Delays in statutory responses to planning creating knock-on delays in programming projects.
- Short term very high construction inflation.

#### **Action to be taken:**

- Assist in the Estate Strategy implementation.

Choose a Report Classification

**Quarterly Performance Report - Strategic Capital Development**

Generated on: 24 May 2022

Last Update Q3 2021/22

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	% spend against budget	98.15%	100%

Last Update Q4 2021/22

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	Implement training sessions for the Project Manager handbook	Yes	Yes
	Implement Project Manager Handbook	Yes	Yes
	Develop templates to assist service units to ensure governance protocols are adhered to	Yes	Yes
	Implement the 5 case Business model	Yes	Yes
	Support and respond through CLT, HOST, CPPB and SPFG (SCRQ)	Yes	Yes
	No of Engagement sessions with potential partner organisations (cumulative)	2	2
	Accelerate the development and implementation of an Estate Capital Asset Strategy	Yes	Yes
	% staff attendance	100%	95%
	% staff reporting regular receipt of loan offers	100%	100%
	% staff receiving regular trade in Performance Conversations	100%	100%

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RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

### **3E. STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION & PERFORMANCE Q4 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

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

- The Head of Strategic Transformation and Performance post which had been vacant since July 2020 was successfully filled at the end of April 2022.
- The Procurement Manager post had been vacant since November 2021. The successful candidate in this recruitment withdrew, and temporary measures were put in place to fill the post. Procurement also suffered the loss of the Procurement Assistant which left the unit with only 1 remaining member of staff. Recruitment exercises for the Procurement Officer and Assistant posts are in the pipeline.
- Procurement Savings of £115,173 fell short of the target of £250,000 as we continued to experience challenges on achieving savings as a result of increases in energy prices, raw materials costs, and shipping costs. The reform of red diesel legislation had also negatively impacted on costs. The supply chain disruption caused by both Brexit (NI Protocol) and the Covid pandemic has also been impacting on the overall cost of goods and services in NI.
- Owing to staff shortages, the Review of Procurement policies, processes, handbook and working practices was delayed and would take place in Q1 2022/23.



- The Review of Business Technology Service Desk Operation had not been completed and would be carried forward into the 2022/23 Service Plan.
- The Service sets itself ambitious customer satisfaction targets of 95% each year and achieved a rating of 90% overall. Individual service unit satisfaction rates are set out in the table below. Overall satisfaction levels were good. However, a low response rate of 18% and a small number of dissatisfied users could give rise to sampling bias.
- Staff satisfaction was not measured in the 2021/22 year owing to the loss of key members of staff (Head of Service in 2020; Procurement Manager 2021 and Procurement Assistant 2022). As the Head of Service post had now been filled, it is felt that the survey would be more meaningful later in the 2022/23 year.

**Key achievements:**

- Attendance is 99.45% with 9 days lost in the quarter and 16 days lost in the year.
- On track for spend against budget.
- Good progress continues to be made on in-service efficiency projects.

**Action to be taken:**

- Ensure Officers consider market changes when the estimated contract costs are made at the outset of new procurement exercises.
- The Head of Service and Service Unit Managers will review the suggested improvements arising from the annual Satisfaction Survey and try to achieve a higher buy-in and response rate to future Satisfaction Surveys.

Quarterly Performance Report - Strategic Transformation and Performance

Generated on: 1 June 2022

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	No. of successful procurement challenges	0	0
	Review Procurement policies, processes, handbook and working practices	No	Yes
	£ Procurement savings (cumulative)	£115,173	£250,000
	% client satisfaction (Procurement)	92%	95%
	% systems and network uptime	99%	99%
	% service calls satisfactorily addressed within timescales	96%	97%
	% client satisfaction (Business Technology)	85%	90%
	Review of Business Technology Service Desk Operation Completed	No	Yes
	No. of live transformation and efficiency projects supported	19	4
	% client satisfaction (Performance Improvement)	93.75%	95%
	% satisfactory audit reports	100%	100%
	% spend against budget	Not available at time of reporting	95%
	% time invested in team briefing, training, development and performance conversations	5.98%	5.0%
	% staff attendance	99.45%	95%
	% staff receiving regular team briefings	100%	100%
	% staff receiving regular Pride in Performance conversations (cumulative)	100%	100%

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Unclassified

% staff satisfaction

Not measured – see notes above

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

### 3F. ADMINISTRATION Q4 PERFORMANCE REPORT

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

#### Key points to note:

The majority of targets in the Administration Service Plan are measured annually.

Table 1: Q4 performance update

Performance Measures	Q1 update
Update Customer Service Excellence Strategy and Action Plan	Missed Target: The Action Plan has been updated and the Strategy is almost complete and will be going to consultation phase in June 2022.
Pilot paperless filing for new files in 2 Departments	Missed target - Scoping work being undertaken at the time of writing with two internal service areas being considered. This is now included in the larger digital transformation project.
All agendas circulated within 5-day notice period	Met target - 100% of Agendas went out 5 days in advance of all Committee and Council meetings.
Prioritise 5 potential Public Rights of Way (PROW) and assert at least 1 per year	Missed target - A full review of all PROW (alleged and asserted) was underway, however there is no-one in post at the time of writing. Recruitment for officer was due to commence in June 2022. Many of the PROW files had been digitised and would assist in easier access to historical information in the future.
Procure and introduce integrated Health and Safety and Risk/Claims Management system	Met target – Integrated system had been procured and data inputted. Software in use by Risk Management and Health and Safety Officers.
EMS – Retain accreditation and expand framework to all Council buildings with a view to accreditation in future years	Met target – The Council have retained accreditation.
FOI/EIR Information response times in compliance with legislation	Missed Target – 93% This is an improvement from 87% for same period last year and given the increased number and complex nature of many FOI requests this is an excellent compliance rate.
Train all CLT/HOST in emergency planning response protocol	Met target
Hold 4 Corporate Health and Safety meetings – with input from directorate Health and Safety meetings	Missed target – One took place in year. To put in context of Covid pandemic – there were many other meetings and task groups set up to deal with specific covid related issues and well as continued



Performance Measures	Q1 update
	support and liaison with Health and Safety/Risk Management Officers.
Have 2 emergency planning test activations	Met target
Hold 2 EPIG meetings	Met target
Deliver 5-year Equality Action Plan	Met target
Monitor the Roadmap to Sustainability	Met target
Review Lands Policy	Missed target – review underway, due to resource issues review delayed
Develop Claims Management Policy	Missed target –work underway
% Staff Attendance (95%)	Met target –96.01%
% Spend against budget (+/-5% of budget)	Met target – 85.83%
% Staff reporting regular receipt of team briefings	100% - Team meets once a month
Pride in Performance Conversations	Met target

#### Key achievements:

- In terms of the number of FOI requests and the increasing complexity of them achieving 93% was a great success.
- The recertification of the EMS continues to demonstrate the Council and staff's commitment to the environment regardless of where their work is being carried out.
- The Roadmap to Sustainability was in place and the Council continued to demonstrate leadership. The monitoring reports to Council had shown that progress was being made on many aspects through many service areas, both working on specific service agendas as well as many cross-council partnerships.

#### Emerging issues:

The effect of the pandemic had remained evident in the workload of this service. There were many issues that had been noted since this/other service(s) were historically paper-based. The pandemic had demonstrated the need for systems to be digitised going forward so that information could be accessed in a timely manner as well as to ensure security of data. This required investment and would fall into the transformation programme that the Council had agreed.

#### Action to be taken:

We continue to work towards all the KPIs.

Quarterly Performance Report – Administration - Generated on: 24 May 2022 - Last Update Q4 2021/22

PI Code	Short Name	Q4 2021/22	
		Value	Target
EN.02.A001.001	EMS - Retain accreditation and expand framework to all Council buildings with a view to accreditation in future years	Yes	Yes
EN.03.A001.001	Prioritise 5 potential Public Rights of Way (PROW) and assess at least 1 per year	80%	100%
EX.01.A001.001	% spend against budget	85.83%	100%
EX.01.A002.001	% agenda circulated within 5-day notice periods	100%	100%
EX.01.A003.001	FOI/IR Information response times in compliance with legislation	93%	100%
EX.01.A004.001	Train all CLT/HoST in EP response protocol	100%	100%
EX.01.A004.002	Have 2 emergency planning test activations	1	1
EX.01.A005.001	% Implementation of 5-year Equality and Disability Action Plans	100%	100%
EX.01.A006.001	Monitor the Roadmap to Sustainability	100%	100%
EX.01.A007.001	Review Land Policy	90%	100%
EX.01.A008.001	Update Customer Service Excellence Strategy and Action Plan for 2020-2024	90%	100%
EX.01.A009.001	Hold 4 Corporate Health and Safety meetings	1	4
EX.01.A010.001	Hold 2 Emergency Planning Implementation Group meetings	1	1
EX.04.A001.001	% staff attendance	98.01%	100%
EX.04.A001.002	% employees in whom time invested in Team Briefings	100%	100%
EX.04.A001.003	% staff reporting annual Pride and Performance conversations	100%	100%
EX.05.A001.001	Pilot paperless filing for new files in 2 Service Areas	60%	100%
EX.05.A002.001	Procure and introduce integrated Health and Safety and Risk/Claims Management system	100%	100%
EX.05.A003.001	Develop Claims Management Policy	25%	100%

Page 6 of 6

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

### **3G. HUMAN RESOURCES Q4 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

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

- This reported on progress against the 23 Service Plan KPIs. Good progress was being made against the PIs with 12 being on target at the time of writing.
- 6 were ongoing, therefore progress had been made, but the targets had not been completed and 5 targets had not been achieved.

#### **HR successes**

HR and OD had been successful in ensuring that there was excellent communication with trade unions with regard to all covid issues and in the review of all the main HR and OD policies. Staff attendance had been very high within the HR team and we had a committed and diligent workforce within this service. Resourcing were extremely efficient in informing candidates for employment of the outcome of recruitment exercises and 100% of candidates were informed of the outcome within 2 weeks of a shortlisting meeting or attending interview.

#### **Targets that are borderline**

- % spend against budget has been lower than anticipated owing to:
  - Staff vacancies; and
  - Impact of Covid on Employee Training and associated costs
- Work was ongoing on a formal home working policy with an aim for this to be in place on 1 October 2022, there is an interim policy in place at the time of writing
- The flexible working policy was under review.



- Progress had been made to develop a formal workforce strategy and we have been in the process of piloting a Gap Analysis survey with a small sample group to identify any potential problem areas before roll-out to the Heads of Service and Service Unit Managers.
- Development of the Corporate Induction Programme for all new Council staff had been delayed and would be progressed in the year ahead.
- Work was ongoing with regard to creating a regional Apprenticeship scheme, though we had initiated some local apprenticeship schemes.












### Targets not achieved

- Council wide absence had remained challenging with a YTD figure of 6.57% against a target of 5.00%. Detailed information on absence was due to be reported to committee on 14 June 2022.
- Officers were unable to complete a number of the activities within the People Plan owing to the ongoing impact of Covid-19. It is hoped these would be progressed in Q4.
- Visits to other work locations to discuss HR issues with managers had not taken place due to covid restrictions.
- Whistle blowing training had not yet taken place.












### Quarterly Performance Report - Human Resources and Organisational Development

Generated on: 08/06/22

Last Update Q4 2021/22

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	% spend against budget	91.11%	100%
	Ensure there is engagement with all employees and trade unions on appropriate government initiatives to tackle Covid 19	Yes	Yes
	% of recruitment exercises completed within 6 weeks	69%	100%
	% of candidates not shortlisted to be informed within 2 weeks from date of shortlisting	100%	100%
	% of candidates not successful at interview to be notified within 2 weeks from date of interview	100%	100%
	Ensure Trade Unions are consulted with effectively regarding any new policies or changes to existing policies	Yes	Yes
	Formulation of a Formal Home Working Policy	No	No
	Review of Flexible Working policy	No	No
	Provide training on the Whistle Blowing policy	No	No
	Develop a formal workforce strategy which sets out its formal status and objectives for recruitment, retention, training and development of staff in line with the new Corporate Plan	No	No
	To commence HR visits teams calls to various work locations	No	Yes
	HR and OD staff to have online Team Building/Development Days to discuss current issues and future plans	Yes	Yes

## Performance

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	Pi Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	Develop a Corporate Induction Programme for all new Council staff so that all staff will be able to settle in more quickly and therefore be more productive	No	Yes
	% staff attendance	98.29%	95%
	Delivery of Team Briefings	100%	100%
	% of staff receiving 'Pride in Performance' conversations	100%	100%
	An agreed 'reduction in absence' Action Plan to be introduced and reduction in staff absenteeism to be no more than 5% (Council Wide)	0.57%	5%
	Average number of days lost per employee (Council Wide)	14.33	14
	Introduce a regional Apprenticeship Scheme into the Council	No	No
	Main HR and OD policies to be reviewed and consulted on	100%	100%
	% of processes to be assessed to ensure HR is GDPR compliant	100%	100%
	% of actions on the People Plan completed	70%	100%
	Ensure the new Core IT phase 1 HR integrated attendance software is implemented and effective and a timetable in place for other phases	Yes	Yes

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

Councillor Gilmour proposed, seconded by Alderman Irvine, that the recommendations of items 3a through 3g be adopted and reports noted.

Alderman Irvine referred to Item 3b: Corporate Communications Q4 Performance Report and asked if the events to be hosted over the summer months by the Council may require additional staff. In addition, he asked if difficulties in filling posts had improved and if there had been higher levels of applicants. The Chief Executive explained that with regard to Communications Unit staffing levels, these were within budget and there was one current vacancy so despite being very busy no additional cover was being requested.. The Head of HR & Organisational Development advised there had been difficulties on occasion finding suitable candidates for roles but that a working group had been set up recently to look towards improving the Council's recruitment and retention practices.

Councillor McKimm welcomed new members to the Committee before referencing Item 3G, page 2's mention of development over home working strategies and asked if there would be any indication on such works for Autumn 2022 given their relevancy on recruitment. The Head of HR & Organisational Development advised that an interim homeworking policy existed but, with recent changes in guidance, all staff were being expected to return partially to the office, with aspirations of retaining flexible home working in a hybrid model going forward.

Alderman Girvan congratulated the Head of Strategic Transformation & Performance on her newly acquired role. Alderman Girvan asked if it was possible to update contact details for senior management, which the Chief Executive agreed to have done.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Alderman Irvine that the recommendation be adopted to note reports.**

#### **4. BUDGET REPORT – PERIOD 12**



## PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

The primary focus for the Council in 2021/22 was to stabilise its finances and to further increase financial strength and resilience, to successfully manage the high inflationary environment that the economy is now in. This report demonstrates that the Council has successfully delivered this.

The Revenue Budgetary Control Report by Directorate for 2021/22 is set out in Report 1 on page 5 and shows an overall budgetary surplus of £296k (box A).

### Explanation of Variance

The Council's budget performance is further analysed on pages 6-8 into 3 key areas:

Report	Type	Variance	Page
Report 2	Payroll Expenditure	£ 479k favourable	6
Report 3	Goods & Services Expenditure	£4,956k adverse	7
Report 4	Income	£4,773k favourable	8

### Explanation of Variance

The Council's overall favourable variance can be summarised by the following table:

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
<b>Payroll Expenditure</b>	(479)	There were a number of vacant posts throughout the Council due to Covid 19 lockdowns creating a back log of staff recruitment. Recruitment and retention of staff continues to be challenging.
<b>Goods &amp; Services Expenditure</b>		
C & W HQ	230	Covid 19 cost pressures
Leisure	270	Utility prices
Waste & Cleansing	428	Waste disposal costs driven by lower recycling rates
Assets & Property	451	Vehicle maintenance costs subject to significant inflation.
Regeneration	(397)	A number of workstreams either were cancelled due to the pandemic or delayed due to programme slippage.
Capital Financing	(150)	Lower expenditure in 2020/21 reduced MRP and lower expenditure in 2021/22 reduced the need to borrow and pay interest

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Transfers to Funds	5,907	To support a range of future inflationary expenditure commitments.
<b>Income</b>		
Services Income	(1,406)	Additional grant income received and faster recovery from Covid across a number of services.
Covid 19 Fund Released	(1,598)	Additional funding released to support additional Covid cost pressures
District Rates	(1,306)	Lower debt write-offs and costs of collection resulting in higher recovery rate
Covid 19 Funding	(329)	Council's actual funding received was higher than budgeted.



<b>REPORT 1 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT</b>					
<b>By Directorate and Service</b>					
<b>Period 12 - March 2022</b>					
Note	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	
	£	£	£	£	
<b>Community &amp; Wellbeing</b>					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	1,013,713	751,000	262,713	751,000	
110 Environmental Health	1,685,995	1,921,900	(235,905)	1,921,900	
120 Community and Culture	1,899,174	2,127,600	(228,426)	2,127,600	
140 Parks and Cemeteries	3,266,012	3,482,300	(216,288)	3,482,300	
150 Leisure	2,550,895	2,958,200	(407,305)	2,958,200	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10,415,789</b>	<b>11,241,000</b>	<b>(825,211)</b>	<b>11,241,000</b>	
<b>Environment</b>					
200 Environment HQ	960,858	607,700	353,158	607,700	
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	14,270,661	14,315,800	(45,139)	14,315,800	
220 Assets and Property Services	6,962,872	6,726,500	236,372	6,726,500	
230 Regulatory Services	347,347	1,052,700	(705,353)	1,052,700	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>22,541,738</b>	<b>22,702,700</b>	<b>(160,962)</b>	<b>22,702,700</b>	
<b>Regen, Development &amp; Planning</b>					
300 Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	299,217	409,500	(110,283)	409,500	
310 Regeneration	798,912	1,165,400	(366,488)	1,165,400	
320 Economic Development	970,433	1,155,200	(184,767)	1,155,200	
330 Planning	1,277,812	1,622,600	(344,788)	1,622,600	
340 Tourism	1,197,813	1,537,400	(339,587)	1,537,400	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,544,188</b>	<b>5,890,100</b>	<b>(1,345,912)</b>	<b>5,890,100</b>	
<b>Finance &amp; Performance</b>					
400 Finance & Performance HQ	174,412	128,000	46,412	128,000	
410 Internal Audit	55,870	57,000	(1,130)	57,000	
420 Finance	983,772	1,007,300	(23,528)	1,007,300	
430 Strategic Transformation and Performance	1,783,781	1,777,600	6,181	1,777,600	
440 Strategic Capital Development	339,731	330,100	9,631	330,100	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>3,337,567</b>	<b>3,300,000</b>	<b>37,567</b>	<b>3,300,000</b>	
<b>Org Development &amp; Administration</b>					
500 OD & Admin HQ	157,174	159,400	(2,226)	159,400	
510 HR & OD	982,133	1,078,100	(95,967)	1,078,100	
520 Administration	3,204,353	3,579,800	(375,447)	3,579,800	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,343,661</b>	<b>4,817,300</b>	<b>(473,639)</b>	<b>4,817,300</b>	
<b>Chief Executive</b>					
600 Chief Executive	308,058	380,300	(72,242)	380,300	
610 Community Planning	156,489	176,100	(19,611)	176,100	
630 Communications and Marketing	773,840	898,900	(125,060)	898,900	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,238,387</b>	<b>1,455,300</b>	<b>(216,913)</b>	<b>1,455,300</b>	
<b>Payroll Savings Budget</b>					
700 Payroll Savings Budget	-	(298,300)	298,300	(298,300)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(298,300)</b>	<b>298,300</b>	<b>(298,300)</b>	
<b>NET COST OF SERVICES</b>	<b>46,421,330</b>	<b>49,108,100</b>	<b>(2,686,770)</b>	<b>49,108,100</b>	
<b>Non Service Income and Expenditure</b>					
<b>Non Service Income and Expenditure</b>	<b>(46,717,387)</b>	<b>(49,108,100)</b>	<b>2,390,713</b>	<b>(49,108,100)</b>	
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>A (296,058)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(296,058)</b>	<b>-</b>	

<b>REPORT 2 PAYROLL EXPENDITURE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT</b>				
<b>By Directorate and Service</b>				
<b>Period 12 - March 2022</b>				
Note	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget
	£	£	£	£
<b>Community &amp; Wellbeing</b>				
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	154,065	153,500	565	153,500
110 Environmental Health	2,071,337	2,140,200	(68,863)	2,140,200
120 Community and Culture	1,259,150	1,483,300	(224,150)	1,483,300
140 Parks and Cemeteries	2,864,492	3,016,100	(151,608)	3,016,100
150 Leisure	3,413,614	3,879,000	(465,386)	3,879,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>9,762,658</b>	<b>10,672,100</b>	<b>(909,442)</b>	<b>10,672,100</b>
<b>Environment</b>				
200 Environment HQ	821,119	353,500	467,619	353,500
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	6,832,393	7,021,100	(188,707)	7,021,100
220 Assets and Property Services	1,837,171	1,975,000	(137,829)	1,975,000
230 Regulatory Services	1,754,628	2,017,600	(262,972)	2,017,600
<b>Totals</b>	<b>11,245,312</b>	<b>11,367,200</b>	<b>(121,888)</b>	<b>11,367,200</b>
<b>Regen, Development &amp; Planning</b>				
300 Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	158,256	152,200	6,056	152,200
310 Regeneration	536,868	613,700	(76,832)	613,700
320 Economic Development	593,482	668,300	(74,818)	668,300
330 Planning	2,029,229	2,070,600	(41,371)	2,070,600
340 Tourism	789,661	853,900	(64,239)	853,900
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,107,496</b>	<b>4,358,700</b>	<b>(251,204)</b>	<b>4,358,700</b>
<b>Finance &amp; Performance</b>				
400 Finance & Performance HQ	117,666	117,800	(134)	117,800
410 Internal Audit	-	-	0	-
420 Finance	792,231	848,700	(56,469)	848,700
430 Strategic Transformation and Performance	596,327	638,800	(42,473)	638,800
440 Strategic Capital Development	332,230	318,100	14,130	318,100
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,838,453</b>	<b>1,923,400</b>	<b>(84,947)</b>	<b>1,923,400</b>
<b>Org Development &amp; Administration</b>				
500 OD & Admin HQ	136,401	136,600	(199)	136,600
510 HR & OD	681,018	730,400	(49,382)	730,400
520 Administration	1,514,183	1,735,800	(221,617)	1,735,800
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,331,601</b>	<b>2,602,800</b>	<b>(271,199)</b>	<b>2,602,800</b>
<b>Chief Executive</b>				
600 Chief Executive	249,016	290,500	(41,484)	290,500
610 Community Planning	148,926	156,000	(7,074)	156,000
630 Communications and Marketing	507,730	497,900	9,830	497,900
<b>Totals</b>	<b>905,672</b>	<b>944,400</b>	<b>(38,728)</b>	<b>944,400</b>
<b>Payroll Savings Budget</b>				
700 Payroll Savings Budget	-	(298,300)	298,300	(298,300)
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(298,300)</b>	<b>298,300</b>	<b>(298,300)</b>
<b>NET COST OF SERVICES</b>	<b>30,191,192</b>	<b>31,570,300</b>	<b>(1,379,108)</b>	<b>31,570,300</b>
<b>Non Service Income and Expenditure</b>				
Non Service Income and Expenditure	900,000	-	900,000	-
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>31,091,192</b>	<b>31,570,300</b>	<b>(479,108)</b>	<b>31,570,300</b>

<b>REPORT 3 GOODS &amp; SERVICES EXPENDITURE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT</b>					
<b>By Directorate and Service</b>					
<b>Period 12 - March 2022</b>					
Note	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	
	£	£	£	£	
<b>Community &amp; Wellbeing</b>					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	859,661	599,000	260,661	599,000	
110 Environmental Health	226,103	291,600	(65,497)	291,600	
120 Community and Culture	1,846,030	1,802,100	43,930	1,802,100	
140 Parks and Cemeteries	859,449	843,600	15,849	843,600	
150 Leisure	1,320,776	1,050,900	269,876	1,050,900	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5,112,019</b>	<b>4,587,200</b>	<b>524,819</b>	<b>4,587,200</b>	
<b>Environment</b>					
200 Environment HQ	141,704	254,200	(112,496)	254,200	
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	8,551,920	8,123,500	428,420	8,123,500	
220 Assets and Property Services	5,373,733	4,923,100	450,633	4,923,100	
230 Regulatory Services	642,174	773,200	(131,026)	773,200	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>14,709,531</b>	<b>14,074,000</b>	<b>635,531</b>	<b>14,074,000</b>	
<b>Regen, Development &amp; Planning</b>					
300 Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	149,295	257,300	(108,005)	257,300	
310 Regeneration	399,773	796,800	(397,027)	796,800	
320 Economic Development	910,771	953,400	(42,629)	953,400	
330 Planning	256,046	412,000	(155,954)	412,000	
340 Tourism	644,742	768,500	(123,758)	768,500	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,360,626</b>	<b>3,188,000</b>	<b>(827,374)</b>	<b>3,188,000</b>	
<b>Finance &amp; Performance</b>					
400 Finance & Performance HQ	56,777	10,200	46,577	10,200	
410 Internal Audit	55,870	57,000	(1,130)	57,000	
420 Finance	241,750	207,400	34,350	207,400	
430 Strategic Transformation and Performance	1,187,454	1,138,800	48,654	1,138,800	
440 Strategic Capital Development	7,501	12,000	(4,499)	12,000	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,549,352</b>	<b>1,425,400</b>	<b>123,952</b>	<b>1,425,400</b>	
<b>Org Development &amp; Administration</b>					
500 OD & Admin HQ	20,773	22,800	(2,027)	22,800	
510 HR & OD	302,015	352,700	(50,685)	352,700	
520 Administration	2,111,958	2,240,900	(128,942)	2,240,900	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,434,746</b>	<b>2,616,400</b>	<b>(181,654)</b>	<b>2,616,400</b>	
<b>Chief Executive</b>					
600 Chief Executive	59,299	89,800	(30,501)	89,800	
610 Community Planning	8,563	20,100	(11,537)	20,100	
630 Communications and Marketing	266,110	401,000	(134,890)	401,000	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>333,972</b>	<b>510,900</b>	<b>(176,928)</b>	<b>510,900</b>	
<b>Payroll Savings Budget</b>					
700 Payroll Savings Budget	-	-	0	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	
<b>NET COST OF SERVICES</b>	<b>26,500,247</b>	<b>26,401,900</b>	<b>98,347</b>	<b>26,401,900</b>	
<b>Non Service Income and Expenditure</b>					
<b>Non Service Income and Expenditure</b>	<b>13,704,450</b>	<b>8,846,300</b>	<b>4,858,150</b>	<b>7,178,800</b>	
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>40,204,698</b>	<b>35,248,200</b>	<b>4,956,498</b>	<b>33,580,700</b>	



REPORT 4		INCOME BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT			
By Directorate and Service					
Period 12 - March 2022					
Note	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	
	£	£	£	£	
<b>Community &amp; Wellbeing</b>					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	(13)	(1,500)	1,487	(1,500)	
110 Environmental Health	(611,445)	(509,900)	(101,545)	(509,900)	
120 Community and Culture	(1,206,005)	(1,157,800)	(48,205)	(1,157,800)	
140 Parks and Cemeteries	(457,928)	(377,400)	(80,528)	(377,400)	
150 Leisure	(2,183,496)	(1,971,700)	(211,796)	(1,971,700)	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>(4,458,888)</b>	<b>(4,018,300)</b>	<b>(440,588)</b>	<b>(4,018,300)</b>	
<b>Environment</b>					
200 Environment HQ	(1,965)	-	(1,965)	-	
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	(1,113,652)	(828,800)	(284,852)	(828,800)	
220 Assets and Property Services	(248,032)	(171,600)	(76,432)	(171,600)	
230 Regulatory Services	(2,049,455)	(1,738,100)	(311,355)	(1,738,100)	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>(3,413,105)</b>	<b>(2,738,500)</b>	<b>(674,605)</b>	<b>(2,738,500)</b>	
<b>Regen, Development &amp; Planning</b>					
300 Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	(8,333)	-	(8,333)	-	
310 Regeneration	(137,728)	(245,100)	107,372	(245,100)	
320 Economic Development	(533,819)	(466,500)	(67,319)	(466,500)	
330 Planning	(1,007,463)	(860,000)	(147,463)	(860,000)	
340 Tourism	(236,590)	(85,000)	(151,590)	(85,000)	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>(1,923,934)</b>	<b>(1,656,600)</b>	<b>(267,334)</b>	<b>(1,656,600)</b>	
<b>Finance &amp; Performance</b>					
400 Finance & Performance HQ	(30)	-	(30)	-	
410 Internal Audit	-	-	-	-	
420 Finance	(50,209)	(48,800)	(1,409)	(48,800)	
430 Strategic Transformation and Performance	-	-	-	-	
440 Strategic Capital Development	-	-	-	-	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>(50,239)</b>	<b>(48,800)</b>	<b>(1,439)</b>	<b>(48,800)</b>	
<b>Org Development &amp; Administration</b>					
500 OD & Admin HQ	-	-	-	-	
510 HR & OD	(900)	(5,000)	4,100	(5,000)	
520 Administration	(421,787)	(396,900)	(24,887)	(396,900)	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>(422,687)</b>	<b>(401,900)</b>	<b>(20,787)</b>	<b>(401,900)</b>	
<b>Chief Executive</b>					
600 Chief Executive	(257)	-	(257)	-	
610 Community Planning	(1,000)	-	(1,000)	-	
630 Communications and Marketing	-	-	-	-	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>(1,257)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(1,257)</b>	<b>-</b>	
<b>Payroll Savings Budget</b>					
700 Payroll Savings Budget	-	-	-	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	
<b>NET COST OF SERVICES</b>	<b>(10,270,109)</b>	<b>(8,864,100)</b>	<b>(1,406,009)</b>	<b>(8,864,100)</b>	
<b>Non Service Income and Expenditure</b>					
<b>Non Service Income and Expenditure</b>	<b>(61,321,838)</b>	<b>(57,954,400)</b>	<b>(3,367,438)</b>	<b>(56,286,900)</b>	
<b>Grand Totals</b>	<b>(71,591,947)</b>	<b>(66,818,500)</b>	<b>(4,773,447)</b>	<b>(65,151,000)</b>	



RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

Upon request of the Chair, Councillor P Smith, that the Head of Finance provided a summary breakdown of the above report to members.

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

Councillor McKimm thanked the Head of Finance for making the report understandable before referencing page 17, good & services and commented on the significant expenditure that had been described as adverse. He asked what the immediate to long-term effects would be. The Head of Finance pointed members to page two's table of major variances, specifically noting transfers to funds for future inflation and expenditure commitments; these were the, 'adverse,' items and would be discussed later in the committee.

Alderman Irvine queried whether central government support would occur with regard to utility prices such as electricity and gas expenditures. The Head of Finance reported that an underspend had occurred in the reporting year due to the fixed nature of contracts that had expired but that an increase potentially in excess of 100% was due. Works were in progress with professional groups to bring collated information from the eleven councils to SOLACE and DfC with the aim of securing support.

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

## **5. AUTHORISED SIGNATORIES UPDATE**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

In line with the Scheme of Delegation, Corporate Leadership Team recently approved the restructuring of the Finance Service to increase capacity for value added activities, increase flexibility, and process the increased workload. This was carried out at no extra cost.

As this structure now included an additional Service Unit Manager, it was therefore necessary to review the authorised signatories to ensure that adequate arrangements were in place for corporate banking and treasury management functions.

Authorised signatories are required as follows:

- Cheques: to be signed by any two authorised cheque signatories, provided they have not also authorised the payment request.
- Online Banking: to be processed by any two of the authorised electronic signatories, provided they have not also authorised the payment request; and
- BACS Payments: to be processed by any one of the authorised electronic signatories; and

- Treasury management decisions: to be processed by any two of the authorised signatories.

It was appropriate that the new Financial Operations Accountant had the same level of authorisation as the existing Service Unit Managers and therefore the recommended revised specified posts and the appropriate authorisations were as follows:

Position	Banking Signatories		Treasury Decisions	
	Cheque	Electronic	Short-term Borrowing and Investment	Long-term Borrowing
Chief Executive	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Director of Finance & Performance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Head of Finance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Corporate Accountant	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Performance Accountant	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Capital Accountant	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Financial Operations Accountant	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the amendment to the authorised signatories for Corporate banking and Treasury Management activities as detailed above, amends the Treasury Management Policy accordingly, and completes the appropriate standard mandates.

The Head of Finance summarised the report for members, stating a restructure of the Finance Service had taken place within the last six months which has created a new manager post (at no additional cost). A new post holder has been recruited and is due to start in the middle of August 2022. This individual was expected to be a bank signatory and so Council permission was required to add them to the bank mandates.

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

## **6. ACCESSIBLE VERSION OF 'OUR BIG PRIORITIES'** (Appendix I & II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes



## Background

The Big Plan for Ards and North Down was published in March 2017. Part 10, sections 69 and 70 of the Local Government (2014) Act stipulates that the first community plan should be reviewed before the fourth anniversary of the date on which the community plans were published. A one-year extension was given due to the impact of Covid-19 and the need to refocus limited resources on community support initiatives. The **Big Plan Part II | Our Big Priorities** was published in April 2022. The document provided community planning partners, stakeholders and the public with updated content and clarified how our 10 focused priorities had been chosen. It explained how the partnership will use workstreams to take each priority forwarded in order to move towards the desired outcomes of the Big Plan. An update on the indicators was also provided. Some additional indicators have been added to reflect the priorities.

The Big Plan Part II | Our Big Priorities was endorsed by Ards and North Down's Strategic Community Planning Partnership on 22 February 2022.

Members will remember that the publication was reported to Corporate Service on 10 May 2022. At this meeting it was agreed:

**“that the Council notes this report and furthermore in addition to noting, it was agreed to seek an exploratory report into the possibility of providing an accessibly inclusive format for all user-groups. The review should provide a costs analysis of such a task and general guidance that may be used for future plans”**

When the Big Plan 2017-2032 was published in 2017, it was also supported by an easy read version and six animations. All of these are available on Council's website. At the time, the easy read version was developed via guidance from the Council's Equality Officer as well as other Community Planning community partners and their service users. To make the Big Plan more accessible (understandable and interesting) to the public it was supported by a series of animations that explained what each of the outcomes meant. This approach was well received and has been commended by many organisations including the Department for Communities and the Carnegie Trust UK. The later referenced our approach, as an example that others could follow, in their *publication 'Embedding Wellbeing in Northern Ireland Support for Community Planning Partnerships - Statements of Progress: [Examples of visual communication of data](#)'*

As mentioned at the meeting of 10 May 2022, work had already started to produce an easy read version of the Big Plan Part II | Our Big Priorities. The term easy read is a generic term used to highlight that a more complex document has been simplified. Easy read is used by lots of organisations including Health, Education and NICCY (NI Children's Commissioner) to identify publications that are simpler to read and understand. A document written with children and young people in mind can also be read by people with other accessibility issues as well people who only want the highlights and don't need all the background information that is relevant to other

readers such as community planning partners, government departments and community organisations.

Following the recommendation from Council, contact was made with NICCY to clarify the Community Planning Services approach to accessibility of publication. The Community Planning Manager is a member of NICCY's Participation Forum. NICCY had fed back that our planned approach to produce an easy read version takes accessibility into account. They also cited the value of our previous animations. They have suggested that we engage with our Youth Council to check readability of the document. They also provided their Participation Advice Guidance which includes a chapter on how to produce children and young person friendly documents and an example of one of their easy read reports.

There was no cost to produce an easy read version of Our Big Priorities as it was already in production at the time of the 10 May meeting and it did not require specialist input. A draft version (pre consultation with user groups) was attached to this report to show what has been done to produce a document that provides information that is easy for everyone to understand. Our next steps would be to test the draft document with our various audiences to check with them on the understandability of the language used, the layout and the relevance of the images.

The other method that was successful to explain the Big Plan was the animations. However, this had not been considered in Community Planning Services 2022/23 budget. However, this was something that we could have considered for 2023/24 to explain in plain English what Council and its community planning partners are doing. In 2017, the six explainer animated videos cost £7,000. It is probable that to update these animations and explain (in plain English) to a public audience a budget of £10,000 would be required. A business case would be required to ask for it to be included in the 2023/24 budget. This is something that could also involve the Youth Council.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council notes this report.

Councillor McKimm, seconded by Alderman Girvan, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor McKimm explained that the accessibility version had been brought forth at the last meeting and the response to developing it has been positive in the community. He looked forward to similar accessible versions of reports and policies in the future, adding that engaging younger generations would be hugely beneficial. Alderman Girvan shared the sentiments of her colleague, adding that it had been a huge undertaking and commended efforts in regard to animations and easily readable content.

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



## **7. ROADMAP TO SUSTAINABILITY – UPDATE** (Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

The Roadmap to Sustainability was agreed by Council in March 2021. It had been developed to formalise, within one document, the Council's commitment to becoming more sustainable and to act as a key enabler in this regard.

The Road map runs from the period 2021 to 2028 to coincide with 2 Corporate Plan phases. It will be updated periodically, with the accompanying Action Plan reviewed and updated on an annual basis, and update reports provided to Council on a quarterly or six-monthly basis depending on progress.

The first update report summarising progress against the key actions agreed in the Roadmap was provided to Council in December 2021. As six months had since passed, a further update against actions was prepared for Members and attached to this report.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

Councillor Douglas proposed, seconded by Alderman Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Douglas welcomed the report and commended officers for their work. In reference to page six, point eight, she advised members that both she and her colleague, Councillor Wilson, had brought forth a proposal previously on an interagency working group to look at car parking and travel. She queried if any update existed as there was a necessity to address connectivity and promote the likes of park & ride.

The Head of Administration advised that the appropriate person to answer the query was the Head of Regulatory Services and a request would be made to him for an update to be provided.

Councillor Douglas made reference to the harsh cuts to the investment fund for recycling and asked if a proposal could be put forth to increase the budget. The Chief Executive stated that it was a matter for the estimates in the Autumn 2022.

Alderman Irvine pointed members to page 4, point 8: Develop a car park strategy, and queried the delay and, as the car park management had been devolved to the Council, was there was a delay in tariffs. The Chief Executive advised that the legislation was not yet in place to allow Councils to vary tariffs and that it was a matter that the Environment Committee was looking into which affected all councils and being taken up with Dfl.

Alderman Girvan added that mention was made too of sustainable forms of transport such as electric vehicles. She asked of progress on electric charging points in the Borough, citing that the only two she knew of were located at Bloomfields Shopping

Centre. The Chief Executive advised that charging points fell under the Environment Committee responsibility but he advised the Committee that the UK Government had passed legislation allowing for funding to be distributed to Councils for installation works using street lighting columns for instance. However, it is DfI who is responsible for the roads and street lights in Northern Ireland. This matter is with the DfI to resolve..

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

## **8. ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CERTIFICATION - SURVEILLANCE AUDIT**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

The Council's Sustainability and Climate Change Policy gave a commitment that the Council would endeavour to reduce its impact on the local and global environment by demonstrating clear leadership, providing high quality services, whilst preventing pollution, reducing waste and greenhouse gas emissions, and saving energy and water.

The Council will strive towards compliance with all sustainability, environmental and climate change legislation, guidance, and best practice principles to fulfil its statutory responsibilities.

The Council would do so via an Environmental Management System (EMS), a systemic approach to handling environmental issues within an organization. ISO 14001 is an environmental management standard which specifies the requirements of an EMS for small to large organisations. The ISO 14001 standard is based on the Plan-Check-Do-Review-Improve cycle.

Through the implementation of our EMS the Council would:

1. Set realistic and measurable objectives and targets together with an Environmental Management Programme to ensure continual improvement in environmental performance; and
2. Regularly review this policy to ensure it continues to be effective and representative of our activities and services.

This was further supported by the development of the Roadmap to Sustainability and a number of key actions within it to develop our environmental sustainability.

On 11 & 16 May 2022, an external auditor from NQA, approved by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service, assessed the Council's EMS system and documentation and carried out a virtual audit of 'Head Office', Bangor Castle and Portaferry and Kircubbin recycling Centres. This was a Surveillance Audit. A full re-certification of ISO14001 is carried out every 3 years with surveillance audits annually in the years in between. No issues were raised, and feedback was positive:

*'The organisation has set up a very comprehensive set of objectives and plans for the future, this has been noted as best practice within the audit report. This demonstrates the commitment shown by the team. The sites at Portaferry & Kircubbin were very well managed.... In summary this is a company that are meeting the requirements of ISO14001:2015 standards to manage and continually improve their integrated management system.'*

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

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

## **9. SUSTAINABLE FOODPLACES – HOUSE OF COMMONS EVENT**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

Ards and North Down Borough Council became a member of Sustainable Food Places (SFP) in April 2022 (reported to Corporate Committee in May 2022).

The ambition of SFP is to create a transition to a healthy, sustainable, and more equitable food system. Not only does this require strong national policy, but also collaborative action between policy makers, businesses, and society at the local level. It promotes a systems approach that involves and connects key actors at all levels and across all parts of the food system.

As part of this membership the Ards and North Down Partnership can avail of a network of contacts and knowledge, apply for grants/funding and attend events.

On 20 July 2022 SFP have secured a place at a House of Commons event celebrating the role of local food partnerships. It will highlight the role of food partnerships in delivering on national policy priorities, in the wake of the Government Food Strategy White Paper, and progress on Scotland's Good Food Nation Bill and a Welsh food bill.

The Council's Compliance Officer (Sustainability), who leads on this work with SFP, has been invited to attend the event. SFP will cover costs of up to £300 for travel, accommodation and subsistence and has advised that there is a small additional budget set aside that could be used to cover any additional costs. They are keen that a representative from each NI member organisation attends.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the attendance of the Compliance Officer (Sustainability) at the event in London in July 2022 at no cost to Council.

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



**10. REQUEST FOR SUBMISSION - MID PROGRAMME REVIEW OF NI CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PROGRAMME**  
(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

**Background**

Northern Ireland's second [Climate Change Adaptation Programme \(NICCAP2\)](#) was published in September 2019 and it covers the period 2019-2024. The programme contained the NI Civil Service response to the risks and opportunities relevant to Northern Ireland as identified in the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017, setting out the policies and strategies to deliver against the priority areas.

NICCAP2 also contained a chapter which sat outside government, titled '*Civil Society and Local Government Adapts*'. The chapter was written by Climate NI, in conjunction with stakeholders outside government, and was the first of its kind in the UK. Recognising that central government cannot act alone, this chapter was the first attempt to report on how Civil Society and Local Government sectors contribute to the national priority areas for action on climate risk and adaptation.

SOLACE supported two actions in the NICCAP2 for local government which are now due for an update on progress:

- *Work with local councils to embed the adaptation cycle across local council planning with the aim of encouraging councils to complete a minimum of step 1 by 2021 and step 4 by 2024.*
- *In bringing forward their LDPs, Councils will take account of climate change adaptation considerations as indicated in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement.*

Climate NI had supported Ards and North Down Borough Council for the past 2 years in preparing our own Adaptation Plan. This had been reported to date through the Sustainability Roadmap.

Council was asked to complete the attached document to provide an update to Climate NI for submission to the NICCAP2 Review.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees to submit the attached NICCAP2 response document to Climate NI.

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

**11. UPDATE ON ARDS AND NORTH DOWN CONSULTATIVE PANEL**  
(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes



## **Background**

The Ards and North Down Borough Council Consultative Panel on Equality and Good Relations (the Panel) comprised a group of individuals from across the Borough. The Panel meets at least twice a year to primarily reflect on the Section 75 screening outcomes of draft or newly implemented Council policies and occasionally other related business.

This external consultation enabled the needs, knowledge and experiences of individuals from a range of communities across the Borough to bear on Council's Section 75 deliberations and decision-making while recognising that authority and responsibility for those decisions still rests exclusively with the Council.

Following an online meeting of the Consultative Panel on Thursday 1 October 2020, the Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding) agreed with the Panel members that an online forum was not a workable platform through which to run these meetings. However, it was felt that face-to-face meetings could, at the time of writing safely resume and given this, Officers believed it was timely to undertake a review of the membership of the Panel and meeting arrangements.

## **Review of membership**

Ards and North Down Borough Council was the only Council in Northern Ireland with an external screening panel of this nature. It was regularly noted by the Equality Commission in their annual report that this was a positive and meaningful way for the Council to consult, scrutinise, evaluate, and engage its impacts on each of the Section 75 categories.

Officers were to undertake a review of membership, initially by contacting all previous Consultative Panel members and asking if they wished to remain as members and, if so, how Officers could assist them to attend and meaningfully contribute to meetings. Their views would also be sought in terms of meeting arrangements.

Once this information is gathered, the Council was to review the composition of the Panel to ensure that the various Section 75 categories are represented insofar as possible (see paragraph below) and where there are gaps, Officers were also to try to fill these by directly approaching local community groups and strategic partners that already work with and are engaged with the Council.

Previously, Officers had been able to ensure representation for s75 categories such as disability or sexual orientation by bringing on board people involved with voluntary or community groups operating in the Borough, to support individuals within these categories. Such individuals can broadly be considered to represent the interests of their wider Section 75 category. This is much more difficult to achieve with the 'political opinion' group as it was very diverse. Officers have not identified an organised community or voluntary network operating within the Borough for each of the two main community backgrounds in Northern Ireland, but even if they did, within each main community background existed sub-categories of opinions and beliefs. There was also a significant proportion of the population that did not class themselves as falling within either of these two main community backgrounds. It



would have been extremely difficult for Officers to select individuals based on their 'political opinion' in such a way that ensured the broad spectrum of political opinion in Northern Ireland was evenly represented. It would have also not been appropriate to ask the existing members of the panel to declare their political affiliations. Therefore, while Officers had kept this under review and had strived to ensure that the Panel was as representative as possible of all the Section 75 groupings, it was unlikely that the reconstituted Consultative Panel would have had individuals sitting on it specifically for their knowledge and background in relation to the 'political opinion' category, nor would officers be monitoring the political affiliations of the Panel members.

### **Meeting arrangements**

Panel meetings had generally taken a 'challenge workshop' format, independently chaired by an external facilitator with first-hand experience in s75 matters and a working knowledge of local government.

The attached document was a draft constitution and sets out the established meeting arrangements for the Panel that operated effectively previously. The draft constitution was to be agreed with the Panel at its first meeting.

Once membership had been established as outlined above, the Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding) was to organise training for Panel members and this would have potentially also been offered to Elected Members to attend as joint event, thus enabling them to meet and engage with the Panel.

It is proposed that thereafter, elected Members would have been invited once a year to meet informally with the Consultative Panel members at further shared learning events.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council notes this report.

Councillor Blaney proposed, seconded by Alderman Gibson, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor T Smith asked on behalf of his absent colleague, Councillor Cooper if, once membership was established, the detail would be made available to the public. The Chief Executive stated that the names of the consultative panel were already in the public domain.

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

## **12. EQUALITY COMMISSION NI ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2021/22** (Appendix 1)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) has requested that all Councils complete a template every year to demonstrate progress on their implementation of

the section 75 statutory duties contained within the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and progress on implementation of positive duties under Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Order (DDO) 2006.

The attached completed template covers the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022. The template is to be returned electronically to ECNI by 31 August 2022.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees to adopt and forward to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland the attached Annual Progress Report for the period 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022.

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

### **13. ATTENDANCE AT THE SOLACE SUMMIT, BIRMINGHAM OCTOBER 2022**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

Solace represented Local Government Chief Executives and Directors throughout the United Kingdom. They were committed to public service excellence and support their membership with learning and development as well as having contributed to policy work, responding to consultations, and representing the professional views of the sector.

Solace UK held a range of events throughout the year as part of their role. The Annual Conference, known as the Solace Summit, was to be held in Birmingham this year. This provided a vital opportunity for networking and debating challenges and solutions to common issues facing the Local Government sector at a senior level.

The Summit was to be held in The Hilton Birmingham Metropole, 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and the delegate fee for members was £525 plus VAT.

The Summit presented an opportunity for the Chief Executive to attend, contribute and report back to colleagues and Members on a range of current challenges and opportunities facing the Council at the time and in planning for the future.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the attendance of the Chief Executive at the Solace Summit in Birmingham 12-13 October 2022, with delegate fee, travel and accommodation costs to be met from existing budgets.

Alderman Gibson proposed, seconded by Alderman Girvan, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor T Smith stated that he would not be in support of the recommendation, citing sustainability and that Council had met for over two years via Zoom and asked why events such as the Solace Summit could not be held in the same manner.

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

## 14. **REQUEST TO LIGHT UP COUNCIL BUILDINGS**

### a) **In support of Ukraine**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

In response to the invasion by Russia of Ukraine in February 2022, and to show Council's support for and solidarity with Ukraine, it was agreed at March 2022 Corporate Committee (and subsequently ratified at March Council) by Members through the Party Group Leaders, Independents, and single Member Parties to light up Council buildings blue and yellow on Friday 25, Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 February 2022.

It was further proposed by Councillor P Smith, seconded by Councillor T Smith, as an amendment, that the Council continued to light up its buildings in support and in solidarity with the people of Ukraine if there were no other scheduled events, and review that in one month. It was agreed that Corporate Services Committee would undertake the review.

It was agreed in May 2022 that this practice was to continue and this decision was due to be reviewed in June 2022

RECOMMENDED Council continues to light up for Ukraine and review the decision monthly at Corporate Services Committee, on dates when there are no other light ups programmed.

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

### b) **in support of Tourettes Syndrome Awareness, Parenting NI and Go Red for Dyslexia and Srebrenica Genocide**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

#### **Tourette's Syndrome Awareness**

##### Requestor

Naomi Johnston – Action Tourette's

##### Reason for request

To mark Tourettes Syndrome Awareness Day.

##### Dates and colours

Lighting up Ards Arts Centre / Ards Town Hall and McKee Clock teal on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and annually thereafter.

##### Background information

Tourette's Syndrome Month is the 15 May to 15 June 2022. It was hoped that lighting up Council buildings would raise awareness of Tourette's Syndrome, and there would be less discrimination to people who suffered from this misunderstood



condition. Many councils across the UK had agreed to light up their local landmarks teal to mark the day and show their support.

Tourette's Syndrome is an inherited neurological condition, the key features of which are tics, involuntary and uncontrollable sounds, and movements. Tourette's Syndrome is a complex condition and covers a wide spectrum of symptoms.

Tourettes Action was a support and research charity that worked to improve the lives of people living with Tourette's Syndrome. Their services included on-line live chat and email support, a befriender network, information, webinars, events, and resources.

#### Does it meet policy requirements?

Yes - request had been received from a non-profit making organisation based in the Borough to mark a significant occasion.

As the request was received in late May and it met the policy criteria, Council officers approved it and it is being brought to Committee retrospectively for noting and for agreement to light up annually on this date.

### **Parenting NI**

#### Requestor

Conal Baxter – Parenting NI

#### Reason for request

To mark the start of Parenting Week which runs from Monday 17<sup>th</sup> to Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2022.

#### Dates and colours

Lighting up Ards Arts Centre / Ards Town Hall and McKee Clock purple on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022, and annually thereafter.

#### Background information

Parenting NI has provided the following information:

*"Parents have an incredibly special role to play within our society - they are raising our future generation. Whilst most people would agree that this is an important and at times difficult job, often the expectations the society place on parents can make their job much more challenging.*

*This year the Parenting Week theme is 'New Horizons'. We will be running free workshops for parents during this week, hosting coffee mornings, sharing top tips and sharing activities and ideas on how parents can share special experiences with their children.*

*Parenting NI has a vision of a future where parenting is highly valued and so we believe it's important to take Parenting Week to recognise the important role parents, and those in a parenting role, have to play in their child's lives and highlight the amazing job they do every day.*

*Parenting NI, established as Parents Advice Centre in 1979, is a unique family support organisation providing services regionally throughout Northern Ireland in that we focus on improving outcomes for children and young people by supporting parents with their parenting skills. As a leading family support organisation our focus is on prevention and early intervention to improve outcomes for children and young people by supporting parents. The key purpose of the organisation is to empower parents. This is the underpinning principle of the support given through the organisation's services.*

*Parenting NI works in partnership with statutory, voluntary and community groups to ensure that parents are able to access the range of support they need to optimise the outcomes for their children. By working collaboratively, services can co-ordinate their expertise and deliver services efficiently, thereby improving the chances of better outcomes for children, young people and families."*

They have advised they also have the support of several Parent Champions from Ards and North Down Borough Council including Councillor David Chambers, Councillor Gillian Greer and Councillor Stephen Dunlop.

#### Does it meet policy requirements?

Yes - request had been received from a non-profit making organisation based in the Borough to mark a significant occasion.

### **Go Red for Dyslexia**

#### Requestor

Maria Scotto – Succeed with Dyslexia

#### Reason for request

To mark the start of Go Red for Dyslexia which runs during the first week of October 2022.

#### Dates and colours

Lighting up Ards Arts Centre / Ards Town Hall and McKee Clock red on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2022 and annually thereafter.

#### Background information

Go Red for Dyslexia was a global campaign by Succeed With Dyslexia that aimed to change the narrative for people with dyslexia and low literacy. They had provided the following information:

*"2022 is our year of inclusivity: we're focusing on celebrating and helping the people who are building the foundations for a better, more accessible tomorrow. That means lighting up even more of the world up in red, applauding even more incredible achievements, and providing our global neurodiversity community with the resources that they need to put positive change at the heart of what they do.*

*Dyslexia is the world's most common disability. Most people with dyslexia never even know it, yet often dyslexia plays a central part in their daily life and more than often impacts their outcomes. Plenty has been achieved in the last 70 years (International Dyslexia Association founded in 1949), but there is still so much more*

*to be done. We believe in investing time and energy in raising greater awareness of dyslexia and support strategies, advocating for wider diagnosis and helping to reduce stigma.*

*We collaborate on a number of campaigns with individuals and organisations to raise awareness of dyslexia and the power of literacy. These campaigns run throughout the year. Our biggest campaign Go Red for Dyslexia is a movement to celebrate dyslexia at a global level. October is dyslexia awareness month and together we'll be turning the world red."*

#### Does it meet policy requirements?

As this request did not meet the specific criteria set out in the policy (not based in or connected to the Borough), it required the consideration and approval of the Council.

### **Developmental Language Disorder**

#### Requestor

Zoe Brown – South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust

#### Reason for request

To raise awareness of language disorders and to support the dedicated language unit located within Castle Gardens Primary School.

#### Dates and colours

Lighting up Ards Arts Centre / Ards Town Hall and McKee Clock purple and yellow on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

#### Background information

Information provided by the requestor:

*"Each year we attempt to raise awareness of Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) which affects 2 children in every classroom (1 in 14). DLD can severely impact upon a child's comprehension of language and can affect spoken language through grammar skills and sound disorders which can result in speech being extremely unclear. Local primary school Castle Gardens houses a dedicated Speech and Language Unit which receives input from highly trained teachers and Speech and Language Therapists. Children attend from Newtownards, Bangor, Comber, and Ards Peninsula areas to receive intensive input to support their language, literacy and spoken language. In previous years we have obtained coverage from local newspapers and have run sponsored events within the school to raise awareness and we are keen to expand our range and raise awareness with other members of the public who may not have heard of Developmental Language Disorder.*

*The Speech and Language Therapy (NHS) team has provided a service into Speech and Language Units in this council area for many years, initially as it was located with Killard House School, both in Newtownards and in Donaghadee, and more recently within Castle Gardens Primary School in Newtownards where the units have re-located to. The Unit is dedicated to supporting those children affected by Developmental Language Disorder to understand and use language and also to improve their speech sounds in spoken language. Each year the RADLD organisation (Raising Awareness of Developmental Language Disorder) aims to promote the awareness of DLD to the general public by setting aside a date in mid-*

*October to target information sheets, t-shirts, news articles, pictures, baking, sponsored events etc through which they can raise awareness and give others a better understanding of DLD. This has always been well supported by Castle Gardens P.S and more recently supported by Newspaper articles and we are keen to increase awareness through the light-up of the Ards Art Centre and the McKee Clock in Bangor. The Speech and Language Unit is attended by children from the local area including Newtownards, the Ards peninsula, Bangor and Comber, and the unit provides regular, intensive therapy and teaching and also educates parents on how best to support their children with DLD, which is a life-long condition."*

Does it meet policy requirements?

Yes - request had been received from a non-profit making organisation based in the Borough to mark a significant occasion.

**Srebrenica Genocide**

Requestor

Peter Osborne – Remembering Srebrenica UK

Reason for request

To commemorate the genocide in Srebrenica, Bosnia as part of a week-long light up by other Councils in NI, including these approved so far below:

4th July Ards & North Down Borough Council (if approved)

5th July Belfast City Council

6th July Derry City & Strabane District Council

7th July Fermanagh & Omagh District Council

Dates and colours

Lighting up Ards Arts Centre / Ards Town Hall and McKee Clock green on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2022 and annually thereafter.

Background information

The request had come via Council's Good Relations Team, who had advised that this was one of the programmes highlighted by them during Holocaust Remembrance in January, and they had provided the information below.

*"The request is to commemorate the genocide in Srebrenica, Bosnia as part of a week-long light up with other Councils. Srebrenica Genocide Memorial Day is a solemn remembrance observed on 11<sup>th</sup> July every year. It honours the memory of more than 8,000 Muslim Bosniaks who fell victim to genocide during the collapse of Yugoslavia. The Green represents the Mothers' (victims group) colour."*

Does it meet policy requirements?

As this request did not meet the specific criteria set out in the policy (not based in or connected to the Borough), it required the consideration and approval of the Council.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves all the light up proposals that meet the Policy as detailed in items 1 to 5 in the report; and considers the request from



Srebrenica Genocide which falls outside the specific criteria and therefore requires the approval of Council (item 5).

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

## **15. RESPONSE TO NOTICES OF MOTION**

**NOTE: NOMs A, C & D were discussed first, with Item B being left to last due to a Declaration of Interest.**

### **a. NOM 160 – Sportsplex Park and Ride Facilities (Appendix I)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

A Notice of Motion debated at Corporate Committee in March 2022 and subsequently ratified by Council stated:

**“We ask this Council to engage with Translink to establish the possibility of using part of the car park at Bangor Sportsplex as a park and ride. This is to, hopefully, find a way to mitigate the parking issues residents and commuters are facing daily, in Bangor West. A bus service departing from here to Belfast or/and the train station using a booking system could potentially offer a solution to the ongoing problems”**

A letter was sent from the Chief Executive on 20 April 2022 to the Chief Executive of Translink and a reply was received on 17 May 2022.

Officers from the Environment directorate were to initiate contact and report future progress through the Environment Committee.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the responses to the Notice of Motion.

Councillor Chambers proposed, seconded by Alderman Girvan, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Chambers stated that he was happy to hear that correspondence had been received in a positive manner. Councillor Irwin paid tribute to Connie Egan her predecessor’s work and advised that this had been a large issue for residents and that the council should continue to facilitate users making the switch to use public transport.

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

### **c. NOM 159 – Queen’s Jubilee (Appendix I & II)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

A Notice of Motion debated at Corporate Committee in March 2022 and subsequently ratified by Council stated:

**“That this council recognises the remarkable reign of Her Majesty the Queen and Her devotion and dedication to the people of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth and will write to the Secretary of State and all ministers in the N.I Executive to urge adequate funding to be available to all eleven councils in N.I. for celebrating Her Platinum Jubilee in a manner befitting such a memorable and historic achievement; and furthermore, tasks officers to investigate all possible external revenue streams to identify financial sources to enable our council to hold a programme of events in our borough to honour this unique and inspiring occasion.”**

Letters were sent from the Chief Executive on 21 April 2022 to all MLA's in the Executive and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Replies were received from The Department of Finance on 26 April 2022 and from the Northern Ireland Office on 11 May 2022.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the responses to the Notice of Motion.

Alderman Irvine proposed, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Irvine expressed disappointment that the central government & Executive did not contribute much to the Jubilee festivities with the council leading the way such as organising beacons and events with an estimated 50,000 people having attended Bangor over the two days.

Alderman McIlveen agreed with the sentiments of his colleague. He spoke of the Department of Education having supplied funding to schools to allow individual schools to hold their own celebrations. Despite no funding coming from the Executive, he praised the efforts of departments that had stepped up instead. Alderman McIlveen advised that he had heard some complaints in Newtownards that the National Anthem had not been played at the end of the Jubilee Beacon lighting ceremony; something that appeared unusual given the celebrations in question. The Chief Executive explained that the playing of the National Anthem was not part of the programme as set out by the Pageant Master, which indicated the playing of the Commonwealth Anthem. The Chief Executive apologised for any disappointment felt by anyone attending but the Council had followed the programme as set out for the Jubilee Celebrations.

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

**d. NOM 161 – Resurface Bridge Road South**  
(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

A Notice of Motion debated at Corporate Committee in April 2022 and subsequently ratified by Council stated:

**“That Council writes to the Department for Infrastructure calling for the prioritisation of the resurfacing of Bridge Road South, Helen’s Bay due to the appalling state of the current road surface and the recent injury of a child.”**

A letter was sent from the Chief Executive on 11 May 2022 to the Minister for Infrastructure and a reply was received on 1 June 2022.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the responses to the Notice of Motion.

Councillor P Smith asked to clarify his understanding of the letter; that the contract for resurfacing expired in November 2021 meaning no contract would be in place until the latter part of 2022; he asked if such could be clarified with the DfI. The Chief Executive advised he would seek clarification and bring further information back to the Committee.

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

Councillor Greer expressed concern over the expired contract, believing government agencies would have been aware of contract-end dates which has resulted in local council areas suffering. With no willingness to resurface roads for some time, she spoke of a child who had been recently injured in the area due to the state of the road and the hurdle of having a budget agreed by the assembly.

Alderman McIlveen believed the issue had been raised in Assembly with the previous Infrastructure Minister as well as issues surrounding other contracts across NI. There are many roads across the Borough in desperate need of attention and a larger budget would be hugely beneficial.

Councillor Blaney asked for more information in regard to how government contracts are initially granted, how they could lapse and if it was only to do with this particular department or several. The Chief Executive advised that these were the questions that should be posed in a letter to seek clarification.

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

#### **b. NOM 162 – Soapbox Race Event in Comber**

(Councillor P Smith declared an interest and Alderman McIlveen acted as Chair in his absence)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

Following a Notice of Motion to Corporate Committee on 10 May 2022, Officers were asked to bring back a report on how the Council might facilitate the Comber TT Soapbox Race and help them organise insurance for the event. This request had been reviewed by the Council's Risk Manager.

### Findings

Council was not able to assist in this matter for the following reasons:

1. It was not possible to extend Council's own insurance to cover a third-party event.
2. This was not be regarded as a normal council function therefore we did not have indemnity insurance cover for this type of activity. In addition, we were not recognised by the insurance market as a broker, this would have been essential to access the full market.

Whilst the event organiser could have contacted insurers directly, the insurance market was diverse and complex. Insurance brokers had expert, qualified personnel that were best placed to advise the event organiser and to undertake a search of likely insurers for the type of event proposed. Use of a brokerage experienced with events would increase the likelihood of successfully sourcing appropriate insurance cover.

RECOMMENDED that Council agree that the event organiser be advised that Council is unable to assist in this matter. The best option available to the event organiser is to consult insurance brokers specialising in events insurance products.

Alderman Keery proposed, seconded by Alderman Gibson, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Blaney expressed disappointment in the Council's inability to assist with the event insurance and asked if all avenues had been explored in assisting the event managers. The Chief Executive advised that all efforts had been made as per the report and that the Council would direct event organisers to other companies who had gone through similar difficulties in the hopes of finding cover. Similarly, if the Council themselves were the event organisers for a soap box race, the same difficulties would have existed due to the level of risk.

Alderman Girvan agreed with Councillor Blaney, stating that an organiser failing to get insurance could stop events from occurring, and associated finances made up a large part of overall costs. She asked where the Comber Soap box organisers were directed to and what the costs involved would be. The Chief Executive was unable to provide this information as it was held by the organisers.

Councillor T Smith was also disappointed for the organisers but understood the position of the Council; to cover one event would create demand and expectation of other event organisers for similar treatment. Due to this, he wondered whether it was possible for the event organisers to apply for funding grants. The Chief Executive advised that there were no specific insurance funding grants but that grants could possibly be accessed through the likes of Tourism NI and community festivals funding.



Alderman McIlveen recalled the Notice of Motion was not in relation to costs but the ability to obtain insurance and cited an accident in England in a similar event that resulted in injury setting a precedent for insurance cover in such events. The Chief Executive explained that the Motion was for Council to take over insurance which was not possible.

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

(Councillor P Smith returned to the meeting at 19:59).

## **16. NOTICES OF MOTION**

No Notices of Motion were submitted.

## **17. CITY STATUS** (Appendix I & II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Copies of the undernoted minutes

### **Background**

It had been agreed by the Council in September 2021 to enter Bangor into the Platinum Jubilee Civic Honours Competition. This was part of Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in 2022 and was open to places across the United Kingdom, Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories.

Applicants were invited to submit their bids to conform to a template setting out why the place deserved to be awarded city status, with particular reference to the following:

- Distinct identity
- Civic pride
- Cultural infrastructure, interesting heritage, history and traditions
- Vibrant and welcoming community
- Record of innovation
- Sound governance and administration
- Associations with Royalty
- Other particular distinctive features, age, residents or communities who had made widely recognised significant contributions to and cultural infrastructure

A profile of the area including the resident population, economic activity, green open spaces, sport and leisure facilities and shopping centres, in addition to Local Authority support for the voluntary sector. A maximum of 50 photographs could be used and a map including transport routes was required.

Three tenets were submitted for Bangor's claim: Heritage, Heart and Hope. Firstly, 'Heritage', which covered Bangor's Christian and global monastic influence, industrial growth and innovation, and proud naval traditions and Royal connections.

'Heart' included references to Bangor's coastal and creative landscape including the seafront and Marina, and its roots in music, art and literature. References to Bangor's businesses, communities and civic pride were also included.

'Hope' focused on the future and the regeneration of Bangor, including plans for the Waterfront, Queen's Parade and Bangor's sustainable future.

The bid document was prepared by Officers in compliance with the rules of the competition and a copy of the final document is attached for information. The entry was submitted on 8 December 2021.

The competition entries were to be assessed initially by an independent panel of experts to inform Minister's consideration before recommendations were made to Her Majesty The Queen. It was announced that a total of 39 entries were submitted for city status.

Following the tragic murder of Sir David Amess MP in October 2021 and following his long campaign on the matter, Southend on Sea was granted city status a few days later, out of respect.

The Council received a letter on 19 May from the Minister of State for the Cabinet Office, Lord True CBE (copy attached), advising the Council that its application for city status for Bangor had been successful and this had been approved by Her Majesty The Queen.

It was noted in the letter that, 'this is a rare honour granted by Her Majesty The Queen and given the standard and number of applications was very high you should be very proud'. There had been a total of eight successful awards of city status, in addition to Southend on Sea as follows:

- Bangor
- Colchester
- Doncaster
- Douglas, Isle of Man
- Dunfermline
- Milton Keynes
- Stanley, Falkland Islands
- Wrexham

Bangor was the only place in Northern Ireland awarded city status, and the first award since 2002. Whilst the award did not confer any additional functions, funding or powers it would generate great civic pride and hope for opportunities ahead for investment and growth and these benefits should be seen right across the Borough. The process for the formal conferment and the presentation of Letters Patent was to follow and be the subject of a further report.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council notes this report.

Before seeking a proposal, the Chief Executive was invited to discuss the report. He explained that the next stage would involve a patent letter which may take six months. Seven other cities were due to receive the same accolade. He thanked the staff who

had worked on the bid documents, advising members that a report would be forthcoming on the patent process and timeframe in due time.

Councillor Douglas proposed, seconded by Alderman Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Douglas thanked staff for their efforts in producing the documents and looked forward to further reports. Alderman Irvine added that he was delighted with the result, and that a lot of people had asked of the city status benefits. He reiterated the tenets of the bid documents; heritage, heart and hope and if used correctly, it could open transformation opportunities for Bangor. From the bid documents, he noted there were 16,000 active volunteers showed good will within Bangor for the betterment of the town.

Councillor Gilmour also thanked everyone for their involvement in the successful bid for Bangor City but proposed an amendment to the report instead of simply noting; *"This Council Writes to Her Majesty, congratulating her on the historic occasion of Her Platinum Jubilee and thanking her for bestowing the tremendous Honour of City status upon Bangor. We welcome the recent visit from His Royal Highness Prince Edward, the Earl and Countess of Wessex and issue an open invitation for further Royal visits to our City."*

Councillor Gilmour proposed, seconded by Councillor McKimm, that the amendment be adopted.

Alderman Girvan referenced the report's stating of Bangor having once been a city before, and that a copy of the Mappa Mundi existed in Bangor Abbey that showed its status in the 1300s. She asked if the report would be made available to the general public given its wealth of information. The Chief Executive advised it was already available to the public on the Council website but he undertook to resend the link to all Members...

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

**On proposal of Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Councillor McKimm, that amendment be made to the recommendation to write to Her Majesty, congratulating her on the Jubilee, thanking her for bestowing city-ship upon Bangor and to welcome the recent Royal visit to Bangor and issue an open invitation for further visits.**

## **18. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

There were no items of any other notified business.

**NOTED**

## **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman Girvan, seconded by Mayor Douglas, that the public/press be excluded during the discussion of the undernoted items of confidential business.

**19. ANDBC ABSENCE REPORT – YEARLY FIGURES 2021/22**

**\*\*\*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)

**20. INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ASSESSMENT**

(Appendix I)

**\*\*\*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)

**21. PAYMENTS TO COUNCILLORS RETURN**

**\*\*\*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)

**22. OUTTURN REPORT 2021/22**

**\*\*\*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)

**23. NOTIFICATION OF PHOENIX GAS WORKS AT THE ENTRANCE TO WARD PARK ON HAMILTON ROAD, BANGOR**

(Appendix I & II)



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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

24. REQUEST FROM CURRY'S AMUSEMENTS TO USE THE SPACE AT THE MCKEE CLOCK ARENA, BANGOR FOR AN AUTUMN FUNFAIR  
(Appendix I)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

25. LEASE OF LAND AT PORTAFERRY ROAD TO ARDS FC  
(Appendix I)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

26. MANAGED WIDE AREA NETWORK PROCUREMENT

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

27. REQUEST FROM THE DONAGHADEE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMPANY LTD TO EXTEND THE LEASE OF THE SIR SAMUEL KELLY LIFEBOAT SITE  
(Appendix I & II)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

28. REQUEST FROM NORTH DOWN HOCKEY CLUB TO INSTALL A GRAVEL PATH AND SIGN AT COMBER LEISURE CENTRE

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

29. RORY MCILROY – UPDATE ON NOM

\*\*\*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)

30. DRAFT PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2022/2023  
(Appendix I)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 20:58

**ITEM 8.4**

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**ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

A virtual meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee was held via Zoom on Wednesday 15 June 2022 at 7.00 pm.

**PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Councillor Edmund

**Aldermen:** Carson  
W Irvine

**Councillors:** Boyle  
Chambers  
Douglas  
S Irvine  
Johnson  
Kendall

MacArthur  
Moore  
McRandal  
Smart  
T Smith

**Officers:** Director of Community and Wellbeing (G Bannister), Head of Community and Culture (J Nixey), Head of Leisure Services (I O'Neill), Interim Head of Environmental Health Protection and Development (G Kinnear), Head of Parks and Cemeteries (S Daye) and Democratic Services Officer (H Loebnau)

**1. APOLOGIES**

The Chairman welcomed a new Member both to the Council and to the Community and Wellbeing Committee, Councillor Moore, and hoped that she would enjoy her time on the Committee. He also sought apologies and those were noted from Alderman S Wilson.

**NOTED.**

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman asked for any Declarations of Interest and the following was noted.

Alderman Irvine - Item 26 – Leisure Insourcing Update  
Councillor Chambers – Item 26 – Leisure Insourcing Update

**NOTED.**

**3. DEPUTATION**

There were no deputations.

#### 4. **PERFORMANCE REPORT ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH Q4** (Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report dated 25 May 2022 from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would be aware that the Council was required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil that requirement the Council approved the Performance Management Policy and Handbook in October 2015. The Performance Management Handbook outlined the approach to Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan Towards 2024 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually (for publication 30 September 2021)
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2021)

The Council's 17 Service Plans outlined how each respective Service would contribute to the achievement of the Corporate objectives including, but not limited to, any relevant actions identified in the PIP.

#### **Reporting approach**

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

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

The report for Quarter 1 2021-22 was attached.

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

- Q4 data was not yet available for the Budget Spend Indicator, though it was expected that there would be an end of year underspend. That was because of difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified Environmental Health staff to fill vacancies which had led to pressure on the service.
- % of premises in priority sectors inspected and permits issued: That KPI had not been met due to the lack of resource within the Noise Team, related to the increase in noise complaints received over the past two years. The KPI had been retained in this year's Service Plan and a Business case for an additional noise officer was submitted as part of the budget process. In line



with the process for business cases relating to staffing it would be submitted to CLT for approval once other priority EHPD business cases relating to transformation of the service had been actioned.

- % of planning comments made within 15 working days: That KPI had not been met this quarter or for the year as a whole – cumulative total 74%. The target currently related to the work of a single Environmental Health Officer and it was recognised that additional support may be required for the role. Provision of additional support for the role also related to the business cases for the transformation of the service and an additional noise officer.
- All staff below Service Unit Manager level completed their Pride in Performance conversations with forms returned to HR as requested.
- Staff absence rates had been detrimentally affected by long term sick including one resulting in ill health retirement. Short term sick absence rates remained low.

#### **Key achievements:**

- The service had continued to adapt well to Covid-19 restrictions being lifted and had been able to provide a service to the residential and business community.
- Business cases for the transformation process had been completed, approved and were on the recruitment list for July 2022. The enhanced posts at Senior EHO level would provide recognition of the in-house expertise, thus aiding staff retention, and would also support the Service Unit Managers in improving the coordination, monitoring, and efficiency of the service delivery. The reallocation of existing budget to create a Health & Wellbeing Officer role would facilitate greater community outreach as part of the Community Planning process.

#### **Emerging issues:**

- Increased energy costs would hit the most vulnerable in society therefore services such as the Affordable Warmth scheme would take on even greater importance as we entered the 22/23 year. It would be important that the DfC continued to fund that initiative. A review of the scheme was in progress and Council Officers had highlighted the need to provide grant payments to Councils rather than the "pay by referral" method which was introduced without agreement. The targeted nature of the scheme and other problems meeting targets had been raised with DfC. Affordable Warmth remained challenging to manage and a more detailed update report was planned for September, when it was anticipated that the findings of the review would be available.
- Demands on the service in terms of service requests continued to exceed pre-Covid-19 levels, and that had been particularly evidenced in a significant increase in Noise complaints.

#### **Action to be taken:**

- Business cases for additional posts were to be submitted in order to meet the high level of service demands, public expectation, and key service objectives which were currently not achieved due to unprecedented demand exceeding current resources.

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

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

Councillor Kendall placed on record her gratitude to Council officers for helping those who were experiencing energy crisis at the current time and their continued diligence in respect of the Affordable Warmth Scheme which had been invaluable to the most vulnerable residents, and she hoped that the scheme would be improved by the Department.

Alderman Irvine concurred with those comments, and it was expected that the later part of this year would be tough as Winter set in so it was important that those most in need received the grants that they would need to heat their homes. He had a question in relation to noise complaints such as barking dogs and loud music at night and noted that the Council seemed to be lagging behind in that work. He asked for an update on that and the interagency approach that the Council took with other bodies such as the NIHE and PSNI. The Interim Head of Environmental Health Protection and Development explained that at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic the Council had been inundated with noise complaints but that had now settled down. However, noise complaints generally were still higher than they had been pre pandemic and the Council had had to be more resourceful such as using the Noise App to filter out some of the complaints but it did remain a challenge but it was hoped that the Council would be in a better position towards the end of the Summer. An interagency approach was used for more complex situations.

Councillor MacArthur had noted that under KPI staffing issues had been an issue and she wondered if those issues had been resolved. The Environmental Health Manager explained that there had been difficulties and that was mainly due to a lack of graduates. There was an increased demand for Environmental Health Officers which had led to the shortage but it was hoped that the Council would be assisted by those who were newly qualified although he accepted that Ards and North Down would have to compete for those like every other Council.

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

**5. PERFORMANCE REPORT COMMUNITY AND CULTURE Q4**  
(Appendix II)

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:** - Report dated 27 May 2022 from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would be aware that the Council was required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil that requirement the Council approved the Performance Management Policy and Handbook in October 2015. The Performance Management Handbook outlined the approach to Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan Towards 2024 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually (for publication 30 September 2021)
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2021)

The Council's 17 Service Plans outlined how each respective Service would contribute to the achievement of the Corporate objectives including, but not limited to, any relevant actions identified in the PIP.

### Reporting approach

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

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

The report for Quarter 4 2021-22 was attached.

### Key points to note:

- Community consultation and engagement in preparation for the PEACE PLUS programme was yet to commence, as the Programme had not been formally signed off. It was likely that consultation would be delayed to the end of the Summer.
- The number of people volunteering in the service was under target in Q4, due to Covid-19 restrictions, however volunteering was increasing.
- A one stop shop for community volunteers had not progressed, but it would be so later in 2022.

### Key achievements:

- A new Education Programme for the Museums was now in place, following the appointment of an Education Officer.



**Emerging issues:**

- The number of young people recruited to the Youth Voice Programme had increased and a rolling programme of recruitment was underway.
- As services returned to normal levels spend against budget would increase.

**Action to be taken:**

- Staff attendance in Q4 was below target due to Covid-19. Staff attendance would continue to be monitored.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

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

Councillor Chambers had a question relating to Youth Voice and noted that there were 14 young people recruited with a target of 20 and asked about how those young people were targeted. The Head of Community and Culture explained that that was through various sources such as the Council's website, through the Education Authority and its outreach programme and the Council was also engaging with SERC about promoting the organisation for those students. The Member had sat on the Youth Council and was aware that it was often difficult to keep the young people on board and the work needed to be interesting and engaging for young people to stay. He also stated that travelling in the evenings to meetings could be difficult for some of those young people and he asked the Council to give that consideration.

Alderman Irvine asked about the proposed 'one stop shop' for community volunteers and why that had not yet happened. The Head of Community and Culture explained that that was down to resources. The Council officers had been significantly involved in other areas of work during the pandemic but that it would be prioritised in the coming year's service plan.

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

## **6. SUMMER SCHEME UPDATE**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report dated 25 May 2022 from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that a report was considered by the Council in March 2022 detailing how the Community Development Team intended to increase the delivery of Council led Summer schemes throughout the Borough. To remain within budget, that involved reducing the duration of the schemes from 3 to 2 weeks but delivering in 7 locations instead of 5. Below were the locations that were agreed upon:

- Alderman George Green Community Centre, Bangor (80 children per week)



- Ballygowan Village Hall, West Ards (40 children per week)
- Comber Leisure Centre (60 children per week)
- Donaghadee Community Centre (60 children per week)
- Portavogie Community Centre, Ards Peninsula (40 children per week)
- Redburn Community Centre, Holywood (60 children per week)
- West Winds Community Centre, Newtownards (40 children per week)

A total of 760 places for children were to be offered in 7 locations of the Borough.

As a result of an investigation following notification to senior management of a change to the agreed schedule in late April, when the Community Development Team went to book the venues after the call-in period, the 2 new sites at Comber Leisure Centre and Donaghadee Community Centre were booked by other users.

Although this may be disappointing in terms of community development run schemes, Members should note that Leisure Services were delivering summer schemes in Comber Leisure Centre in July and August, while Sports Development was delivering a Football Camp in Cromellin Park, Donaghadee. Therefore, the Council was delivering summer schemes in those two towns.

The Portavogie summer scheme may move to Portavogie School, to allow a larger Scripture Union summer scheme to use the community centre venue. A decision would be taken following a site visit at the school to ensure the alternative venue was suitable.

To ensure the Council summer schemes were delivered across seven sites, two new locations were identified, based on similar need and catchment audience - Bowtown Estate and Carrowdore.

Both areas had no community or leisure summer scheme provision and Members would be aware that, based on a survey of users, parents/guardians highlighted that they would be happy to travel to avail of the summer scheme provision.

Table 1 below, based on reservations to date, demonstrated that running a summer scheme in Carrowdore provided a service to households across the peninsula.

Table 1

Residential locations of Children attending Carrowdore	Number of places utilised
Ballyhalbert	1
Ballywalter	12
Bangor	3
Carrowdore	19
Conlig	1

Comber	1
Donaghadee	12
Greyabbey	12
Lougheries	1
Millisle	21
Portaferry	1
Portavogie	1

Below was the list of Council delivered summer schemes in 2022:

- Alderman George Green Community Centre, Bangor (48 children per week)
- Ballygowan Village Hall, West Ards (48 children per week)
- Bowtown Estate, Ards (48 children per week)
- Carrowdore Community Centre (48 children per week)
- Portavogie Community Centre, Ards Peninsula (48 children per week)
- Redburn Community Centre, Holywood (48 children per week)
- West Winds Community Centre, Newtownards (48 children per week)

A total of 672 child places would be offered at this year's summer schemes which would offer a fair distribution of summer scheme places throughout the Borough whilst complying with safeguarding ratios. That was also bolstered by the availability of other summer schemes such as ones provided by Leisure Services, Sports Development, Community Partners, Education Authority, and privately run schemes.

It should also be noted that this was the first year that summer scheme registration was conducted online. That new process opened on Monday 9 May and closed on Friday 20 May. Within the first half an hour of registration opening, 340 had applied. By Friday 20 May, all available places on summer schemes had been booked.

Below shows where it was originally intended that Community Partners would deliver summer schemes:

- Ballyphilip Youth Group, Portaferry (40 children per week x 1 week)
- Breezemount Com Association, Bangor (40 children per week x 3 weeks)
- Kilcooley Women's Centre, Bangor (80 children per week x 3 weeks)
- Killinchy and District Community Development Association (30 children per week x 2 weeks)
- Millisle Youth Forum, Millisle (30 children per week x 2 weeks)

However, Members should note that Community Partners who delivered the summer scheme in Breezemount, had sourced alternative sustainable funding to deliver their programme. That meant that they would not avail of the funding that they had previously utilised from the Council. Below showed where Council Community Partners would deliver summer schemes:

- Ballyphilip Youth Group, Portaferry (40 children per week x 1 week)
- Kilcooley Women's Centre, Bangor (80 children per week x 3 weeks)
- Killinchy and District Community Development Association (30 children per week x 2 weeks)
- Millisle Youth Forum, Millisle (30 children per week x 2 weeks)

Breezemount would still deliver a summer scheme for 40 children per week over 3 weeks, just not availing of Council funding.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this update report.

Councillor T Smith made an alternative proposal which was seconded by Councillor MacArthur as follows.

This committee finds it extremely disappointing that some of the proposed Summer Schemes, agreed by Council in March this year will not be happening and we apologise to local residents who may have been looking forward to these taking place. Furthermore, this Council will ensure that the Donaghadee summer scheme will take place next year (2023).

Councillor T Smith expressed his disappointment at the situation which would result in Donaghadee not having a Council led summer scheme during the coming school break. Mistakes had been made this year so he called for a guarantee that the Council would provide a summer scheme for Donaghadee next year. The football scheme which would run would serve a different section of the community and he was certain that if the Council had run its traditional summer scheme it would have been oversubscribed.

Councillor MacArthur agreed with that and while she did not wish to take away from the good work that the Council was doing in other areas running summer schemes there was real regret for families living within Bangor East and Donaghadee that the programme would not be run in that area. It was an area where over 1,000 school children lived and those who were successful in obtaining a place elsewhere in the Borough would have to rely on a family member driving them there. She thought the Council should be able to guarantee a scheme in an area of that population. The creative classes which would run were also welcome but came at a higher cost and could exclude those families who had a lower income. She hoped to see a scheme next year which would be inclusive for all, particularly for those families who would certainly struggle with the cost of living this coming Winter and she thought that the free school meal programme could be considered.

Councillor McRandal referred to the summer scheme at Reburn, Holywood and local residents there had been frustrated about not being able to secure a place having logged on only 15 minutes after the scheme had opened online. He asked if more places could be made available and it was explained that that was not possible since a child/staff ratio needed to be maintained and a budget had been set restricting the

number of children able to attend to 48. The Member asked if the Council captured a child's postcode and address to ensure the scheme was only open to people who lived in the Borough. The Head of Community and Culture said that was the case and that the system was also set up to prohibit a single person making multiple bookings at once. She stated that demand was always high and was guaranteed to outweigh supply but the Council would seek to improve the system for the coming year.

Alderman Irvine asked about the scheme in Breezemount, Bangor which had been able to source alternative funding outside the Council provision. The Head of Community and Culture explained that all schemes were encouraged to find partners to apply for further funding and Breezemount was being assisted by the North Down Community Network to make that scheme more sustainable for them. He also hoped that vulnerable families were able to avail of opportunities provided and that they would not be priced out of summer sport and play provision.

Councillor Chambers echoed the comments of Councillor MacArthur and thought it would be remiss of anyone not to acknowledge the level of work that went in to delivering summer schemes. He congratulated officers but was equally disappointed that Donaghadee had missed out this year and while the football camp would be popular it would only appeal to a section of young people most of whom wished to take part in a variety of different activities. Following on from the amendment he asked if there was the ability for the Council to block book the facilities out on a rolling basis annually. The officer stated requests to do that had already been made.

Councillor Boyle also thanked the Head of Community and Culture and her team and there had been much good work outlined in the report. Councillor T Smith had made his point in the press but it was important to accept that the Council did not always get everything right but it did always try its best and had admitted the problem when it had arisen and given an apology for that and was always learning better ways of working. Budgets and staff numbers were not what everyone would like and all councils were struggling in the current economic climate. The problem he had for not supporting the amendment was the word 'guarantee'. He did not think that the Council should be making guarantees since no community could be prioritised over another and he believed that everyone should be treated equally.

At this stage Councillor T Smith explained that he was not asking for special treatment for Donaghadee but rather was simply asking the Council to fulfil the decision that it had made and to carry out what had been agreed previously. He called for a recorded vote.

On the amendment being put to the meeting with 12 voting For, 1 voting Against and 1 Abstained and 2 Absent it was declared CARRIED.

**FOR (12)**

**AGAINST (1)**

**ABSTAINING (1)**

**ABSENT (2)**



**Alderman**  
Carson  
Irvine  
**Councillors**  
Chambers  
Douglas  
Irvine  
Johnson  
Kendall  
MacArthur  
McRandal  
Moore  
Smart  
T Smith

**Councillor**  
Boyle

**Councillor**  
Edmund

**Alderman**  
S Wilson  
**Councillor**  
Thompson

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor T Smith, seconded by Councillor MacArthur, that this committee finds it extremely disappointing that some of the proposed summer schemes, agreed by Council in March this year will not be happening and we apologise to local residents who may have been looking forward to these taking place. Furthermore, this Council will ensure that the Donaghadee summer scheme will take place next year (2023).**

## **7. QUEENS PLATINUM JUBILEE GRANTS EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report dated 26 May 2022 from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that in February 2022 the Council agreed to support a programme of activity to mark The Queens Platinum Jubilee. That programme included an element to mark the Service of Thanksgiving across the Borough. The Service of Thanksgiving for Her Majesty The Queen's reign was to be held at St Paul's Cathedral on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2022. That would be broadcast via several media outlets.

To compliment the occasion a small amount of funding had been offered by the Council administered through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process. The EOI was only available for Faith-Based Groups within the Borough, who could apply for funding towards the costs involved in providing refreshments on either Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2022 after the official Service of Thanksgiving, or on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022 following their own Service of Thanksgiving.

Applications opened on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April and closed on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022 and were advertised on the Councils website and the direct targeting of faith-based groups.

In total 14 applications were received and listed in Table 1. In line with the budget set aside for the EOI it was recommended that 100% of the amount applied for be awarded to all successful applicants totalling £1,400.

**Table 1.**

Name of Faith-Based Group	Amount received
Ballyblack Presbyterian Church	£100.00
Ballygilbert Presbyterian Church	£100.00
Bangor Abbey Church of Ireland	£100.00
Bangor Community Church	£100.00
First Bangor Presbyterian Church	£100.00
Glen Community Church	£100.00
Groomsport Parish Church	£100.00
Helens Bay Presbyterian Church	£100.00
Killinchy Parish Church	£100.00
Movilla Presbyterian Church	£100.00
St Marks Church	£100.00
St Mary's Kilmood	£100.00
St Philip and St James Holywood Parish	£100.00
The Salvation Army - Ards branch	£100.00

The distribution of EOI from Faith Based Groups within the Council area was appended. As Members would note no such group from the majority of the Ards Peninsula applied.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council retrospectively approve the recommendations detailed in Table 1, as detailed in this report.

Proposed by Councillor T Smith, seconded by Councillor MacArthur.

Councillor T Smith was happy to propose the recommendation especially since Her Majesty the Queen was a woman who held a deep Christian faith and he was pleased that local churches were able to secure some funding for their Jubilee celebrations. Councillor MacArthur was in agreement and she put on record her thanks for the community groups and churches who had worked so hard over the Jubilee weekend to make it a tremendous time of celebration.

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

## 8. SOCIAL SUPERMARKET UPDATE

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report dated 24 May 2022 from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would be aware that the Council, via funding from the Department of Communities, was supporting the establishment of the Ards and North Down Social Supermarket (SSM) in Newtownards. The SSM would be in The Warehouse, 3 Glenford Way, Newtownards and would be operated by North Down Community Works.

Members of the SSM co-design group met in the Warehouse on 17 May 2022 and were given a tour of the building and learned more about the current services. The building was approximately 10,000 square feet and had some surrounding land, with play equipment for children and an area for growing food for preparing meals.

Users of the facility were people from Ards & North Down who were in crisis, struggling financially or in need of help. That included people of all ages and abilities, elderly people, families, and individuals struggling to keep up with the cost of living, in debt, experiencing crisis or poverty, or facing a mental health crisis. North Down Community Works worked in partnership with local agencies and organisations to provide services for the individuals they were engaged with.

Between January and March 2022, approximately 7,200 meals were prepared on site and were either collected or delivered to those in need. In addition, 650 food hampers were collected or delivered. People dropping into the Warehouse were supplied with breakfast, lunch or dinner.

The Warehouse employed a full-time chef who prepared meals on site. The majority of the food used was food that would have otherwise been wasted by local producers/retailers, as part of FareShare programme and in connection with local business. A community fridge, located at the front door of the building, was used to provide food for around 50-60 people weekly. Left over or waste food that could not be used safely went to the local pig farm.

The Warehouse also ran a "Wear & Share" project which encourages people to bring and swap small household items and clothing including men, women and children's clothes, bridal wear, interview clothes, shoes, and other items.

The Wear and Share project was created from three foundational ideas:

- Those in crisis could access free clothing / household items.
- A reduction of the negative impact the fashion industry had on the environment.
- There were enough resources if shared.

The service was available to anyone, but those who could were encouraged to make a donation, while those in crisis could use the service for free. It did not operate as a charity shop. The service was used by approximately 100 people per week and the Warehouse would soon be launching a "Warm Room" - a place to meet and socialise for those struggling to heat their own homes.

Warehouse services were supported by a bank of around 40-50 volunteers who assisted with food deliveries, food collections, Wear and Share, kitchen duties, helping in the garden, making check in calls and any ad hoc jobs. There were also 2 trainee placements for students attending South-Eastern Regional College. Volunteers from the New Horizon programme provided mental health advice and Duke of Edinburgh participants could volunteer to fulfil their community hours.

As well as having two private meeting rooms, which were currently being used for counselling, a dedicated room with a separate entrance was currently being equipped for the SSM.

Since the last meeting of the SSM co-design group several site visits to other SSMs had been facilitated by members of the group. Information was gathered on the different operating models, including:

- Sources of food
- Access to food
- Pricing strategies
- Types of food
- Staffing
- Wrap around support
- Finance and budgeting

The information was discussed at the meeting to collectively consider what would operate best in Ards and North Down, and further meetings of the group had been organised to drive forward the establishment of the SSM as soon as possible.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the SSM update detailed in this report.

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

Councillor Chambers admitted that he had been 'blown away' and unaware of what was going on with the social supermarket in Newtownards and had been deeply impressed to read the report of the invaluable and outstanding work in local communities. He asked if it would be possible for officers to arrange a visit for those Members who were interested in learning more about the work.

Councillor Kendall absolutely concurred with those comments and thought a delegation visit would be amazing. She asked about the timeline for the social



supermarket and the Head of Community and Culture stated that progress was being made rapidly with the support of Blu Zebra and there was a strong desire to have the service up and running as quickly as possible.

Councillor Moore and Councillor T Smith shared the support for the supermarket particularly since the cost of living crisis was beginning to affect many people. Many Members would wish to see the work at first hand and demand would be greater than supply but the Council needed to stand with those involved and show its support. In response to a query the Head of Community and Culture stated that the numbers enrolled for the SSM Programme had not been agreed as yet, but other SSMs had up to 80 people enrolled for a 6 month programme of support.

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

**9. UKRAINE SUPPORT UPDATE AND DATA SHARING AGREEMENT**  
(Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report dated 26 May 2022 from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that further to the report presented to Council in April 2022, the Regional Ukraine Operational Planning Group continue to meet on a weekly basis to share information and address any issues which arise. The Head of Community and Culture Represented the Council at that weekly meeting.

For Member's information, the numbers of Ukrainian refugees arriving in Northern Ireland was steadily increasing and from mid-May, circa 1,400 had arrived under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. Almost 700 refugees had attended one of the four community assistance centres, which was almost double the numbers attending at the end of April. In terms of the profile of those arriving approximately 40% of applications are under 18 years of age, 90% of adults were female, and very few were over the age of 50 years. According to UK statistics 70% were educated to degree level.

It was estimated that around 5% of refugees matched under the Homes for Ukraine scheme would find their match unsuitable, therefore would need to be rehoused. There was almost no social housing available and a shortage of private rental accommodation. As such, a rematching policy was being devised.

Up to mid-May, over 300 sponsor homes had received a first visit from Extern and Bryson House, to check the suitability of the property, and Access NI checks were ongoing. Unfortunately, as yet, no payments had been made to sponsors, but when they did, payments would be made monthly in arrears and back dated to either when the refugee was accommodated by the sponsor or when their visa was approved, whichever was later. Officers had encouraged the Department of Finance (DoF) to prioritise those payments as some sponsors were finding it difficult to meet increased

costs due the rising cost of living. In addition, the Department had written to both sponsors and arrivals, providing both parties with information on the relevant schemes and support services available.

Given that personal information needed to be shared between agencies to inform the key delivery partners of the specific needs of the resettled individuals on arrival to Northern Ireland, and to tailor the ongoing help and support required by each family to resettle within their communities, the Department of Finance was requesting all parties to sign a Data Sharing Agreement.

That was important as, for example, knowledge of the personal details of the families would help identify suitable housing and wider support arrangements. Dates of birth would inform the need for a school placement. Health information would determine immediate or future medical intervention.

Additional data was collected from the refugees to identify those who had arrived outside of the Homes for Ukraine scheme and ensure that they could be provided with the support that they required.

Information sharing would continue on a daily basis initially. However, as data volume was expected to increase significantly, a Northern Ireland specific database with specific business rules for organisations would be developed or accessing of the Home Office Foundry system would continue. That would allow real-time, reliable data to be available to delivery partners 24/7 and evaluation reports on resettled individuals would be shared with the Home Office as required.

There had been some changes to the visa application process, especially for those arriving through the Republic of Ireland and that information had been updated on the Northern Ireland Direct website and had been communicated to the Community Assistance Centres.

Due to the relatively low numbers arriving in the Borough and the proximity of Ards and North Down to Belfast, it was increasingly unlikely that the Council would be required to set up a formal Community Assistance Centre. Therefore, as detailed in April's report, officers had been working with North Down YMCA and the local Networks to establish a wraparound support service initially in Bangor but with the potential to expand the service to Newtownards and provide outreach services for the peninsula. That service would be available to all refugees, although it was expected that the largest client group would be Ukrainians and their sponsors. The service had been operating from the beginning of May 2022 and aimed to, in partnership with Council and community and voluntary organisations provide advice and wrap around support to:

- Refugees and Asylum Seekers arriving in Ards & North Down,
- Sponsors/families hosting refugees and to local organisations providing further assistance.

The Services provided would include:

- Language support and advocacy services to refugees/asylum seekers arriving in Ards and North Down, such as access to health care, education, welfare, and employment.
- The provision of information and support to local individuals and organisations hosting Ukrainian refugees under 'Homes for Ukraine' and Ukrainian Family scheme.
- Facilitate access to 'Home for Ukraine', Ukrainian Family Scheme and Ukrainian Extension Scheme for both sponsors (individuals and organisations based in Ards and North Down) and beneficiaries (Ukrainian citizens).
- Provide bi-weekly\* drop-in advocacy clinics at YMCA North Down (Bangor) and The Link (Newtownards) plus Ards Peninsula outreach.
- Provide a meeting space for refugees/asylum seekers and their sponsors.
- Facilitate access to ESOL classes for refugees/asylum seekers.
- Facilitate access to support groups and organisations for refugees.

*\*with potential for weekly, subject to capacity & demand*

The pilot project would run for an initial 5-month period (May to September 2022) with potential for additional 6 months (October 2022 to March 2023) and a Project Board, had been established, comprised of YMCA staff, the networks, and Council Officers to manage the project. Monitoring and evaluation would be completed monthly and funding for the support could be found initially from the Councils Good Relations budget.

The project would have a degree of built-in flexibility to respond to emerging needs of both the refugees and hosts. The Department of Finance had also established a sub-group to advise and assist Councils setting up local wrap around services.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council notes this update report and approves the attached Data Sharing Agreement for signature.

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

Councillor MacArthur thanked officers for the report which was mainly positive to hear with a small amount of negative points. It was heartwarming that so many families in Northern Ireland had opened their homes to approximately 1,400 Ukrainians and that showed great generosity. She thanked the Council for the work that it had carried out to date and she had appreciated the regular updates. She noted that most of the people arriving had been women and children and that most of those women were educated to degree level. Many of those people who had arrived spoke of the welcome and warmth that they had received in Northern Ireland. One negative was that some people had been unable to access work due to language difficulties, so she urged the Head of Community and Culture to try to assist with sourcing opportunities for the Ukrainian people. There was also the

frustration that the Homes for Ukraine payments had not yet come through and while no one was showing this dedication to care for people for simply financial reasons the reality was that everyone was feeling the increasing costs of living. This was a rural Borough and the cost of transport and services was often greater in more rural locations. She asked for pressure to be placed on the Department of Finance so that payments could be made to mitigate against everyday costs. The Head of Community and Culture agreed to do so and would continue to lobby the Department of Education regarding language classes and would try to source some classes locally through churches and with the local colleges.

Councillor Boyle agreed with everything that Councillor MacArthur had said particularly in relation to the financial aspect where costs were rising steadily. He was aware that people living on the Peninsula were making financial donations to the host families themselves and he thought that the report had highlighted the complexity of the situation being faced. He also referred to the role of the NIHE and what could be done in the use of Houses of Multiple Occupation and the whole project was a massive undertaking. He had enjoyed a social event recently at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Cloughey which had been for the community to welcome the Ukrainian people and spoke of the kindness and warmth of everyone who had attended.

The officer explained that Houses of Multiple Occupation were not thought to be suitable for the Ukrainian people arriving into Northern Ireland.

Councillor Irvine asked about payments to the host families and if there was a contact for that. The officer explained that those payments were being made through the Home Office or the Department of Finance. Checks needed to be carried out before payments were made and that was a time-consuming process but payments were being to come through. The officer was also aware that the Link in Newtownards had begun English classes for the refugees but the demand for those was currently outstripping supply and the Council was trying to source additional funding for that.

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

## **10. REFUGEE PROTOCOL AND BOROUGH OF SANCTUARY**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report dated 25 May 2022 from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that in February 2022 the Council agreed the following Notice of Motion:

*In light of recent events that have seen a number of refugees seeking sanctuary in the Borough, and building upon this Council's good relations works in the community, this cross-party motion proposes that this Council takes the following actions:*



1. *That officers return to us at their earliest convenience a proposal for a refugee "strategy" (later clarified as a protocol), outlining amongst other issues the cross directorate working that would be required.*
2. *That officers compile a report detailing necessary considerations, benefits, and costs if any in Ards and North Down acquiring "Borough of Sanctuary" status as recently attained by Belfast City Council.*

*Members also noted that through its Good Relations programme Ards and North Down Borough Council had been working to promote equality and mutual respect across the Borough and with the PCSP it had delivered programmes such as No Hate Here supporting victims of hate crime. The need for a refugee protocol and the acquisition of Borough of Sanctuary would build on that work.*

### **Refugee Strategy**

The Executive's Racial Equality Strategy (2015-2025) provided a framework for Government Departments (and Local Councils) to tackle inequalities and to promote and encourage good race relations and social cohesion for Irish Travellers, minority ethnic people whose families had been here for generation or who had recently arrived, migrant workers and asylum seekers. The Strategy recognised that there was a strong case for a separate Refugee Integration Strategy, to ensure there was a smooth transition between being an asylum seeker and a refugee and to ensure that refugees could build a new life in Northern Ireland. Rather than creating a new strategy, the Council should support that with a contributory protocol.

In developing a protocol for how the Council supported refugees wishing to resettle, either temporarily or on a more permanent basis, it should be noted that overall responsibility for managing each scheme within the UK lay with the Home Office, which liaised closely with the responsible Departments in Northern Ireland, i.e The Executive Office and Department of Finance. To date, each scheme had been delivered entirely differently in response to the different circumstances faced by the refugees and asylum seekers.

Between 2015-2018 the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) saw approximately 1,726 people seeking sanctuary in Northern Ireland. The Scheme resettled displaced refugees who were living in camps in countries neighbouring Syria, principally Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. Families arrived in Northern Ireland on prearranged dates and up to 35 families resettled in the Borough. That advance notice made it relatively easy to ensure the necessary support was in place and that was led by The Executive Office and co-ordinated through the Strategic Migration Partnership Regional "Welcome Centres" were established, where statutory partners and councils were able to provide information on services e.g. health, housing, education jobs, etc, and provide information on what each council area had to offer. Each family was allocated a key worker to assist in their resettlement. The VPRS was evaluated and one of the learning outcomes identified was the lack of available information on how those refugees had integrated into communities.

The scheme had now changed to the Northern Ireland Refugee Resettlement Scheme (NIRRS) and welcomed all refugees, not just Syrians.

In 2021 the Executive formally agreed to accept refugees arriving under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ARCS).

[ARAP](#) offered Afghan nationals who had worked for, or alongside the UK government, and met the ARAP criteria, relocation in the UK. It had settled thousands of Afghans who had worked with the UK government, and their families.

Anyone who was resettled through the ACRS receives indefinite leave to enter or remain (ILR) in the UK and could apply for British citizenship after 5 years in the UK under existing rules.

There was no application process for ACRS. Prioritisation and referral for resettlement was in one of 3 ways:

1. Vulnerable and at-risk individuals who arrived in the UK under the evacuation programme would be the first to be settled under the ACRS. Eligible people who were notified by the UK government that they had been called forward or specifically authorised for evacuation, but were not able to board flights, would also be offered a place under the scheme if they subsequently came to the UK. The first Afghan families had now been granted ILR under the scheme.
2. From Spring 2022 the United Nations Refugee Agency would refer refugees in need of resettlement who had fled Afghanistan. The Agency had the global mandate to provide international protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees. We would continue to receive such referrals to the scheme in coming years.
3. The third referral pathway would relocate those at risk who supported the UK and international community effort in Afghanistan, as well as those who were particularly vulnerable, such as women and girls at risk and members of minority groups. In the first year of this pathway, the government would offer ACRS places to the most at risk British Council and GardaWorld contractors and Chevening alumni. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office would be in touch with those eligible to support them through next steps. Beyond the first year, the government would work with international partners and NGOs to welcome wider groups of Afghans at risk.

The focus of ACRS would be on those who remained in Afghanistan or the region, primarily Afghan nationals – although nationals of other countries, for example in mixed nationality families, would also be eligible. Spouses, partners, and dependent

children (under the age of 18) of eligible individuals could also be resettled under the scheme. Other family members may be resettled in exceptional circumstances.

ACRS demonstrated the government's 'New Plan for Immigration' in action, to expand and strengthen safe and legal routes to the UK for those in need of protection. A further scheme MARRS was the resettlement of musicians from Afghanistan.

From early 2022 over seventy asylum seekers had been temporarily rehoused between two locations in Bangor. The asylum seekers were originally from countries such as: Eritrea, Somalia, Syria, Sudan, Yemen, Palestine, Iran, Afghanistan and Nigeria and were relocated from other locations in Great Britain. They were primarily single males, although a small number of families had also been rehoused in the town centre since 2021.

The scheme was managed by the Home Office, which had been liaising with accommodation providers across Northern Ireland to identify, for example, hotels that could provide exclusive use for particular sex/age groups, thus making access to services more efficient. Mears Housing was contracted by the Home Office to support those being rehoused locally and a co-ordinator was appointed.

Unlike the VPRS, no advance notice was given to Council or local statutory agencies. When the news broke over Christmas 2021 many local agencies, including Council, churches, voluntary and community organisations, offered their support and that help was on-going.

More recently many refugees had been fleeing to escape the war in Ukraine. Members would be aware that the Home Office had two formal routes for those resettling in the UK – the Ukraine Family Scheme and the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme (the 'Schemes'). To date, the number applying for visas under the Ukraine Sponsorship was approximately 1,400, although it now appears that some people may be applying for visas but not actually traveling here. However, those numbers did not include those travelling across the border from the Republic of Ireland – that number was impossible to confirm.

In Northern Ireland the process was being managed regionally by a Strategic Planning Group and an Operational Planning Group and officers from Community and Culture were represented on the Operational Planning Group. That group was being kept updated on how the schemes were operating, translation services, how safeguarding matters were being dealt with and how data sharing was being managed. A key consideration would be longer term integration in line with the new Government Integration Strategy. It was also important to note that SOLACE and Northern Ireland's Emergency Preparedness Group were regularly kept up to date on developments. Similarly, the Council's Communication Team, through the Executive Information Service, met fortnightly with various departments and statutory agencies to share information on the schemes including information available



through NI Direct, which was also shared on the Council's website. The information available on NI Direct, was being consistently reviewed and updated.

To date, four Community Advice Centres (CACs) had been opened. Originally it was considered that a CAC would be opened in Ards and North Down. Whilst that remained a possibility and was being kept under review, it was becoming increasingly unlikely due to the relatively small numbers of Ukrainian refugees arriving here. Also, due to the nature of the schemes, families and those opening their houses to the refugees had been providing assistance to help them attend one of the established CACs - mainly the one based in the Cecil Ward Building in Belfast. The current advice to Councils that did not have a CAC in their local area, was to redirect refugees to the nearest CAC where they could receive advice and their 'one off' financial payment.

In response to the specific situations those seeking refuge found themselves in, the Home Office and Government Departments managed each refugee scheme differently. There was not a 'one size solution' and so it was very difficult to establish an appropriate single Council procedure or way of working to respond to those varying types of affairs of state.

However, it was imperative that the Council delivered the following in each situation:

1. Is represented by Senior Management on the appropriate regional body managing the process.
2. Nominates appropriate officer/s as the Council's single point of contact.
3. That these officer/s provide regular updates to Members, Senior Management and all internal stakeholders, through current mechanisms e.g. Council's Committee structure, CLT, HOST, SUM Forum etc.
4. Effectively manages communication flows internally and externally in line with Executive Information Service Guidance and in collaboration with the Council's Communications Team. All appropriate methods of communication will be used to support this. It should be noted that in all situations to date, media relations has been managed by the Executive Information Service.
5. Updates the Community and Voluntary Sector and key stakeholders through existing fora, e.g. the Community Support Steering Group, formal and informal partnerships and meetings.
6. In line with Home Office guidance, appropriate local support mechanisms for refugees/asylum seekers/host and sponsors are established. This may involve setting up specific drop in services for wrap around support, sharing information on local support organisations on the Councils website and between agencies and information on Borough orientation.

### **Borough of Sanctuary**

The Belfast City of Sanctuary (BCoS) group was formally constituted following the first AGM at Belfast City Hall on 1 March 2018 and was currently in the process of becoming a charity. BCoS had a Management Committee which, reflecting the



partnership ethos of BCoS, was made up of members of the host community and members of the refugee and newcomer communities, as well as representatives of Belfast Multi-Cultural Association, ICTU, Belfast Metropolitan College and Belfast Unemployed Resource Centre.

BCoS group was part of a network of City of Sanctuary groups across the UK and the related Places of Sanctuary groups in the Republic of Ireland. Since its establishment, BCoS had operated entirely on the basis of voluntary work by members of the committee and a growing pool of members and supporters. They worked in close partnership with the refugee and newcomer communities, public bodies and community and voluntary organisations.

Main areas of work recently had been working in close co-operation with the Education Authority and Urban Villages to promote the establishment of 'Schools of Sanctuary' in the Belfast Area.

There were no further groups in Northern Ireland at present, however Newry, Mourne and Down District Council were currently following steps to become a City of Sanctuary.

For Ards and North Down to become a Borough of Sanctuary, there were a number of steps to be completed, including ensuring there was not already a group in the area.

The Council's Good Relations Officer and Externally Funded Programmes Manager attended the Belfast City of Sanctuary Annual General Meeting on AGM on 12 May 2022 and held a further follow up meeting on 17 May 2022 with the Co-Ordinator of the Belfast City of Sanctuary. The BCoS Co-Ordinator had offered to assist Ards and North Down Borough Council to become a Borough of Sanctuary.

The process would require a group to be formally constituted with a number of specific sectors/refugees/newcomers, etc, represented including the Law centre, Education Authority, Arts as well as individuals. The group would nominate the normal roles of Chair, Secretary, and committee members. The group must include and work in partnership with, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. The aim of the group was to promote safe, inclusive spaces and a support network for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, and disabled residents. It was recommended the group met monthly to plan projects, apply for funding, and encourage others to become a sanctuary.

Any organisations e.g., schools, businesses, libraries, nurseries, councils could become a place of Sanctuary as long as they could provide a safe and inclusive space free from persecution. The committee would monitor the sanctuaries in its area to ensure they were delivering safe spaces.

Ards and North Down had a good foundation in place to become a Borough of sanctuary. It would be good practice to support the establishment of the group and nominate the Good Relations Officer to the Ards and North Down Borough of Sanctuary Committee.

Further meetings were due to take place over the next few weeks with the Council's Intercultural Forum, the Networks, and the YMCA in order to discuss and agree how best to form an appropriately constituted group to progress the process of AND becoming a Borough of Sanctuary and an update report would be brought to members in due course.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council approves the Protocol detailed in the report and that a further update report detailing the potential establishment of a Borough of Sanctuary is brought to the Committee in due course for consideration.

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

Councillor Kendall thought that it was heartening to see the progress in support of the cross party Motion and that this Council was a good example of one where safe and inclusive places could be provided for refugees. In seconding the recommendation Councillor Douglas also welcomed the report and the work that had been done so far noting that Ards and North Down had a history of welcoming people who had come from difficult situations.

Councillor Smart gave his thanks to officers for turning around the report so quickly since it was quite a complex task.

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

**11. KIRKISTOWN CASTLE 400 ANNIVERSARY FURTHER REPORT ON FUNDING**  
(Appendix IV)

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:** - Report dated 23 May 2022 from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the following Notice of Motion was agreed by Council in April 2022:

**“To mark the 400th anniversary of the building of Kirkistown Castle, Council tasks officers to work with the Department of Communities (Historic Monuments Division), local community groups and schools, to deliver a community programme of events to mark this important milestone in the history of the village of Cloughey.”**

Officers from the Community and Culture Team had met with the Cloughey and District Community Association (C&DCA) to discuss what could be achieved given the very limited timescale and Council resources.

C&DCA was reluctant to take on any significant organisation of events to mark the anniversary due to limited time, energy and resources within their ageing group. However, the group had agreed that, with the support and direction of Council Officers, it would make attempts to secure funding for the indicative programme of activity as laid out in the appendix. Members should note that there was no dedicated budget provision for that activity within the Community and Culture Team.

### **Indicative programme of Activity**

C&DCA agreed that the most viable option was to arrange an open day and programme of activity to coincide with the national European Heritage Open Day series that would take place on 10 September 2022 between 12noon – 4pm.

Access to the Castle was dependent on the agreement and cooperation of the Northern Ireland Environment Agency who were the custodians of the Castle. A meeting took place with NIEA on 25 May 2022 and Officers had the commitment of NIEA to assist in the delivery of the anniversary events and to contribute to the budget (amount was to be confirmed). Appropriate insurances would need to be in place before the public could be permitted to enter the Castle and NIEA would confirm in due course if that was possible. Indicative programming details and indicative budget, agreed with C&DCA is detailed in the appendix.

### **Funding**

Whilst there was no specific budget secured through the estimates process for this programme of activity it was anticipated a budget in the region of £5,000 would be required. Whilst there was a small underspend in the 2020/21 budget in the NI Centenary Grants, (£2745) that surplus was returned to the Council's general fund under normal financial processes and therefore was not available in 2022/23 for this event. Therefore, where possible C&DCA would apply for Council and external funding, with the support of the Community and Culture team. The Director of Finance and performance had also indicated that any short fall being small in nature could be funded from in year Directorate savings or the Council's general fund if Directorate savings did not materialise.

Possible sources of funding included but were not limited to:

- Ards and North Down Borough Council Heritage Grant
- Big Lottery Fund
- Arnold Clark Community Fund
- Esme Mitchell Fund
- Matthew Good Foundation- Grants for Good Fund

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this update report.

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

Councillor Boyle welcomed the report and acknowledged that Councillor Adair and Councillor Edmund had asked for the area of funding to be revisited and he was pleased that it looked like new life was being brought into the anniversary and its celebration. While it had not been budgeted for other sources of funding were now beginning to be secured.

Councillor MacArthur believed that Cloughey Church had also agreed to make a donation to the celebration. The Head of Community and Culture added this was along with support that was being sought from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and she hoped that if there was any shortfall in that that the Council might be in a position to meet the additional costs from in year underspends to date.

Councillor Douglas thanked officers and stressed the importance of our built heritage and a four hundred year anniversary was quite remarkable and she hoped that it would be celebrated and promoted across the Peninsula.

The Chairman agreed and thanked the Director and other officers who were working on achieving the funding needed.

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

(Councillor T Smith left the meeting at 8.10 pm)

## **12. ACCESS FOR DOGS TO MUSEUM COURTYARD. TRIAL PERIOD PROPOSAL**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report dated 26 May 2022 from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the North Down Museum by-law (1990) stated:

**'No person shall cause or allow any dog (with the exception of a guide dog for a blind person) or other animal belonging to him or under his control to enter or remain in the Museum'.**

Officers had reviewed the practicality and logistics of changing that by-law to allow dogs into the museum courtyard.

The difficulties of permitting dogs presently was the gate by which they could enter must be kept closed during museum opening hours. That was for two reasons:



1. The security of the collection and visitors. Museum staff must know who is in the building at all times. The reputation of the Council could be called into question if any artefacts were stolen or broken. Many items on display were valuable (financially or historically) or on loan from other museums, groups or individuals. Therefore, under no circumstances should non-assistance dogs be permitted within the galleries as the risk of damage to artefacts or displays increased.
2. The museum did not have sufficient staff to continually monitor the gate and allow dog owners in and out of the courtyard. Presently dog owners were referred to the dog friendly café run by Coffee Cure, in the walled garden.

It was recommended that for a trial period, dogs were permitted into the Museum Courtyard only, with their owners and on leads. They would have access through the front door/reception of the Museum, then straight through the double doors behind reception into the courtyard. They would leave the same way again. That meant that they would not have to enter any galleries at any point, and museum staff could monitor who was in the building at all times.

The following controls would be put in place:

- Museum staff would explain entry and exit to all owners when they arrived.
- Only dogs on a lead would be permitted to enter.
- Only two dogs per owner would be permitted.
- Dogs would not be allowed if there was a large group or school visit to the courtyard.
- Signage would be placed in the courtyard listing the owner's responsibilities.
- Signage to make it clear where dogs were not allowed (galleries and indoor café area unless they were an assistance dog).
- When the museum was closed but the café was open, dogs would enter/exit through the gates.

A formal list of responsibilities for the café would be drawn up and signed. That would include:

Café staff would be responsible for-

- Monitoring dogs while in the courtyard (on lead and under control).
- Cleaning up any mess made by the dog if the owner did not do so.
- Providing dog mess bags on request.
- Providing water for dogs.
- Ensuring that dogs did not enter the indoor café area (apart from assistance dogs).
- Ensuring staff avoided touching dogs but if they did then proper hygiene standards were followed.
- Filling in an incident report if required.

Museum staff would be responsible for-

- Explaining entry and exit while museum was open and ensuring that was followed.
- Ensuring no (non-assistance) dogs were in the galleries.
- Assisting café staff to fill in incident report if required.
- All signage.

Both café and museum staff would have the power to ask an owner to remove his/her dog if it was causing a nuisance or showed aggressive behaviour to other dogs or visitors.

It was further proposed that museum staff would trial the scheme for two months during July and August 2022 and consult with all visitors to see if they were content to have dogs within the museum complex. An evaluation report would be written for Council at the end of the trial, which would inform a possible change to the North Down Museum by-law.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council agrees that the museum trials permitting dogs into the museum café courtyard in July and August 2022.

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

Alderman Irvine considered this to be a sensible move by the Council to undertake the trial as Castle Park was well used by dog walkers. He hoped that the trial would go well and in time be implemented fully in the future.

Councillor Chambers also welcomed the trial and was aware of people being disappointed about not being able to gain access to the courtyard. He gave credit to Alderman M Smith who had pursued the matter for some time. He was aware that the operator of the restaurant was keen to permit dogs and their owners to access the facilities.

Councillor MacArthur agreed and felt the controls being listed were necessary and she would look forward to having some feedback on the trial.

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

### **13. PERFORMANCE REPORT LEISURE SERVICES Q3 AND Q4**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report dated 10 May 2022 from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would be aware that the Council was required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil that

requirement the Council approved the Performance Management Policy and Handbook in October 2015. The Performance Management Handbook outlined the approach to Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan Towards 2024 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually (for publication 30 September 2021)
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2021)

The Council's 17 Service Plans outlined how each respective Service would contribute to the achievement of the Corporate objectives including, but not limited to, any relevant actions identified in the PIP.

### Reporting approach

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

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

The report for Quarter 4 2021-22 was attached.

### Key points to note

- A particularly challenging year for leisure centres and community centres, the pandemic resulted in long closures for the facilities, but confidence was slowly returning and the recent announcement on the suspension of Covid-19 restrictions should help see a return to pre pandemic operating levels. It should be noted that that would not happen overnight, as managers noted there was still a reluctance from some to come into environments where there were a lot of people.

### Key achievements

- The learn to swim programmes at both Ards Blair Mayne and Bangor Aurora had the highest ever number of enrolments, the team at Bangor Aurora noted that the number of enrolments at that site was the highest anywhere in the UK within the Serco group.
- Quest accreditation had been retained across all sites.

### Emerging issues

- Staff recruitment and retention had been challenging this year with a significant number of recruitment campaigns failing to attract suitable candidates. It was noted that that was echoed in all other sectors of the Council and right across the local government sector in Northern Ireland.
- The ongoing breakdowns of the pool floors and booms at Bangor Aurora were having a significant effect on expenditure and had led to the total loss of the diving programme and would impact on the income generation if the problems could not be resolved.
- Increasing inflation across energy and food bills in particular would result in less money for discretionary items such as leisure and that may impact membership sales and retention.
- Insourcing would make for a challenging year ahead as the Council looked to merge two distinct operating systems.

#### **Action to be taken**

- Leisure would look to developing a relationship with local colleges with a view to creating leisure apprenticeships and also developing in house training programmes that would allow us to recruit unqualified people who would have the right personality traits that the Council could then skill up to become highly motivated and skilled staff.
- Review of membership pricing to ensure the Council remained competitive in the marketplace.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

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

Councillor McRandal thanked officers for the report which highlighted some difficulties for leisure services which would likely continue for some time. He had one question in relation to the performance report and one unmet target in the delivery of the community centre marketing plan. It was explained that that was due to a shortage of staff and currently staff were focusing mainly on keeping the leisure facilities themselves open.

Councillor Kendall welcomed the new leisure apprenticeships which might help the sector which was struggling to recruit qualified staff. The Head of Leisure informed Members that Human Resources was working across the Council to get apprenticeships and yet none had been taken up in the leisure settings. He also informed them that grants had been low last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic but applications were starting to pick up again as society turned to normal.

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



## **14. CALHAME PARK CLOUGHEY RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report dated 6 May 2022 from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the Council agreed in April 2022 to the following Notice of Motion.

**That officers bring back a report with reference to the provision of flood lighting and creation of a running track around the Council owned facility, located at Calhame Park, Cloughey. Incorporating improved access and additional parking to address concerns of local residents while enhancing sport facilities for the community of Cloughey.**

To complete the initial report officers had referred to similar schemes that had been undertaken in different parts of the Borough over the last couple of years. In order to give members basic information, they required at this time to enable them to instruct officers on next steps.

### **Floodlighting**

An exercise similar to what would be required at Calhame Park was recently carried out in Holywood and from looking at that, the total cost would be expected to be close to £100,000. That allowed for eight columns, and all civil engineering works required.

Eight columns would be the normal minimum requirement for floodlighting for matches. The £100,000 did not take into account any additional charges or enabling works that NIE may require for connections that may be needed.

### **Running Track**

Officers had assumed that the intention of the Motion was not a full athletics type track, (which would be the subject of another report to be brought forward in the future as a possible replacement for the track at Ballykillaire) be considered, but rather a track like those installed at Comber Parkway or Londonderry Park that was suitably lit and could be used by joggers and walkers for safe exercise. Based on the installation at Comber Parkway the track would cost about £94,000.

### **Car parking**

The laying of a car park could be quite complex and surveys on ground conditions could have an adverse impact on the overall cost of a scheme. In a recent paper published on the estimated cost of a parking lot at the conceptual level, it was estimated that for a parking area of almost 7,000 square feet, that would accommodate 24 cars the costs would be in the order of £124,000.

Therefore, at this superficial level of estimating costs, the total cost of any potential project was in the order of £318,000 at 2021/22 prices.

### **Capital Project Due Process**

Whilst officers had brought back estimates for the work on the three main areas requested in the NOM members should understand that before any work could even be considered a feasibility study and an outline Business Case would have to be developed to assess if there was a need for the development and the viability of the proposed project, the options for delivery of both those initial tests were met and the short and long-term impacts on the district rate.

That would require full community consultation, consultation with clubs and associated organisations and governing bodies, the CPD format five case business case, and an options appraisal for Council approval. All of that would have to be undertaken by a consultant and given that there was no budget available this year for the appointment of a consultant was dependent on budget being secured for 2023/24 which would include an affordability assessment as part of the Council's existing capital projects portfolio prioritisation. Therefore, it was April 2023 at the earliest that any consultant could be appointed to consider the project.

As would be noted from the estimates the project in total was likely to cost in the region of £318,000 and if a need was identified that would have to be added to the 10-year capital plan that already had a number of significant projects waiting to start.

### **Other Information**

Members would recall that in 2016 Council approved a Sport NI Strategy for the area which on the evidence of need identified required sports facilities in the Borough. Members were reminded that arising out of that strategy, the 3G pitch at Harbour Road, Portavogie which would be fully floodlit was likely to be completed in the next twelve to eighteen months and the mixed-use facility 3G pitch which again would be fully floodlit due to be built in the Portaferry area could be delivered two to three years behind this. So, both would need to be taken into account in the needs analysis for a third floodlit pitch in the same general vicinity. The strategy identified the facilities required in the Borough but upgrades to the grass pitch at Calhame Park to include floodlighting was not highlighted as a need at that time.

Furthermore, a floodlit grass pitch was normally unable to cope with more than six hours of bookings a week as the grass surface would be so badly damaged that it would make it unusable if more play were to be introduced. That would limit the use and therefore the value for money that floodlighting investment would deliver.

Finally, the Council would also have to make an allowance for ongoing costs such as path, lighting and any additional pitch maintenance, plus, ideally, establish a sink fund for any replacement infrastructure for future years.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the contents of this report and also notes that if the project was to progress to the next stage, it would first require Council, in accordance with its own policy for capital projects of this nature, to set aside a

budget in the region of £20,000 to £30,000 in order to produce a feasibility study and outline business case as part of the 2023/2024 rate setting process, which would consider the viability, need, options, cost, affordability and value for money of this proposal.

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

Councillor Boyle had brought this proposal to the Council and he thanked officers for the detail in the report. He asked about the business case funding figure of £20k and if that would form part of the Rate setting process for 23/24. The Director replied that it a business case for 23/24 would be prepared as part of the budget setting process and this would have to be considered along with all other revenue business cases to see which the Council would prioritise and which may not make the cut depending on the cumulative affordability.

Alderman Irvine was happy to note the report on what would be a significant project and there were a number of similar projects waiting to be started.

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

## **15. QUEST ACCREDITATION**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report dated 20 May 2022 from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members may be aware both Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex (ABMWLC) and Comber Leisure Centre (CLC) were required, as a Key Performance Indicator (KPI), each year to retain the Quest Quality Award accreditation. Quest was leisure's specific quality award relating to continuous improvement for leisure facilities and was designed to measure how effective leisure organisations were at providing a quality leisure service. Quest assessed centres on Operational Management, Customer Journey, Programming, Health and Safety Compliance Declaration, Cleaning and Housekeeping, Team and Skills Development, Planning to Improve and Community Outcomes.

Quest accreditation was managed by Right Directions and the assessment consisted of an unannounced Mystery Visit completed by a leisure professional who utilised the facilities and produced a detailed report based on their customer experience. In addition, a full day investigative analysis was conducted by a qualified professional Quest assessor examining all aspects of leisure facility management as detailed above.

Quest registration lasted 12 months and must be renewed each year for the Quest accreditation to be maintained. CLC and ABMWLC had consistently held the Quest accreditation, first achieved in 1999 and 2001 respectively. From 2001 to December



2018 Quest accreditation was held at Ards Leisure Centre (ALC) in William Street before the Council moved its operations to the new site at ABMWLC in January 2019. In agreement with Right Directions a further assessment of the new facilities was undertaken in 2019 and the Council were once again awarded Quest accreditation to continue 21 years of continuous award for Ards and 23 years for Comber.

The provision of leisure facilities across the Borough had seen a capital investment programme from Council in excess of £100 million over the last 10 years. With such significant Council investment, it was imperative the Council leisure facilities continued to be independently assessed and retain the Quest accreditation as that external assessment demonstrated leisure was providing best value for our customers and rate payers.

With the ongoing pandemic, Right Directions introduced an additional focus on critical aspects of leisure operations for dealing with the provision of a safe leisure environment during the pandemic detailed as Quest Prime (Recovery). Operational management, Customer journey and housekeeping were all assessed in light of the pandemic under that revitalised aspect of the award.

ABMWLC held its Quest assessment on 2 February 2022, CLC held its Quest assessment on 28 March 2022. Both Centres were successful in retaining the Quest award and secured 'good' status under the new Quest Prime (Recovery) award. That was an excellent achievement as previously under the one day assessment a basic "Quest registered" award was the only category that could be obtained.

Quest had many partners including Sport England (SE), Sport Northern Ireland (SNI), UKActive, Leisure Net and Chartered Institute for Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) which all endorsed Quest as a valuable tool in management of leisure facilities. SNI recognised "the many benefits of the Quest scheme and believed it would have an important role in the delivery and development of sport and physical activity throughout Northern Ireland over the next decade".

As the Council focused on the merger of the two leisure operating models over the next two years discussions were already underway to consider utilising the Quest award scheme across the full range of leisure services. That would include consideration of attaining Quest for all of the Council's sites including the dual use site in Portaferry and potentially incorporating the Council's excellent sport development service once the merger had been fully completed. In the interim it was intended to retain the current awards and extend that significant period of endorsement during the very difficult transition period ahead.

ABMWLC (previously William Street) and CLC had both been Quest accredited for over 20 years and, as such, were two of the longest continuous award-winning centres in the UK. The continued accreditation and indeed retaining the award during



a global pandemic, reflected the great dedication and commitment of the Council's leisure team ably supported by all sections of the Council. The leisure team was one of only three sections currently to have an independent quality award accreditation relating to the operations of its services. As such that should be recognised by the Council as a fantastic achievement for the Council's leisure teams at both ABMWLC and CLC during this extremely challenging period of service delivery.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council note the above report and the continued Quest accreditation for both ABMWLC and CLC and acknowledges the continued success of both centres regarding their Quest accreditation.

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

Councillor Chambers congratulated the whole team for the effort which would have been involved to achieve the Quest Accreditation. The only downside was that most people were unaware of what the achievement meant. He believed that it would be appropriate to make a note of that which could be displayed proudly in centres beside the certificate of achievement.

Alderman Irvine and Councillor Moore offered praise and stressed the importance on keeping Council facilities to a high standard for the end users.

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

## **16. SPORTS FORUM GRANTS**

(Appendices V -X)

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:** - Report dated 24 May 2022 from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would be aware that on the 26 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. £40,000 had been allocated within the 2022/2023 revenue budget for this purpose.

The Council further authorised the Forum under delegated powers to award grants of up to £250. Grants above £250 still required Council approval. In addition, the Council requested that regular updates were reported to Members.

During April 2022, the Forum received a total of 10 grant applications; 2 of which were for Equipment, 1 for Events, 1 for Seeding, 1 Goldcard and 5 Individual Travel/Accommodation Applications. A summary of the 10 successful applications were detailed in the attached Successful: Equipment, Event, Seeding, Travel/Accommodation and Gold Card Applications.

For information, the annual budget and spend to date on grant categories was as follows:

	Annual Budget	Funding Awarded April 2022	Remaining Budget
Anniversary	£1,000	£0	£250
Coaching	£3,000	£0	£2,203.75
Equipment	£11,000	£2,000	£7,000*
Events	£6,000	£1,000	£3,700
Seeding	£500	£250	£250
Travel and Accommodation	£14,500	£670	£12,550**
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	£1,000
New category under development	£3,000	£0	£3,000
Goldcards proposed during the period April 2022 is 1.			

\*The proposed remaining budget for Equipment of **£7,000** was based on a proposed award of **£2,000** as outlined in Successful Equipment Applications – for Approval. The proposed remaining budget for Events of **£3,700** was based on a proposed award of **£1,000** – for Approval. The proposed remaining budget for Seeding of **£250** was based on a proposed award of **£250** – for Approval. The proposed remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of **£12,550** was based on a proposed award of **£670** – for Noting.

\*An Equipment grant for £1,000, awarded at the March Working Group and ratified on 27 April 2022, was included in the 2022/23 budget.

\*\*Please note the increased amounts for Individual Travel/Accommodation for 2022/23, approved by Council on 27 April 2022, were backdated to 1 April 2022. That increased the amount awarded for April 2022 to £1,280, from £800 (an additional £550 was awarded and £70 reclaimed).

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the attached application for financial assistance for sporting purposes valued at above £250, and that the application approved by the Forum (valued at below £250) is noted.

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

Councillor Boyle was greatly encouraged to see the continued sporting enthusiasm throughout the Borough and even though they were relatively small sums of money it was very valuable to those who received.

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

## **17. PERFORMANCE REPORT PARKS AND CEMETERIES Q4**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report dated 24 May 2022 from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would be aware that the Council was required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil that requirement the Council approved the Performance Management Policy and Handbook in October 2015. The Performance Management Handbook outlined the approach to Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan Towards 2024 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually (for publication 30 September 2021)
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2021)

The Council's 17 Service Plans outlined how each respective Service would contribute to the achievement of the Corporate objectives including, but not limited to, any relevant actions identified in the PIP.

### **Reporting approach**

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

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

The report for Quarter 4 for 2021-22 was attached.

### **Key achievements:**

- The NI100 Garden was opened near Whitespots, DAERA Minister visited the site.
- Ards and North Down in Bloom Community Competitions winners awarded their prizes.
- A rolling programme of tree planting and events was implemented across the Borough. In total 12,315 trees were planted with nine tree events supported.
- Orchards planted in Greyabbey, Portaferry and Portavogie.

- Recruitment of Interim Head of Service, 3 x Gardeners, 1 x Gravedigger, and 1 x Team Leader undertaken.
- Pride in Performance conversations undertaken with all staff.
- Walled Garden open to public in winter months for first time, excellent attendance had been reported.
- Herbicide Reduction Policy agreed and implementation process had begun.
- The new cemetery software system, PlotBox now being implemented.

### Emerging issues

- Apprenticeship scheme in association with Greenmount College was being progressed in 2022-23.

### Action to be taken

- Draft Local Biodiversity Action Plan would be completed in Summer 2022.
- Plans for 2022/23 Ards and North Down in Bloom and STAND4TREES initiatives underway.
- Implementation of a programme of Summer Events including Wild Days Out (Biodiversity Education Initiative) in July and August.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

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

Councillor MacArthur was happy to welcome the report and noticed the key achievements commending the planting of 12,000 trees and the planting of orchards as well as the outcome of the In Bloom competitions. The active participation of children and local communities was very encouraging. She asked about the herbicide reduction policy and how that was being developed and for an update on the orchards and Wild Days Out.

The Head of Parks and Cemeteries explained that Wild Days Out was a biodiversity activity aimed at families which included the identification of animals and how they contributed to the improvement of the natural environment. Some orchards had been planted already and the Council was now looking at further potential sites across the Borough and was keen to partner with local communities. The herbicide policy in existence was not suitable for every area and in some places hot foam was used to kill weeds without the need for chemicals. Further testing on more sustainable sources was being considered such as hard surfaces if provided which were finished in a way that discouraged weeds from growing.

Councillor Chambers asked about the Plot Box software system which was being used in the Council's cemeteries. The officer explained that a new system was being put in place and had been developed successfully by a Northern Ireland business and was now used in Ards and North Down and indeed around the world.



It recorded all the information needed in the management of a cemetery and was linked by GPS so staff could locate plots and help manage cemeteries well.

Councillor Kendall congratulated the team on the community involvement in the planning of green spaces and orchards and said the Council was making a positive environmental impact. She hoped that an orchard could be planted in Holywood soon. The officer was happy to take recommendations of potential suitable sites for orchards at any time and stated that he hoped up to 15k trees would be planted each year for many years to come.

Councillor McRandal echoed what Councillor Kendall had said and the work was now producing results. Most questions he had had were answered except for one about the use of 'friends' groups and volunteers. The officer agreed that it was something that the Council wished to progress and was about to implement a 'friends' group in the Walled Garden in Bangor.

Councillor Douglas welcomed the report and was aware that so many people wished to volunteer to take pride in our city, towns and villages and that resource could, in her opinion, be better utilised. She looked forward to seeing continued progress.

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

## **18. DISPLAY BED APPLICATION**

(Appendix XI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report dated 4 May 2022 from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would be aware that on the 27 February 2019, the Council agreed a policy for the use of Display Beds in the Borough, the policy required Officers to report to Council any applications received by external organisations. Through the pandemic the display bed application process had been suspended and those floral beds had been used to celebrate the excellent work carried out by NHS staff and other key workers. It was proposed that the display bed application process now recommenced and that the NHS staff / key workers displays continue until new applications had been approved by the Council. The Council had received one application for use of the display beds. Officers had assessed the application and had determined that the request met the criteria in the policy and was recommended for approval. The application was deemed by Officers to not require equality screening.

The application was as followed and the proposed design of the display was included in the attached appendix. The Parks team would endeavour to replicate the design as far as possible, however detailed design may alter in order to facilitate installation. If necessary, the Officer would liaise with the applicant if the installation may have to be significantly different from that proposed.

Please note that the application had been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and was originally planned for 2020.

Name of Group / Organisation	Display Bed applied for	Proposed dates of display	Reason for the display
Holywood Women's Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the Bangor Road entrance to Ballymenoch Park, Holywood</li> </ul>	01/07/2022 – 31/08/2022	To commemorate Holywood Womens Institute reaching 70 years.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council approves the above application for the display bed.

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

## **19. AMENDMENT TO CEMETERIES PRICING POLICY**

(Appendix XII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report dated 25 May 2022 from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members may be aware of the tragic death of Daniel Ferguson in December 2021 who passed away while living in Australia, a few days before he was due to travel to Northern Ireland to live in Donaghadee.

The Council's Parks and Cemeteries Services was contacted by Shields Funeral Directors on behalf of the family to make arrangements for Daniel to be buried at Ballyvester Cemetery. The details given at the time included the place of death and therefore we correctly applied the Council Pricing Policy and the resident discount was not applicable. The interment took place on 24 December 2021.

Enquires were received on behalf of the family concerning the conclusion reached that the resident discount to the full cost of the interment service was not applicable. On review and on the basis of all the information received from the Funeral Directors it was verified that the conclusion was correct.

For Members information, a poll of several other Councils in Northern Ireland was undertaken, and it was confirmed that the application of the policies of those Councils would also have reached the same outcome as was concluded in this case.

In March 2022, Daniel's mother, through the Mayor, contacted the Director of Community and Wellbeing and the Chief Executive and asked for a meeting to

discuss changing the related pricing policy in order to avoid a similar circumstance involving other families in the future arising. A meeting took place on 28 April 2022 with Daniel's mother, Maxine Porter.

The details of the circumstances were discussed at length, and during the meeting it was learned that Daniel was packed and ready to return home when he died and had already established evidence of residence in Northern Ireland by transferring his address on official documents, including a driving licence.

Ms Porter also made it clear that she was not seeking redress on her particular case, but a change that would allow similar cases to be avoided in the future. If such a change was possible, she asked if such changes might be encouraged across the other 10 Councils in Northern Ireland.

Officers believed therefore that this could be the basis, with certain amendments to our Cemetery Pricing Policy, on which to make a change to policy that would allow future cases of this nature to qualify for the residents' discount. i.e., if evidence could be produced that would indicate 'imminent residency'.

Subsequent to the meeting, Ms Porter wrote to the Council setting out details of her circumstances for Members information. That was attached in an appendix.

Three changes to the Council's Cemetery Pricing Policy would be necessary.

- Evidence provided that other statutory authorities had provided a new form of identification such as a driving licence to the deceased within three months prior to the date of death that included an address within the Borough.
- Evidence of an imminent return to the Borough, such as flight tickets or other evidence of travel arrangements.
- Evidence that this return was intended to be permanent at the time, evidence would include a tenancy or mortgage agreement.

The Director had spoken to Ms Porter about this approach and she is very content with the suggested way forward.

RECOMMENDED that (subject to equality screening outcome) that Council amends its Cemetery Pricing Policy by including a qualification for resident's discount for imminent residency by appropriately incorporating the three points referred to above. Furthermore if approved, and in accordance with Ms Porters request, that officers write to all other Councils in Northern Ireland advising them of this case and decision and encourage them to do likewise.

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

Councillor MacArthur paid tribute to Councillor Brooks for taking the matter on board and referred to the tragic circumstances relating to the death of Daniel in Australia and his status at that time as a 'non dom' resident of the Borough. She was pleased that a pragmatic approach would be taken by this Borough and commended the Council for listening to Ms Porter and also for the work that Ms Porter herself had done to help improve the Council's policy for the future. She was encouraged that the Council would write to other Councils in Northern Ireland asking them to reconsider their policy so that undue distress to other families was not caused in the future.

Alderman Irvine concurred and was saddened by the tragic set of circumstances that had led to Daniel's death just as he was preparing to return to his home in Northern Ireland. He stressed that sensitivity needed to be shown in these circumstances.

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

## **20. MANAGEMENT OF SAND DUNES**

(Appendices XIII & XIV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report dated 24 May 2022 from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that in June 2020, the Council agreed to the following Notice of Motion proposed by Councillor Adair:

**"That this Council, in collaboration with other partner agencies and the local communities, investigates and compiles a report on the current and future management of the sand dune systems at Cloughey and Portavogie, with a view to producing a plan that addresses issues such as climate change, coastal erosion and dune stabilisation"**

An initial report was brought to the Council in January 2021 and that report addressed one part of the agreed proposals from that time that could be addressed now.

The issue of coastal erosion had been widely discussed in relation to climate change and rising sea levels. Such changes could have a significant impact upon the structures within coastal dune systems and consequently loss of habitat. It had been reported that coastal dune systems were beneficial to negating the impact of coastal erosion and could in fact act as natural coastal defence mechanisms.

The benefits of providing a natural solution to retaining sand dune systems and prevent further erosion had been demonstrated in the Newry, Mourne & Down District Council area. Officers from Ards and North Down Borough Council visited two sites in Ballyhornan to view works undertaken in conjunction with local community groups.



The loss of dune systems was mainly as a result of tidal action, however in higher density tourist areas, the action of foot traffic across the vegetation could contribute towards a significant decline.



The above photos showed the impact on unprotected dunes from tidal action and foot traffic at Portavogie and Cloughy. While there was some regenerative growth visible, if unprotected, the growth would not develop.

Essentially, with both areas visited in Newry Mourne and Down, there had been significant land loss due to both tidal action and foot traffic with regenerative growth not establishing. By following guidance developed by the Conservation Volunteers and Clean Coasts, sections of fencing were installed in order to protect the growth and create an environment whereby dunes could restore naturally. The guidance from Clean Coasts was included as an attachment to the report.



The picture above, showed a newly installed fence. The basis of the installation was to create pockets with the fencing at 45° to the strand line which slowed the windblown sand, depositing it within the pocket. That then allowed greater success for the development of the regenerative growth. On areas where the regenerative growth was not present, additional locally sourced native plants were introduced to protected zone.



The photos above showed the benefits of the installation of the fencing having trapped the sand and harbouring regenerative growth. That was further protected from foot traffic by the outer wire fence. The fencing had been in place for three years and it was evident from the photos that the dunes were restoring to the height of the fence.

The next stage of the restoration was to install a further fence two metres in front of the current fence to replicate the process and extend the dune system further. The success of that approach was that it could be community led. While the natural solution to coastal erosion was extremely cost effective, by engaging local communities to take ownership, pockets of external funding could be unlocked to facilitate the works.

In Newry Mourne & Down District Council, a number of groups partnered with the Council to identify key locations and applied for external funding. Officers would be of the opinion that if the Council wished to go forward with a similar initiative, community engagement was critical to the success.

In addition to the above points, it was also suggested that appropriate signage was put in position to advise the general public of the initiative and the benefits of the approach.

Officers believed that it would be beneficial to select a key area at both Cloughy and Portavogie and work with local community groups to carry out two small scale pilot schemes if funding could be obtained. After a period of monitoring, a further report would be brought before Members with the results and a measure of the success.





The above photo shows the signage in place at Ballyhornan highlighting the community led project together with partnership logos.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council notes the contents of the report and gives approval for Officers to seek external funding and engage with community groups in taking forward two pilot projects, one at Portavogie and one at Cloughy in relation to sand dune restoration as described in this report.

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

Alderman Irvine was content with the progress that officers sought external funding and he wished the project well.

Seconding the recommendation Councillor MacArthur recognised that this was an urgent problem and had been reported on the news that very evening where there had been a regression of the coastline 5 metres in one year and pointed out that nothing would stand in the way of the wind and the waves. She thought that it was disappointing that Northern Ireland did not have a joint up strategy relating to coastal erosion.

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

## **21. CARWOOD TRAILS** (Appendix XV)

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:** - Report dated 24 May 2022 from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that in April 2022, Council agreed to the following Notice of Motion:

**“That Council task Officers to work with the Woodland Trust to develop and enhance community trails at Carrowood, Carrowdore as a potential Peace Plus project.”**

Council officers meet with the Woodland Trust regularly and a scheduled meeting took place in May 2022. The above Notice of Motion was discussed, and it was proposed by officers from both organisations to work together to update the site management plan and seek external funding from various sources as appropriate. It was unlikely that the proposal could be funded through Peace Plus given the process that must be applied through the recently established partnership to identify Borough wide needs first, although Peace Plus as a potential source of funding would be explored. There were however other more appropriate avenues of funding for such a scheme.

Carrowood was one of The Woodland Trust's 'Woods on Your Doorstep' woodlands created to commemorate the Millennium. The 0.45 hectare site was planted with a mixture of native shrubs and trees in 1999.

Community Trails referred to walking and/or multi-use trails that linked communities to surrounding greenspace via a safe off-road route, or one community to another, for example, along a river corridor. Those trails provided 'doorstep' safe off-road walking/cycling opportunities at a community level and were intended to boost the sense of community as well as improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

Since 2014, Outdoor Recreation NI (ORNI) had been working in partnership with the Peninsula Healthy Living Partnership (PHLP) and Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC) to carry out a phased approach towards developing 'Community Trails' in the area. That had comprised of the following:

**Phase I – Identification of potential community trails**

In 2014 ORNI completed a feasibility study for the development of community trails in and around nine settlements in the Ards Peninsula, through desk research, a review of village plans, extensive community consultation and site visits. The study was completed in 2016 and it outlined the needs and aspirations of the communities for access to safe, doorstep, off-road outdoor recreation provision (including walking, running and family cycling). It also highlighted that there was a lack of off road provision and that there was a heavy reliance on the use of the public road network, country lanes, shoreline and a small number of asserted Public Rights of Ways for recreational purposes.

The study identified 25 routes, ranging from long, linear coastal foreshores routes to short riverside walks, and from routes on agricultural land to routes within private estates.

**Phase II – Concept Trail Design**



A total of nine potential community trails were identified as 'priority projects' and taken to Phase II. That involved carrying out scoping of the potential for development and concept trail design. Of those nine, three were deemed to be feasible to be taken forward for development. The remaining six were put on hold due to issues including funding, land ownership and environmental designations.

### **Phase III – Delivery of Capital Projects**

To date, community trails that had been developed in the Ards Peninsula by ORNI (in partnership with a variety of organisations including PHLP, Council, The Woodland Trust and the National Trust) including Slans Graveyard and The Warren Boardwalk (both in Cloughey), Corrog Wood (Portaferry) and Nugent's Wood, (Portaferry).

### **Reassessment**

All remaining potential community trails were reassessed in 2019. The reassessment found that many of the trails were unable to proceed mainly due to several factors including land ownership issues, environmental/planning and financial reasons.

### **Full Review (Next Stage)**

In partnership with PHLP and Outdoor Recreation NI, the community trails project had now reached a stage where a full review of all the potential trails in the Peninsula needed to be undertaken and that process was about to commence. Again, the review would follow the same process as outlined above with emphasis on working with other partners such as The Woodland Trust and the National Trust as generally those partners were more willing to create a recreational resource on their lands as opposed to private landowners.

Therefore, sites like Carrowood in Carrowdore (Woodland Trust) would be considered in that review along with other potential Woodland Trust and National Trust sites as well as established Rights of Way and so on. The remaining originally proposed trails would also be revisited to see if any of the previous issues could be overcome.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the contents of the report and approves for Officers to seek external funding and engage with community partners in taking forward a review of community trails including Carrowood.

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

RECESS 8.58 pm

RECOMMENCED 9.12 pm

## **22. NOTICES OF MOTION**

### **22.1 Submitted by Councillor Adair and Councillor Edmund**

That this Council task officers to enter into discussions with the Education authority concerning the redevelopment of the play area fronting Victoria Primary School (which is a shared facility between the school and public) as a potential Peace Plus project to enhance recreation and sports facilities for Ballyhalbert.

Proposed by Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor MacArthur that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Councillor Adair gave a history to the site under consideration explaining that in 2004 the Council had sold land in Ballyhalbert for the purposes of building the new Victoria Primary School. Previous to that Ballyhalbert had had a football pitch at that area and they were promised a new pitch after the school was built. He reported that there were no sports or recreation facilities in the village and this was an opportunity to address that.

He pointed out that the population in Ballyhalbert had quadrupled in recent years with no increase in facilities to match that growth and at times Ballyhalbert felt like the forgotten village. He called on the Council to work together with the Education Authority and the school to see what could be done for the shared space beside the primary school.

He thought that some Members had been confused the last time this had been discussed this matter believing that he was asking for a play facility but this was rather a call for a sports and recreation facility and he asked for Members to give it their support and show the people of Ballyhalbert that they mattered when it came to recreational facilities.

Councillor MacArthur reserved the right to speak at this point.

Councillor Boyle referred to the growth in population at that area and the village deserved everything that the Council could do for it and he looked forward to the report. He was concerned about the Education Authority aspect of it and the additional work that that would mean. There was certainly potential in that area in his view if people were able to come together to achieve something of value.

Alderman Irvine commended Councillor Adair and Edmund for bringing forward the Notice of Motion and believed that improvements in that area would benefit the whole community.

Councillor MacArthur was keen to support anything that promoted outdoor activity and engagement in sport. She hoped that the seeds of potential would be planted and finance could be sourced for the development of a recreational facility.

Councillor Adair thanked Members for their support and had had discussions with the MLA for the area, the school and parents and everyone was happy to assist in

bringing forward a longed-for recreation area for Ballyhalbert and much could be done by working together.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor MacArthur, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.**

### **22.1 Submitted by Alderman McIlveen and Councillor Kennedy**

That this Council notes that 2028 will mark the centenary of the internationally renowned Ards TT Races and tasks officers to prepare a report in relation to options on events to best commemorate this sporting anniversary and celebrate the area's rich motorsport heritage.

Proposed by Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Kennedy that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Alderman McIlveen began by stating that for those who were not aware, the Ards Tourist Trophy race was first run in 1928 and ran until 1936. It owed its origins to Harry Ferguson (inventor and industrialist) and his friend Wallace McLeod and that was thanks to Northern Ireland being the only part of the UK where the roads could be closed for motor racing.

It was Northern Ireland's premier tourist event and attracted crowds in excess of a quarter of a million people and according to some reports upwards of half a million people. Competitors would come from all over the world and included Sir Malcolm Campbell, then the world land speed record holder. Winning the TT was more important than Formula 1 at that time. Every major car manufacturer who wanted to prove its worth entered the TT, including Bugatti, Bentley and Mercedes-Benz. It was quite common to design race specific models to compete, such as the Aston-Martin Ulster.

The course was a 13-mile triangular circuit, starting from Dundonald to Ards, then Comber, and back to Dundonald. Initially races were of 30 laps for a total distance of 652 km (405 mi); from 1933 races were of 35 laps for a total distance of 760 km (470 mi). Each race could last up to six hours.

The start was at the Newtownards Road 1 1/2 miles from the then Dundonald village and 300m from the left-hand Quarry Corner (near to where Charles Hurst was currently). The track continued towards Newtownards up the Belfast Road to Cree's Corner at the top of Bradshaw's Brae and then downhill, winding around seven bends within just half a mile. The race then went under the railway bridge at the end of Church Street in Newtownards where it then passed the Town Hall at the end of Regent Street and continued into Conway Square and on down South Street. The course then continued towards Comber along its fastest sections with speeds in excess of 120 mph, passing the airport and going through a S-bend and over a level crossing into the town. There it made a 90-degree right hand turn around

McWhinney's butcher shop (where a plaque still commemorates the race) and followed along the Comber Road to Dundonald, where a hairpin (where the Elk Inn used to be) led it back to the start section at Quarry Corner.

The first Ulster TT was run as a sports car handicap and was won by Kaye Don in a Lea Francis. A car which was present again in Conway Square in Newtownards at the unveiling of the Ards TT memorial at the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first race in 2008.

In 1936 with the race run in torrential rain, a local driver Jack Chambers skidded at the Newtownards railway bridge while approaching the Strangford Arms in Newtownards, demolishing a lamp post and mowing down a crowd standing against the wall. Eight spectators were killed that day and many were injured. The race was never run again. There was old news footage of that race on YouTube if anyone wished to investigate that further. The Council had previously agreed to erect a plaque on Church Street – following a Motion tabled by his colleague Councillor Kennedy – to commemorate that tragic accident. It was disappointing that there was still no plaque erected despite the passing of several years.

To mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, there were a series of events over 5 days in June 2003, including 23 of the original cars which took part in the races driving three laps of the old course. The procession laps were led out by Lord Dunleath and again there was footage of that which was covered by the BBC at the time. At that time, there was also a gala evening held at the Great Hall in Stormont, driving test at Ballywalter House and hill climb events in Craiganlet.

Those races were still legendary in the racing fraternity and the many fans of vintage cars. When he was in discussions and developing his proposal for the hosting of the Circuit of Ireland Rally in the old Ards Borough Council, one of the main attractions for the organiser was the history of the TT races in the area. One of the reasons why the Council hosted a town centre stage was to recreate the feel of the old Ards TT.

He thought that Members should not underestimate the huge draw that an appropriate series of events would have on a tourism level. His personal view was that that should be in the hands of the Council's Regeneration and Development Department because it was of huge tourist potential which was also why he had submitted this with such a long run in. Prior to submitting the Motion, he had discussions with officers about how the Council could best commemorate this.

He was not proposing that the race be rerun and understand from the experts that that would cost a minimum of £10M to £20M. However, there were a range of things that the Council could do:

- An exhibition in the Ards Town Hall



- A vintage festival along the lines of the Goodwood Vintage Festival over a weekend – including vintage music, fashions, car shows etc
- A potential drive of the old route as occurred for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary
- A service to remember those who lost their lives at the event perhaps at the site of the 1936 tragedy

Costs for that could be scoped out in any potential report. It was estimated that planning for such an event could take up to 5 years. Goodwood Vintage Festival attracted over 210 000 visitors. An event held in the Borough, properly done, would be a hugely attractive proposition for tourism in the area.

He went on to say that motorsport enjoyed support in this Borough and beyond. He recalled the estimated 25,000 spectators who crammed into the streets of Newtownards for the Circuit of Ireland event in 2014, the popularity of the Holywood Hill Climb, the vintage car rallies in the area and, not forgetting, the many events held at Kirkistown racetrack.

He recognised that this was an ambitious proposal and would leave it to officers to scope out the costs as well as source potential funding streams. He encouraged Members to back the Motion.

Councillor Kennedy thought that there was no need to go in to further detail and that he believed this was an uncontroversial Motion. He thanked Alderman McIlveen for bringing the Motion to his attention and due to time constraints now was the right time to bring it forward. He remarked that these races were held in an incredibly interesting time in our local history and heritage and thought that the Borough did not do enough to maximise and market its heritage. This had been a significant event when had drawn hundreds of thousands of people and was one of the top races in the world and it was incumbent upon the Council to take whatever measures necessary to celebrate that. He had done a bit of work on that and saw how the golden jubilee was celebrated, with racing circuits, receptions in City Hall, Belfast, it had been very significant and the one hundredth anniversary should be more so. One thing had jumped out at him and it was Harry Fergus and McLeod who had gone to Brooklands race in Surrey and were so impressed and the desire of the drivers to drive off road that within the year they had the first race organised stating above all things lets keep off limiting ourselves to possibilities.

Councillor Boyle agreed wholeheartedly supporting and thanked the Members for bringing forward their Motion in a timely manner. He agreed that it was an event that had massive potential as a tourism product and that there was a lot to sell. He hoped that everyone would get behind the Motion and not let it slip.

Alderman Irvine, Councillor Moore and Councillor MacArthur were in agreement and spoke of their support for the Motion noting that motor sports were very popular in Northern Ireland and hoped it would spark interest with a new generation and hoped

a working group could be set up which could work with Tourism NI to promote the event and the Borough.

Alderman McIlveen thanked Members for their supportive comments and thanked one of his constituents who had brought this to his attention and the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning along with the Director of Community and Wellbeing for the support they had shown to what could be potentially the jewel in the crown for the Borough.

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

### **23. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

There were no items of Any Other Notified Business.

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

**AGREED, on the proposal of Chambers, seconded by Councillor Boyle, that the public/press be excluded from the meeting.**

### **24. CONTRACT EXTENSION FOR HOME SAFETY CHECK SCHEME IT SOLUTION**

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

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

**SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

### **25. PCSP PRIVATE MINUTES 7TH MARCH 2022 (Appendix 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)**

### **26. LEISURE INSOURCING UPDATE**

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

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

**SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

**27. WARD PARK UPDATE**

(Appendix XVII - IXX)

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

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

**SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

**28. GREENWAYS NETWORK UPDATE**

(Appendices XX – XXII)

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

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

**SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

**29. WHITESPOTS UPDATE**

(Appendix XXIII)

**\*\*\*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)**

**30. SINGLE TENDER ACTION FOR WILLOW BURNERS**

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

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

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

**TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 10.28 pm.



**From:** Murray, Andrew <[Andrew.Murray@nihe.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.Murray@nihe.gov.uk)>

**Sent:** 19 May 2022 11:49

**Subject:** Public Consultation – The Housing Executive’s Affirmative Action Plan.

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Consultee,

## **Public Consultation – The Housing Executive’s Affirmative Action Plan.**

Following the presentation of the Affirmative Action Plan to the Housing Executive’s Consultative Forum on Equality (and subject to purdah during the election campaign), we agreed to circulate the plan for a 12 week public consultation. This plan is a “living document” which is responsive to change and it seeks to work towards making the Housing Executive’s workforce more reflective of the community we serve.

A summarised version of the plan is attached and we are interested in hearing your views on the proposals and, in particular, the following areas:

- the overall plan
- the evidence of diversity, needs and underrepresentation presented
- the proposed action measures to address these issues.

A full version of the Affirmative Action Plan is available on request. If you have any questions; you would like to meet to discuss the plan or any associated issues, or if you would like to request any of the documentation in an alternative format, please contact the Equality Unit at [tony.steed@nihe.gov.uk](mailto:tony.steed@nihe.gov.uk) .

The closure date for responses to this formal consultation is 19<sup>th</sup> August 2022 however I would remind you that this is a living document and you will have the opportunity to raise issues that arise or that are important to you after this date for consideration.

Regards

Andrew Murray  
On behalf of Tony Steed

Equality Unit

# **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

A workforce reflective of the community we serve

David Moore

Director of Corporate Services

**Consultative Forum**

**30 March 2022**

# Introduction

## Purpose for today

- To provide a high level summary of the detailed strategy and affirmative action plan which will be submitted for formal approval over the coming weeks.
- To commence consultation with key stakeholders.

## Why have a strategy and affirmative action plan?

- We need to harness the benefits that come from a diverse and inclusive workforce
- Ensure that we attract and retain all available talent.
- Both our Corporate Plan and People Strategy set the objective to have a workforce which is representative of our community.

## Objective 2: People Strategy

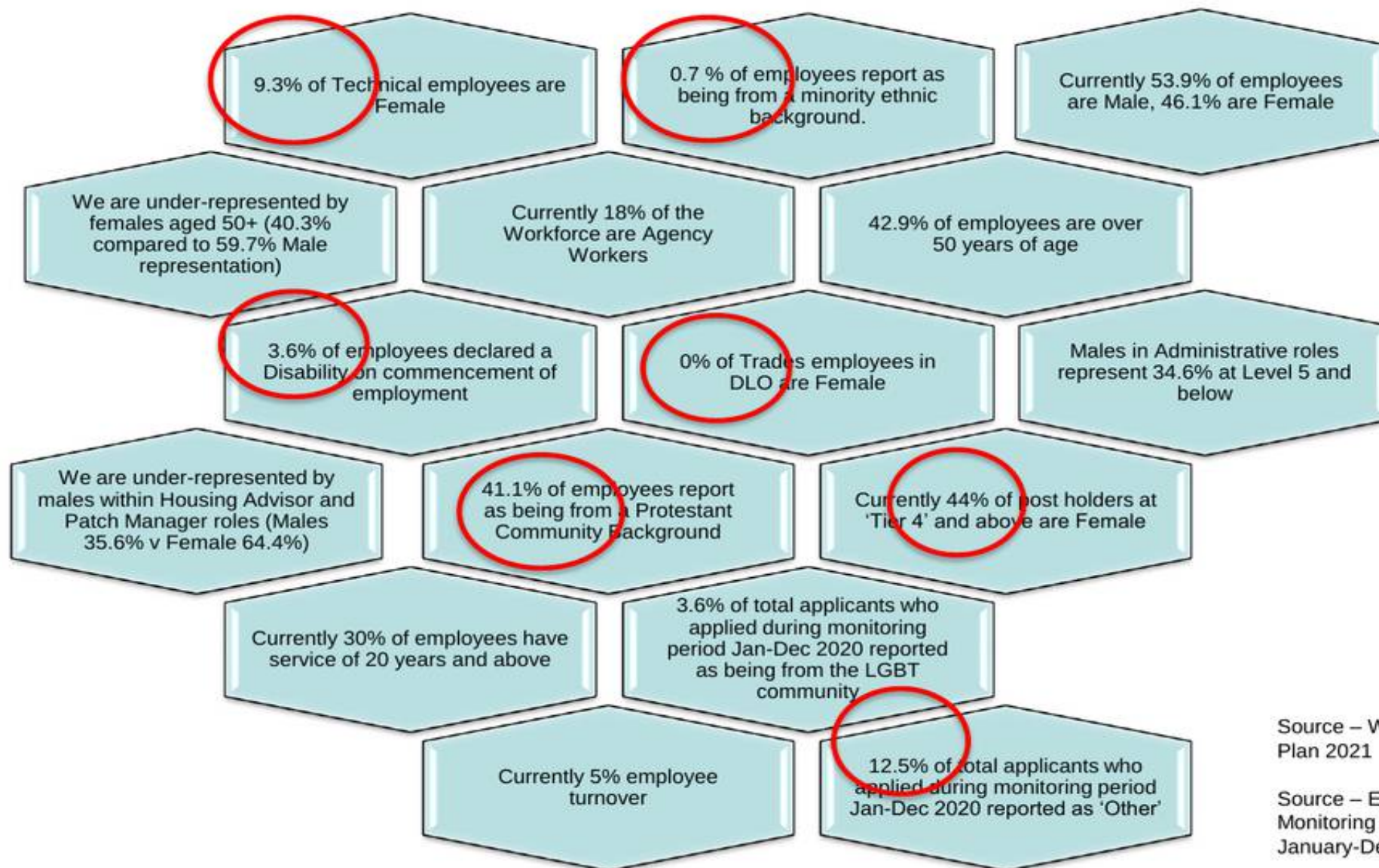
- “We will ensure a highly valued, engaged, performance and customer orientated workforce, **which is representative of our community**, and an **environment of dignity and respect** and health and well-being, where all employees are enabled to reach their potential and be recognised for their individual contributions”.
- Legislative Requirements – e.g. Fair Employment and Treatment (Northern Ireland Order) 1998 (FETO) – affirmative action measures.
- We are currently under-represented in a number of areas and as such we need to develop proactive affirmative action measures/positive action steps.



# Where are we now?

# Where are we now?

## Some key NIHE statistics



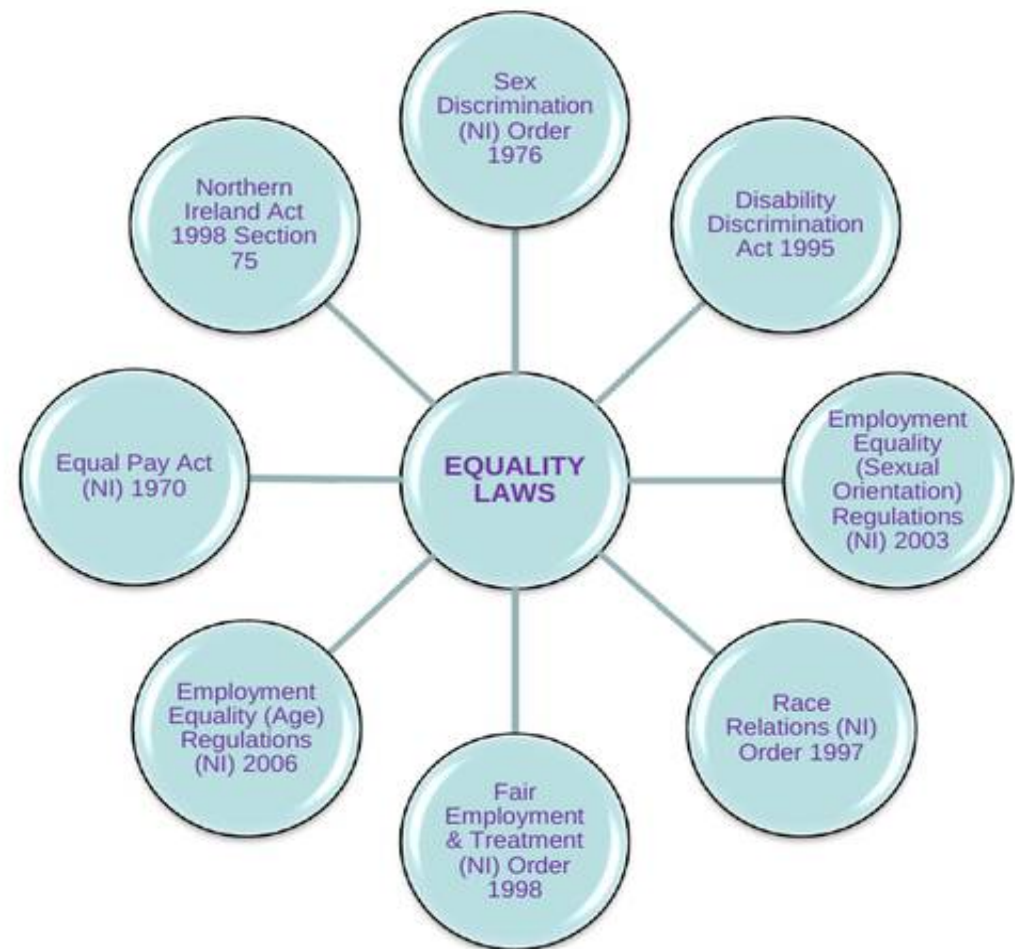
Source – Workforce Plan 2021

Source – EO 2020 Monitoring Data January-December

# Where are we now?

## Legislative Context

- Some of the core equality legislation applicable in Northern Ireland.
- This list is not exhaustive and does not detail a number of important amendments.
- In addition, there are specific duties regarding affirmative action measures associated with FETO and there are a number of Codes of Practice which NIHE is required to follow.





# Where are we now?

## Changing Demographics – Community Background

### • Economically Active Persons 16-74 years:-

- Protestant – 49.3% [52.4%]
- Roman Catholic – 47.6% [47.6%]
- Other – 6.0%

2011 NI Census



### • Economically Active Working Age:-

- Protestant – [47.0%]
- Roman Catholic – [53.0%]

2017 NI Labour Force Survey



### • Monitored Public Sector Workforce: -

- Protestant – [50.2%]
  - Roman Catholic – [49.8%]
- ### • Monitored Public Sector Applicants -
- Protestant – [48.8%]
  - Roman Catholic – [51.2%]

2019 Equality Commission NI 30<sup>th</sup> Monitoring Report



### • NICS Workforce Monitored Composition 2019:-

- Protestant – [50.8%]
- Roman Catholic – [49.2%]

Northern Ireland Civil Service



### • NIHE Workforce Monitored Composition 2021:-

- Protestant – 41.1% [43.2%]
- Roman Catholic - 54.1% [56.9%]
- Other – 4.8%

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

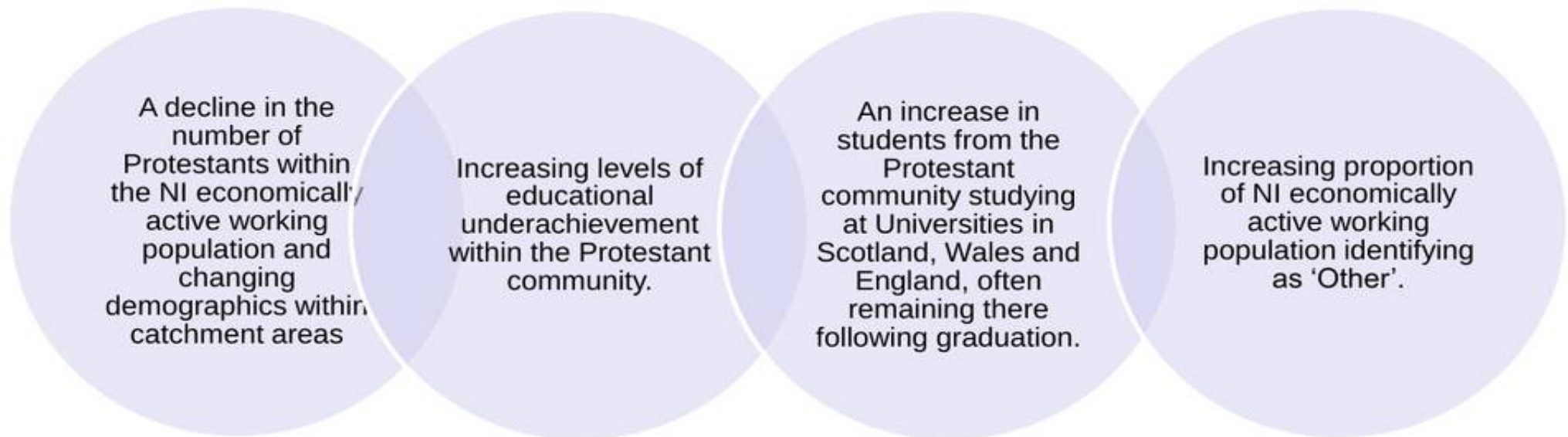


[%] percentage of P & RC only  
i.e. others removed



## Where are we now?

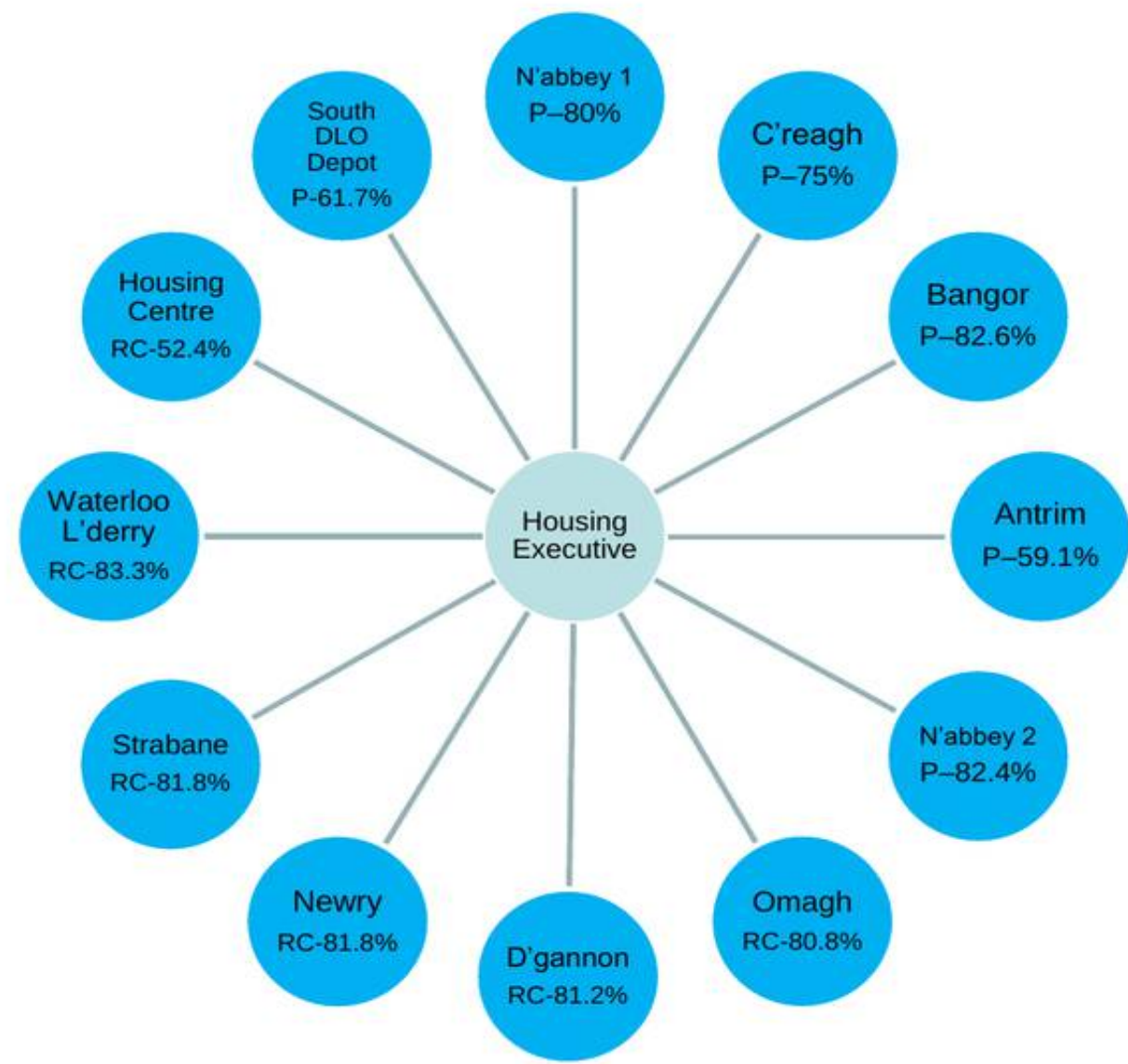
### Some External issues regarding Community Background



Source References – Appendix 1

# Where are we now?

## Community Background Trends in NIHE – impact of location

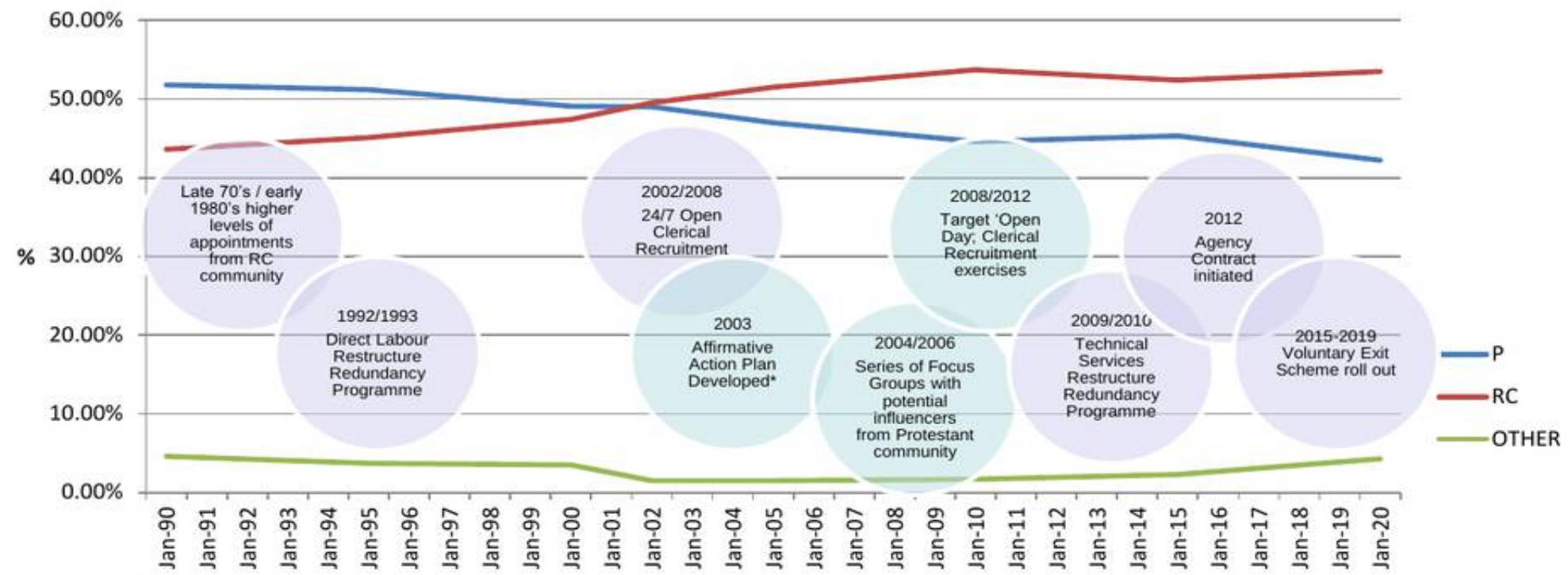


Source: Article 55 Review  
P – Protestant  
RC – Roman Catholic

# Where are we now?

## Some Internal issues regarding Community Background

Northern Ireland Housing Executive Community Background Workforce Profile 1990-2020



	Jan-90	Jan-95	Jan-00	Jan-02	Jan-05	Jan-10	Jan-15	Jan-20
P	51.80%	51.20%	49.10%	49.00%	47.00%	44.60%	45.30%	42.20%
RC	43.60%	45.10%	47.40%	49.50%	51.50%	53.70%	52.40%	53.50%
OTHER	4.60%	3.70%	3.50%	1.50%	1.50%	1.70%	2.30%	4.30%

Year

■ Positive Actions     
 ■ Negative Actions

Source: Equality Monitoring Team  
Source References - Appendix 2



## Where are we now?

### Applicant & Success Rates 2015 -2020 - Community Background

**Externally advertised posts 2015-2020 (includes duplicate External applicants and NIHE Agency Workers)**

**Internally advertised posts 2015-2020 (includes duplicate Internal applicants and NIHE Agency Workers)**

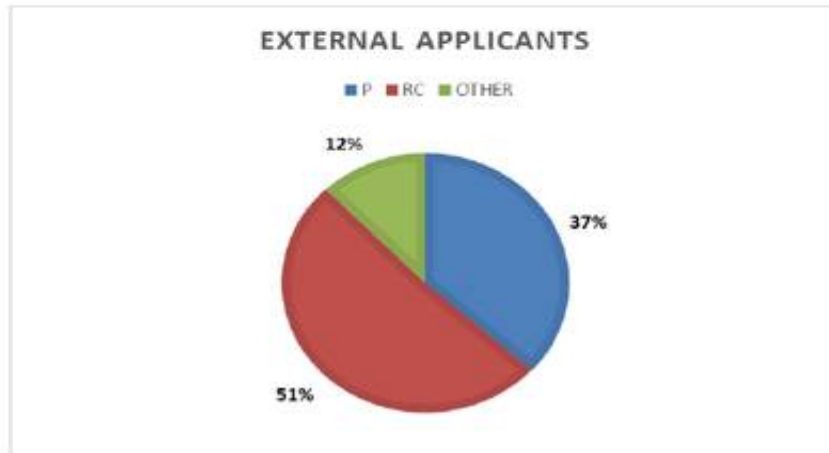


Chart:6

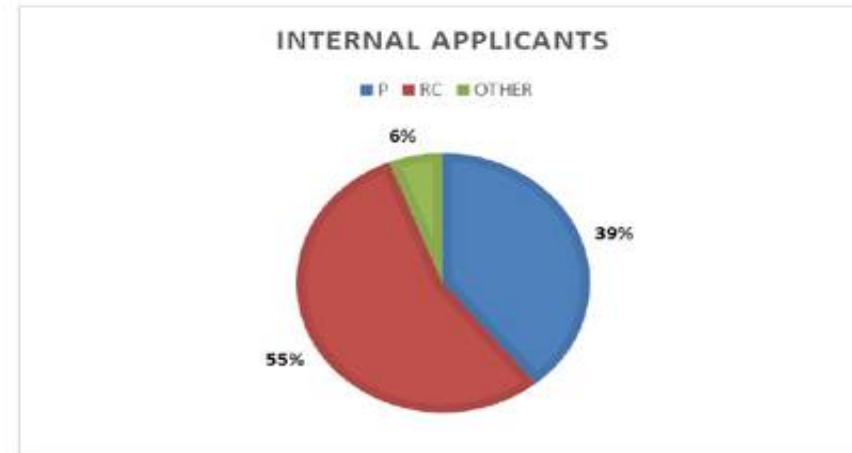


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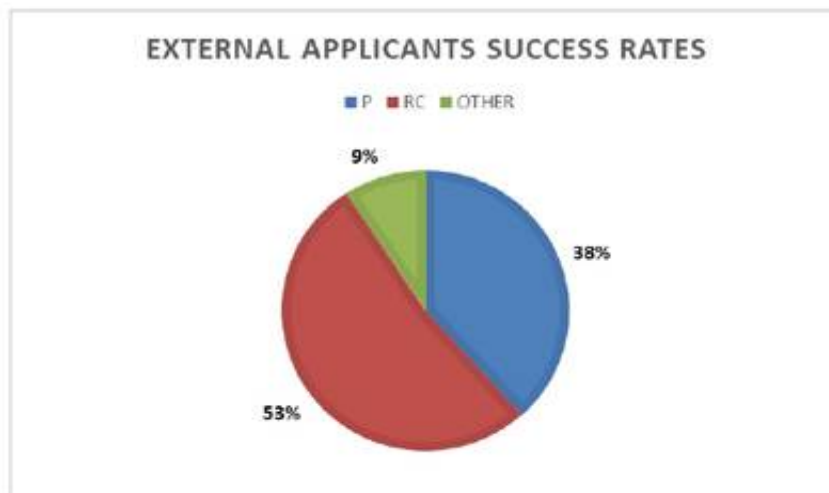


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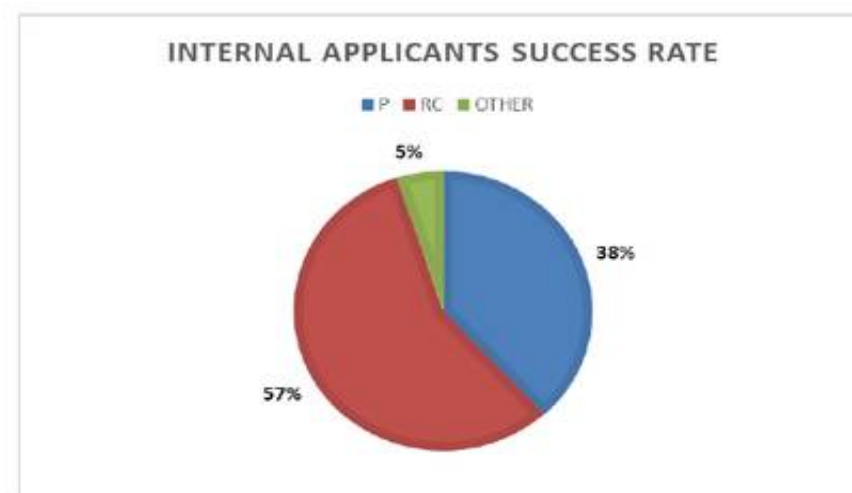


Chart:9



# Where are we now?

## Summary of key points

- Affirmative/positive action measures align with our core values.
- NIHE has areas of under-representation most notably:
  - Protestants represent 41.4 % of workforce.
  - Females in Technical roles represent 9.3% and 0% in Craft roles in DLO.
  - Males in Administrative roles represent 34.6% at Level 5 and below.
  - Ethnic Minorities represent 0.7% of the workforce (versus 1.8% population)
- Protestant representation in NIHE has declined over the last 30 years.
  - Leavers – higher ratio of Protestant leavers due to retirement over a sustained period - legacy from NIHE formation, impact of transfer of former council employees.
  - New starts – lower numbers of Protestants reflective of lower applicant rates.
  - Low staff turnover rates 5%. 30% of employees have service of 20 years or more.
  - Changing demographics in NI – declining Protestant population and increase in 'Other'.
- Key current issue - applicant rate **not** appointment rate.

# Where are we now?

## Summary of key points

- Overall male / female composition of NIHE is 53.9% and 46.1% respectively (includes DLO employees)
  - Excluding DLO and Technical roles, females account for – 58.9% of our workforce.
  - Currently 63.9% of all females employees are less than 50 years of age compared with 54.9% of male employees.
- Females in Leadership positions – 44 % of post holders at 'Tier 4' and above are female.
- Ageing workforce – 42.9% aged 50 years and above; 22.4% aged 35 years and below. Compared to economically active labour market figures - 31% aged 50 and above, 34.3% aged 35 years and below.
- Need to refresh internal statistics and better understand issues regarding disability, sexual orientation and minority ethnic background.
- Need to ensure that the working environment embraces diversity and is inclusive.
- There are opportunities to address workforce composition through for example:
  - Large scale recruitment activity required
  - Reduce reliance on Agency Workers.
  - Use of apprenticeships and Jobstart schemes.
  - Focused outreach activity, with an enhanced team.
  - Employer Branding, promotion of an employer of choice
  - Learning from others and our previous experience.

# Where would we like to be?

Dream statements .....

**A workforce reflective of our diverse community**

**An employer of choice for all sections of the community**

**An effective advertising and outreach programme – that produces applicant rates reflective of the community.**

**A highly valued, engaged and flexible workforce, consistently demonstrating our values in an environment of dignity and respect.**

**An example of best practice in equality, diversity and inclusion**

**Organisational stability without an over reliance on temporary arrangements**



# How will we get there?



## How will we get there?

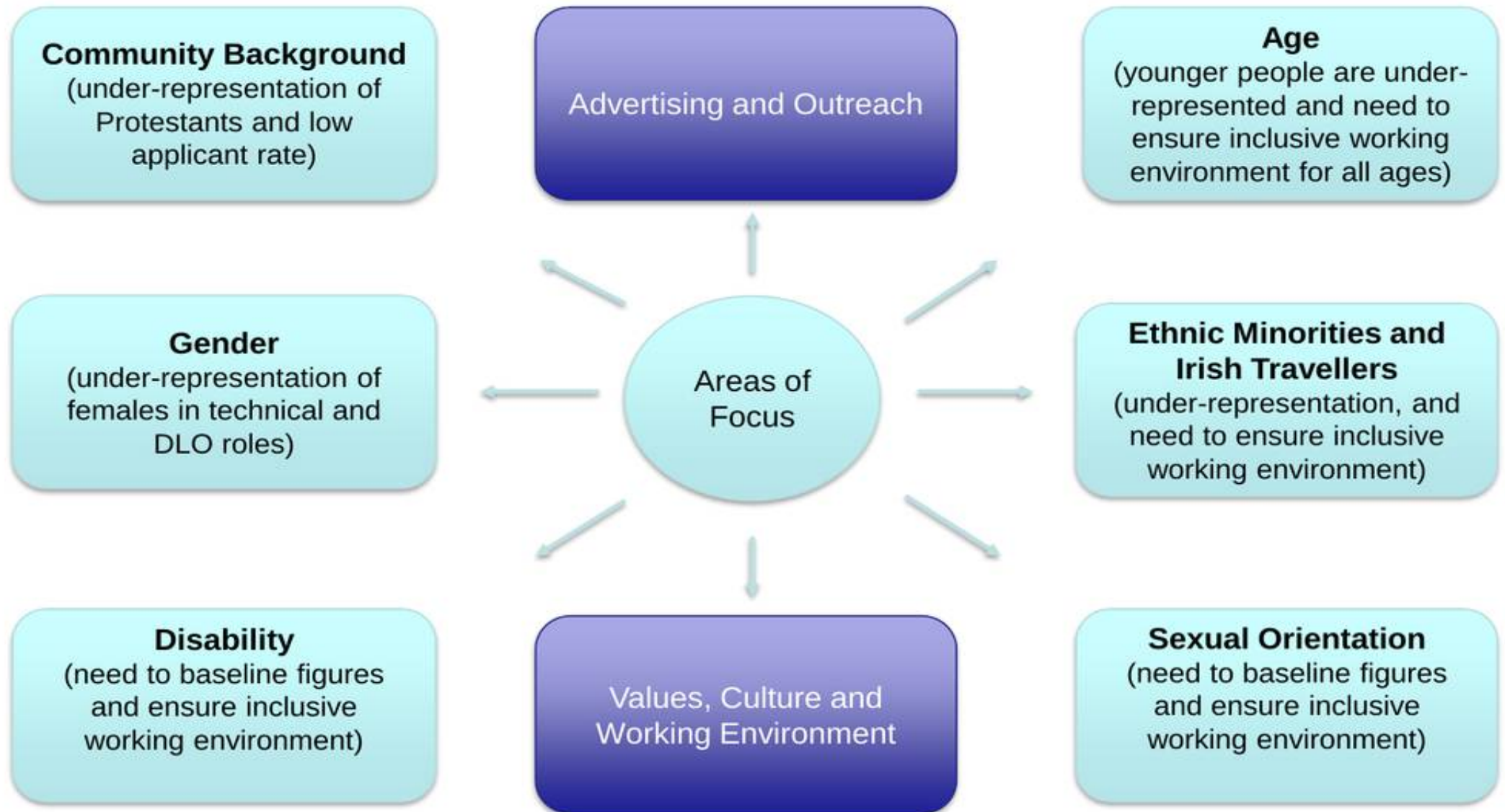
To be successful we need to:

1. Recognise and highlight issues and areas of concern.
2. Seek to understand why these issues may exist.
3. Improve organisational awareness and gain commitment to effect change.
4. Detail specific actions in order to address areas of under-representation and to ensure a culture of committed to diversity and inclusion.

A detailed action plan has been developed and will be subject to on-going review and amendment as required. Common themes across the areas include:

- **Advertising and Outreach**
- **Researching barriers or 'chill factors'**
- **Ensuring meaningful engagement with stakeholders (internal and external)**
- **Initiating and supporting programmes to overcome barriers e.g. new work and training programmes**
- **Considering and Implementing any other specific interventions e.g. new policies**
- **Monitoring and Reviewing the impact of the affirmative action measures.**

# High Level Summary of Issues and Actions





## General actions

### Values, Culture and Working Environment (Examples of Actions)

- Establish a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team.
- Establish a new organisational EDI steering group, with dedicated work streams, networks and engagement with equality groups.
- Develop a competency framework to support the required values & behaviours to help embed EDI.
- Ensure a rolling programme of EDI training and incorporate EDI into leadership development and personal skills courses.
- Identify and develop partnerships with external organisations to ensure organisational learning.
- Monitor Dignity at Work cases and seek feedback at induction and exit interviews.
- Review and 'equality proof' our working environment.
- Improve organisational messaging on EDI maximising opportunities e.g. International Women's Day, Pride etc.
- Review our Equal Opportunities Policy.

### Advertising and Outreach (Examples of Actions)

- Conduct an employer branding exercise to inform advertising and outreach activities.
- Develop outreach plan in consultation with stakeholders to help remove negative perceptions and promote NIHE as employer of choice.
- Review recruitment and advertising activity & ensure EDI is embedded e.g. candidate packs, website etc. Tailor welcoming messages e.g. DLO.
- Monitor/review success of advertising mediums and amend accordingly.
- Review educational qualifications and experience requirements for all roles – justifiable/role related.
- Ensure SIP's in place for all posts – this includes consideration of affirmative action measures etc.
- Ensure that all selection tests are 'reliable and valid', no adverse impacts/ reasonable adjustments/ positive duties.
- Set targets and monitor progress.



# Community Background

## Key issues

- Steady decline in Protestant representation in the Workforce
- Currently under represented at 41.4%
- Current applicant rate circa 37%

## Examples of Actions

- Engage with the Protestant community and conduct research to understand possible 'chill factors'.
- Conduct further internal analysis to understand possible reasons for Protestant under-representation e.g. analysis of the impact of location of offices and inter-generational employment.
- Advertise all posts externally with minimum exceptions, ensure posts are widely advertised using a variety of mediums, use periodic targeted advertising in high footfall areas e.g. shopping centres.
- Reduce reliance on agency workers and ensure compliance re Affirmative Action measures.
- Raise the profile of NIHE with the Protestant Community as an employer of choice.
- Develop an outreach programme with an enhanced HR team and senior HR lead. Examples include school/college 'twinning' and connecting with youth organisations etc.
- Review language on welcoming statements and EDI messaging.
- Ensure organisational awareness, gain commitment and consider ways to enhance messaging regarding a good and harmonious working environment.
- Deliver workshops with the Board, Executive Team and Leadership Network to discuss the Affirmative Action Plan with an initial focus on Protestant under-representation.
- Review entry level qualifications/options for entry level recruitment in some core areas and consider the possibility of specific training interventions (in line with Articles 72 and 76 of FETO).



## Gender (Transgender and Transitioning Actions are included under Sexual Orientation)

### Key issues

- Under representation of females in technical roles (9.3%) and DLO (0%)
- Under-representation of males in certain roles e.g. admin roles, Housing Advisors and Patch Managers

### Examples of Actions

- Develop links between schools/colleges/universities and Asset Management (includes DLO) enabling regular engagement with Careers Department to highlight non-traditional career options.
- Further develop links with organisations such as WomensTec to develop pathways for increased female participation in DLO and technical roles – promote work experience opportunities etc.
- Tailor and target advertising and recruitment activity as appropriate e.g. high female footfall areas and utilise 'Come and Try' Days etc.
- Maximise opportunities presented from key events e.g. International Women's Day.
- Ensure HR policies provide maximum flexibility to enable continued career development and support employees e.g. menopause, prostrate and breast cancer awareness, carer support etc.
- Together with Facilities, identify and address any physical 'chill factors', 'barriers' for females e.g. uniforms, toilet facilities etc.
- Establish specific targets for female/male participation in under-represented roles e.g. in 15% of applications for Technical, and 10% of applications for DLO trades roles.
- Ensure representatives from key areas e.g. DLO are included in equality forum work streams.
- Continue to promote women in leadership programmes e.g. Chief Executive Forum.



# Ethnic Minorities and Irish Travellers (Race)

## Key issues

- Under representation 0.7% vs 1.8%
- Need to ensure that our working environment and working practices support diversity and inclusion.

## Examples of Actions

- Promote job vacancies to representatives of ethnic minority groups and the Irish Traveller Community, and maximise other advertising opportunities such as through our tenant magazine
- Maximise opportunities from events such as the Mela to promote NIHE as an employer of choice.
- Review the Equality and Human Rights Commission report (2017) to understand specific barriers and any impact this may on our resourcing practice
- Engage with employees and external stakeholders from ethnic minority communities and the Irish Traveller Community to identify possible barriers to recruitment and actions that may encourage increased applications.
- Engage with Business in the Community and explore options to participate in Race at Work initiatives e.g. placement opportunities.
- Through engagement with ethnic minorities and the Irish Traveller Community, seek to understand specific employment needs and seek to address these within NIHE and ensure that our HR policies actively consider and address the needs of ethnic minority and Irish Traveller employees and applicants.
- Conduct a review of our Race Relations Policy.
- Promote a culture of racial inclusivity within the workplace through EDI training and maximise opportunities to promote diversity that come from key events e.g. Ramadan, Diwali, Black History' month etc.



# Disability

## Key Issues

- 3.6% of NIHE employees declared a Disability on commencement of employment
- 20.6% of NI population reports having a Disability
- Need to refresh baseline data
- Ensure working practices and environment support diversity and inclusion.

## Examples of Actions

- Introduce a process to refresh/determine the current number of employees with a disability and regularly review this (note the importance of acquired disability in this regard).
- Promote job vacancies with organisations such as Employers for Disability NI, continually review entrance requirements and proactively encourage participation of disabled people in public life.
- Work towards the achievement of new disability employment standards (under development by DfC similar to UK Disability Confident Standard).
- Engage with disabled employees and external stakeholders to identify possible barriers to recruitment and actions that may encourage increased applications.
- Engage with Autism NI and other similar organisations to understand and implement actions that encourage applications and facilitate employment for neuro divergent candidates.
- Maximise opportunities such as JobStart and work with external organisations such as USEL, Action Mental Health and Orchardville to support programmes and placement opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Develop a new Reasonable Adjustment Policy and work with internal and external stakeholders (e.g. RNIB and Action Mental Health) to ensure that our HR policies actively consider and address the needs of disabled employees and applicants.
- Maximise the opportunities that come from the implementation of the Disability Action Plan and facilitate engagement between disabled employees and the Facilities team to understand and address any issues with NIHE premises.



# Sexual Orientation (LGBTQ+)

## Key Issues

- Need to refresh baseline data
- Ensure working practices and environment support diversity and inclusion.

## Examples of Actions

- Engage with LGBTQ+ employees and develop links with external organisations (e.g. Rainbow Project, Cara Friend and Stonewall) to identify possible chill factors, opportunities to promote employment, and examples of successful outreach initiatives which may be applied by NIHE.
- Maximise opportunities from events such as PRIDE to promote NIHE as an employer of choice.
- Ensure candidate packs etc. communicate that NIHE is an inclusive organisation which welcomes and promotes diversity in our workforce.
- Through engagement with the LGBTQ+ community seek to understand specific employment challenges, how NIHE can better promote inclusivity in the workplace, and how HR policies can actively consider and address the needs of LGBTQ+ employees and applicants.
- Review the 'Government Equalities Office, LGBTQ+ Action Plan 2018' to further understand issues faced by the LGBTQ+ community.
- Develop and introduce a 'transitioning at work' policy for those undergoing gender reassignment.
- Engage with the Facilitates team to ensure that our premises are appropriate with respect to gender e.g. consideration of gender neutral toilet facilities/changing facilities.
- Introduce a process to refresh/determine the current number of LGBTQ+ employees and regularly review this.



# Age

## Key Issues

- Younger people are under-represented
- 42.9% of NIHE employees are over 50 years of age (versus 34.3%)
- 22.4% of NIHE employees are aged 35 or below (versus 34.3%)
- Need to ensure an inclusive workplace for all ages

## Examples of Actions

- Engage with younger employees and external organisations e.g. N. Ireland Youth Forum to understand how we can encourage applications from younger people.
- Ensure that job vacancies are advertised on relevant platforms, forums and events (e.g. Connect to Success NI, Skills NI) and ensure regular engagement with schools, colleges and universities.
- Pilot options to encourage applications through funding of learning and development opportunities.
- Work with key stakeholders to promote opportunities for those not in employment, education, or training (NEET) e.g. Jobstart.
- Develop the learning academy, introduce new apprenticeship programmes and develop options for entry level recruitment in a number of core areas.
- Ensure an understanding of the 'five generations' in the workplace' and tailor HR policies & practice and learning and development interventions accordingly.
- Develop an age inclusive plan for the workplace in consultation with Business in the Community and work with organisations such as 50+ (previously Fuller Lives) to develop appropriate interventions e.g. 'Mid Life Support plans.
- Ensure Health and Wellbeing policies support employees as they progress through life's stages.
- Develop skills/knowledge sharing opportunities e.g. through internal mentoring and work shadowing programmes to enable transfer from older employees to younger employees and vice versa.

## Additional Comments and Next Steps

- While the affirmative action strategy and plan outlines a number of specific issues and actions, these cannot be considered in isolation.
- There are a number of related areas of work which are on-going or will be progressed.
- HR will ensure an integrated approach e.g.
  - Health and Well-being
  - Workforce Planning
  - Pay and Grading
  - Talent Management and Succession Planning
  - Reward and Recognition
  - Learning and Development
  - Resourcing
  - Employee Engagement

### Next Steps

- Continue engagement with key stakeholders (internal and external) as per actions in the strategy.
- Continue to review and amend the action plans as appropriate.

Unclassified

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## Item 11

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	[Council
Date of Meeting	29 June 2022
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	20 June 2022
File Reference	CX210
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Appointments to Sub-Committee, Working Groups and Outside Bodies
Attachments	Appendix 1 - List of Sub-Committees, Working Groups or Outside Bodies for Nomination

At the Council's Annual Meeting on 22 May 2019, appointments were made to Sub-Committees, Working Groups and Outside Bodies by way of nomination. Some of those appointments were for a one-year term only. These one-year appointments are outlined in the tables attached in appendix 1, including any further changes to the composition of the groups since then.

Nominations are now sought to fill the one-year appointments, and vacancies arising on three of the four-year appointments, as outlined in Appendix 1 for the year 2022/23. All vacancies are highlighted in red text.

Note that one of the groups to which one-year appointments were made at the Annual Meeting in 2020 is no longer meeting and has been removed from the table in the appendix. This is:

- 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Northern Ireland

## RECOMMENDATION

Unclassified

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It is recommended that Council proceeds to appoint Members to the Sub-Committees, Working Groups and Outside Bodies listed in Appendix 1 by way of nomination.



**APPENDIX 1 - LIST OF SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS OR OUTSIDE BODIES FOR NOMINATION****CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE****Body: Fair Trade Working Group – 4 Places (4 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2019/23</b>
<b>1</b>	Alderman Gibson
<b>2</b>	Alderman Keery
<b>3</b>	Councillor Egan
<b>4</b>	Vacant

**Body: Diversity Champions – 2 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Councillor T Smith
<b>2</b>	Councillor Blaney
<b>3</b>	Councillor Egan

**Body: Veterans Champion – 1 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Councillor Cummings

**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE****Body: Car Parking Strategy Working Group – 11 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Alderman Carson
<b>2</b>	Councillor Smart
<b>3</b>	Alderman Gibson
<b>4</b>	Councillor Thompson
<b>5</b>	Councillor Edmund
<b>6</b>	Alderman McIlveen
<b>7</b>	Alderman Girvan
<b>8</b>	Councillor Douglas
<b>9</b>	Alderman Wilson
<b>10</b>	Councillor Dunlop
<b>11</b>	<b>Alderman Menagh</b>

**REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE****Body: Bangor Coastal Masterplan – Leadership Group – 10 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Councillor Gilmour
<b>2</b>	Alderman Irvine
<b>3</b>	Councillor Cathcart
<b>4</b>	Councillor Blaney
<b>5</b>	Councillor McClean
<b>6</b>	Councillor McKimm
<b>7</b>	Councillor Dunlop
<b>8</b>	Councillor Douglas
<b>9</b>	Alderman Wilson
<b>10</b>	<b>Councillor Egan</b>

**Body: Visit Belfast – 2 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Councillor Adair
<b>2</b>	Councillor Greer

**COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE****Body: Arts and Heritage Advisory Panel – 5 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Alderman Gibson
<b>2</b>	Councillor Kennedy
<b>3</b>	Councillor Smart
<b>4</b>	Councillor McKimm
<b>5</b>	Councillor Douglas

**Body: Mental Health Champions – 2 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Councillor Thompson
<b>2</b>	Councillor Smart

**Body: Billiard Room Trustees – 7 Places (1 Year Appointment) (Newtownards Town DEA Members)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Councillor Armstrong-Cotter
<b>2</b>	Councillor Kennedy
<b>3</b>	Councillor Mathison
<b>4</b>	Alderman McDowell
<b>5</b>	Alderman McIlveen
<b>6</b>	Councillor Irvine
<b>7</b>	Councillor Smart

**Body: Community Development Grants Working Group – 5 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Councillor Thompson
<b>2</b>	Councillor Cathcart
<b>3</b>	Councillor Smart
<b>4</b>	Councillor Douglas
<b>5</b>	Councillor Kendall (Replaced August 21)

**Body: Age Champions – 3 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Councillor McAlpine
<b>2</b>	Councillor Thompson
<b>3</b>	Councillor MacArthur

**Body: Sports Forum – 6 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Councillor Chambers
<b>2</b>	Councillor Smart
<b>3</b>	Alderman Irvine
<b>4</b>	Councillor McRandal
<b>5</b>	Councillor Thompson
<b>6</b>	<b>Alderman Menagh</b>

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

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Alderman Gibson
<b>2</b>	Councillor Thompson



3	Alderman Carson
4	Councillor McClean
5	Councillor McRandal
6	Councillor Douglas
7	Vacant

**Body: National Association of Councillors – 8 Places (4 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2019/23</b>
1	Alderman McDowell
2	Alderman Wilson
3	Councillor Boyle
4	Alderman Gibson
5	Councillor Thompson
6	Alderman Carson
7	Alderman Keery
8	Vacant

**Body: Northern Ireland Amenity Council – 2 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
1	Councillor Edmund
2	Councillor McRandal

**Body: Percy French Management Committee – 4 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
1	Councillor Walker
2	Councillor Douglas
3	Councillor Kennedy
4	Vacant

**Body: Bangor Alternatives Advisory Committee – 1 Place (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Alderman Irvine

**Body: Local Floods Forum – 1 Place (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Councillor Thompson

**Body: Portaferry Regeneration Ltd – 1 Place (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Councillor McAlpine

**Body: Northern Ireland Drainage Council – 2 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Alderman Gibson
<b>2</b>	Vacant

**Body: All Party Group on Climate Action – 2 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Councillor Thompson
<b>2</b>	Councillor Kendall (Replaced August 21)

**Body: Ards Community Hospital – Multi Agency Forum – 2 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Councillor Smart
<b>2</b>	Alderman Menagh

**Body: Local Government Partnership on Travellers Issues – 3 Places (4 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2019/23</b>
<b>1</b>	Councillor Boyle

2	Alderman Carson
3	Vacant

**Body: Youth Council Cross Party Working Group – 5 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
1	Councillor Thompson
2	Councillor Walker
3	Councillor McKee
4	Councillor Chambers
5	Councillor Egan

**Body: Community Advice Ards and North Down - 4 places (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
1	Councillor McKee
2	Councillor Walker
3	Councillor Blaney
4	Vacant

**Body: Somme Heritage Centre Management Committee - 3 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
1	Councillor Cummings
2	Councillor Thompson
3	Alderman Menagh

**Body: Community Resuscitation Group – 2 Places (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
1	Councillor Thompson
2	Councillor McKimm

**Body: Kilcooley Neighbourhood Partnership – 1 Place + 1 Substitute (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Councillor Gilmour
<b>Sub</b>	Councillor McKee

**Body: Bangor Aurora Joint Management Committee – 1 Place (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Councillor Gilmour

**Body: NI Strategic Migration Partnership Sustainable Communities and Demographics Working Group (hosted by NILGA) – 1 Place (1 Year Appointment)**

	<b>2021/22</b>
<b>1</b>	Councillor Greer



Unclassified

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**ITEM 12****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	29 June 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Organisational Development and Administration
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administration
Date of Report	15 June 2022
File Reference	LP37
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/>
Subject	Request to light up Council buildings for World Fragile X Day
Attachments	

**Requestor**

FRAXA Research Foundation

**Reason for request**

To mark World Fragile X Day

**Dates and colours**

Lighting up Ards Arts Centre / Ards Town Hall and McKee Clock teal on 22 July 2022.

**Background information**

Fragile X Syndrome is the most common known cause of inherited disability and the leading known single-gene cause of autism. It causes learning and physical disabilities, significant anxiety, ADHD, sensory processing disorder and other conditions.

FRAXA Research Foundation is a non-profit organisation including parents and relatives of people with Fragile X syndrome. They try to raise awareness of Fragile X syndrome in order to accelerate progress towards effective treatments and a possible cure.

Unclassified

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22 July 2022 is World Fragile X Day and FRAXA are working with organisations all over the world to raise awareness of this condition. Each light up is added to the World Fragile X Day map on their website: [www.worldfragilexday.com](http://www.worldfragilexday.com) after it is confirmed.

Does it meet policy requirements?

As this request does not meet the specific criteria set out in the policy (not based in or connected to the Borough), it requires the consideration and approval of the Council.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council considers the request to light up Council buildings teal on 22 July 2022 to mark World Fragile X Day.

Unclassified

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**ITEM 13****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	29 June 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Environment
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Assets and Property Services
Date of Report	13 June 2022
File Reference	77076
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/>
Subject	Tender for the Provision of a Suitable Electric Vehicle Management Contractor
Attachments	None

In December 2021 a report was brought updating Members on work the Council has undertaken as part of a wider NI Consortium on Electric vehicle charging.

Derry City and Strabane District Council is leading a Consortium of nine of the Councils in Northern Ireland to secure funding through ORCS (On-street Residential Charge Point Scheme) to procure, install, operate and maintain 124 EV Charge Points throughout NI. The ORCS scheme covers 75% of the capital costs with the remaining 25% costs being matched by Department for Infrastructure. The funding application is currently being assessed by OZEV (Office of Zero Emissions Vehicles) and a decision is expected in the next few weeks.

Ards and North Down Borough Council has submitted fifteen points across ten locations as part of this bid and is currently awaiting a response on this.

Derry City and Strabane District Council is now seeking to appoint a CPO (Charge Point Operator) to procure, install, operate and maintain the planned 124 charge points through a public procurement process within the Crown Commercial Services Framework: Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Solutions (ref No: RM6213). The tender process is expected to be completed by the autumn with an appointment of a CPO in late September or early October 2022.

Unclassified

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**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Council approves participation in the contract to be led by Derry City and Strabane District Council for a Charge Point Operator, as outlined in this report.



Unclassified

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**ITEM 16****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	29 June 2022
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	14 June 2022
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/>
Subject	Request for Deputation from U3A
Attachments	

A request to make a deputation has been received from Adam Harbinson of University of the Third Age (U3A), to inform Council of the activities it promotes and is engaged in for the benefit of the 'third agers' in Ards and North Down.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council agrees to the deputation request from U3A and refers this to the Community and Wellbeing Committee.

Unclassified

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**ITEM 16.1****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	29 June 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Environment
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regulatory Services
Date of Report	22 June 2022
File Reference	LR 100 / 90101
Legislation	The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (NI) Order 1985
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Grant of Indoor and Outdoor Entertainment Licences
Attachments	None

Applications have been received for the grant of an indoor and an outdoor entertainment licence for the:

**The Georgian House, 14 The Square, Comber**

**Applicant:** Mr James Mulholand, Elmwood Drive, Lisburn

**1. Indoor Entertainment**

**Type of entertainment:** Indoor dancing, singing and music or any other entertainment of a like kind.

**Days and Hours:** Monday to Sunday during the hours when intoxicating liquor may be sold or consumed on these premises under the Licensing Order (NI) 1996.

Unclassified

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## **2. Outdoor Entertainment**

To be provided in the outside courtyard and walled garden areas at various times in connection with organised events.

**Type of entertainment:** music

**Days and Hours:** Monday to Sunday 9am to 11pm

There have been no objections to this application and NIFRS, PSNI and Environmental Health are satisfied with the application and the premises.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Council grants the applications.

**ITEM 17****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	29 June 2022
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	15 June 2022
File Reference	CG 12172
Legislation	Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Subject	Notices of Motion
Attachments	Notices of Motion - Status Report

Please find attached a Status Report in respect of Notices of Motion.

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

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Council notes the report.



**NOTICE OF MOTIONS UPDATE – JUNE 2022**

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
31/05/15	Permanent recognition of Rory McIlroy in Holywood	Councillor Muir	24/06/15	Corporate Services Committee – October 2015	Agreed	June 2022	Update sought at Jan 22 Council – To be reported to CSC in June 2022
21/1/19	Shelter at slipway in Donaghadee	Councillor Brooks & Cllr Smith	Council – January 2019	Environment Committee	Agreed	TBC	
25/9/19	Report on feasibility of holding annual remembrance service for those lost to suicide	Councillor Martin	Council – October	Corporate Services – November 2019	Agreed	Reported to CSC January 2020. Further report to come back (September 2022).	

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
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16/01/20	Closing of a public right of way at Andrew Shorefield, Groomsport	Alderman Keery	Council – January 2020	Corporate Committee – February 2020	Agreed	Reported to CSC in March and October 2020. Further report to come back (September 2022).	
16/01/20	Installation of CCTV for Donaghadee with costings	Alderman Keery	Council – January 2020	Environment Committee – February 2020	Agreed	TBC	
27/2/20	Council opposes money spent on Irish Language Act.	Councillor Cooper	Council- June 2020	Corporate Committee – August 2020	Agreed	SoS reply reported to and noted by Nov 2020 CSC.	Letters sent to SoS and NICS Perm Sec. SoS reply reported to CSC. NICS Perm Sec reply awaited. Expected follow up needed to

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
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							Executive Office (TBC)
3/3/20	Management of Sand Dune Systems in Cloughy and Portavogie	Councillor Adair	Council – June 2020	Community and Wellbeing Committee – September 2020	Agreed	Report going to June 15th 2022 CWC	Coastal Erosion Forum meeting took place. Site meeting attended 8 April 2022
20.10.20	"I would like to task officers to produce a report to consider what could be a more environmentally friendly and benefit the wellbeing of the community for the use of the disused putting green on the Commons and play park at Hunts park in Donaghadee . Following the success of the Dog park in Bangor and the demand for a Dementia	Councillor Brooks	Council October 2020	Community & Wellbeing Committee – December 2020	Agreed	TBC	Officers to liaise with Regeneration and consideration of Masterplan and also take into account play strategy local consultation when it takes place in

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
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	garden, both should be considered as options in the report. The process should involve consultation with the local community."						Donaghadee and bring back a report thereafter.
19 April 2021	Flying of Union Flag on all Council buildings and war memorials all year round. Flags at half mast on death of any monarch or any other member of the Royal Family or Prime Minister of the UK for the period of mourning.	Councillor Cooper	Council April 2021	Corporate Committee – September 2021	NOM as amended agreed at March 2022 Council	TBC (awaiting EQIA)	EQIA to be carried out
10 May 2021	That officers are tasked to bring back a Report on how the Council might approach a Climate Change Action Plan and perhaps including - but not limited to - a review of all Council long-term investment, a Borough-wide engagement via an Innovation Lab, a	Councillors Walker & Egan	23 June 2021	Environment Committee – October 2021 (deferred from September Committee)	Agreed	TBC	



TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
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	Conference of Ideas, and values-based recommendations for next steps.						
20.10.2021	That officers bring back a report to consider the option of transferring responsibility for bins which are currently the responsibility of the Parks Section into the Environment Directorate.	Alderman McIlveen & Councillor Cathcart	Council November 2021	Community & Wellbeing December 2021	Agreed	Report to C&WC 13th April 2022	Further report to follow
3.11.2021	That this Council, in liaison with the Department for Infrastructure, will seek permission for and explore a source of funding in order to make an artistic feature of the steps which lead from Princetown Road to Queen's Parade at Bangor seafront as part of Bangor	Councillor Douglas & Alderman Wilson	Council November 2021	Regeneration & Development December 2021	Agreed	Update at Sept/Oct R&D	Consultation with Town Advisory Group currently taking place and outcome will be reported to

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
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	Town regeneration, and brings back a report to Council addressing how this can be achieved as a pilot for the Borough.						future meeting.
01.12.21	That this Council recognises the need for an additional park and ride to serve the Ards Peninsula and agrees to lobby Translink and the Department of Infrastructure to seriously consider this facility, which would further reduce vehicle movements within the Borough and assist our residents to continue to reduce the Borough's carbon footprint.	Councillor Thompson and Councillor Edmund	Council – December 2021	Corporate (deferred from January to February CSC)	Agreed	May 2022	Responses from DfI and Translink noted by May Committee (to be ratified by May Council)
31.12.21	Coastal and Storm Damage to Ballywalter Harbour,	Councillors Adair and Edmund	Council January 22	Environment February 2022	Agreed	TBC	Report to be brought back

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
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	repair costs and reinstatement costs						
10.1.22	Review of Old Minerals Permissions (ROMPs). For Department to implement, administer and deliver ROMPs	Councillors McKee and Kendal	Council January 22	Planning Committee February 22	Agreed	Response from Dfl Minister reported to May PC and recommendation to be adopted by June Council.	Further letter to be issued to Minister and Chief Planner, opposing the Department's approach, following June Council.
18.1.22	Refugees Sanctuary in the Borough	Councillors McKimm, Dunlop, Smart and Mathison	Council January 22	C&W February 22	Agreed	Report to 15 June 2022 C&WC	
19.1.22	Queen's Platinum Jubilee Funding	Councillor Cooper and Alderman Menagh	Council February 22	Corporate Committee – March 22	Agreed	TBC	Letters sent to NIO and Ministers. NIO have advised DCMS will reply. Response to



TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
							NOM noted at June CSC.
20.01.22	Stand4Trees and Tree Protection Orders	Councillors Kendall and McKee	Council February 22	Planning Committee – March 22	Agreed	Planning Committee Jul/Aug 2022	Awaiting legal advice to be brought back to Council
1.02.22	Park and Ride at Bangor Sportsplex	Councillor Chambers and Alderman Smith	Council February 22	Corporate Committee – March 22	Agreed	TBC	Letter sent to Translink. Reply rec'd Response to NOM noted at June CSC.
02.03.22	400 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kirkistown Castle	Councillors Adair and Edmund	Council – March 22	Community and Wellbeing Committee – April 22	Agreed (as amended)	Update Report to 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2022 C&WC	
09.03.22	Resurfacing Bridge Road South, Helen's Bay	Councillor Greer, Johnson, Kendall & McRandal	Council – March 22	Corporate Services Committee – April 22	Agreed	TBC	Letter issued. Reply rec'd and Response to NOM noted at June CSC.



TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
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09.03.22	Calls for Council responsibility for a devolved Regeneration Budget	Councillor Walker and Alderman McDowell	Council - March 22	Regeneration and Development Committee – April 22	Agreed	Update at Sept/Oct R&D	HOR to: 1. Draft letter to Minister; 2. Outline to RDC, a united engagement campaign with other Councils, SOLACE & NILGA, to secure Ministerial support.
23.03.22	Flood lighting and running track, Cloughey	Councillor Boyle and Alderman Carson	Council – March 22	Community and Wellbeing Committee – April 22	Agreed (as amended)	Report to 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2022 C&WC	
6.04.22	Community trails at Carrowood Carrowdore	Councillors Adair & Edmund	Council – April 2022	Community & Wellbeing Committee – May 22	Agreed (to be ratified by April Council)	Report to 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2022 C&WC	
12.04.22	Comber TT Soapbox Race	Councillor P Smith, Councillor	Council – April 2022	Corporate Committee May 2022	Amended (to be ratified by		Report to be brought back.

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
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		Cooper and Councillor Cummings			April Council)		Response to NOM noted at June CSC.
13.04.22	Environmental damage caused by modern day packaging	Councillors McRandal and Douglas	Council – April 2022	Environment Committee – June 2022	Agreed (to be ratified by June Council)		
14.04.22	Locking up schedule for Playparks	Alderman Irvine and Alderman Keery	Council – April 2022	Community & Wellbeing Committee May 2022	Agreed (to be ratified by April Council)	Report deferred following amendment to CWC recommendation at Mays Council Meeting report date TBC	
19.04.22	Light up our council buildings in green (the colour of the Samaritans)	Councillors Dunlop & McKimm	Council – April 2022	Corporate Committee May 2022	Agreed (to be ratified by April Council)		NOM 163 Final minute awaited.
10.05.22	Discussions with EA re redevelopment of the play area fronting Victoria	Councillors Adair and Edmund	Council – May 2022	Community and Wellbeing June 2022			

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
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	Primary School as a potential Peace Plus project for Ballywalter						
17.05.22	2028 Centenary of the internationally renowned Ards TT races. Asking Council how best to commemorate this important sporting anniversary.	Alderman McIlveen and Councillor Kennedy	Council – May 2022	Community and Wellbeing June 2022			
	RESCINDING MOTION Purchase of equipment by Council to support hybrid meetings for Bangor and Ards Chambers. To be in place onsite for 1 September 2022.	Alderman McDowell, Councillors Cummings T Smith, Greer McRandal Walker & McKee	Council – May 2022	Heard at Council Meeting May 2022	That all meetings take place onsite/hybrid from 1 September 2022 or as soon as possible after that date.		

**From:** DoF Census NISRA <[census@nisra.gov.uk](mailto:census@nisra.gov.uk)>  
**Sent:** 24 May 2022 09:36  
**Subject:** Census 2021 Outputs - Update - First results published

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

# census 2021

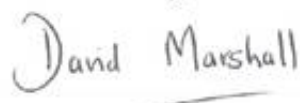
## Census 2021: First results published

The first results from Census 2021 were published today, 24 May 2022. The results are available on the [NISRA website](#). This first release consists of headline population statistics by age and sex, number of households with usual residents, and communal establishment population.

Other main Census 2021 statistics will be released in stages up to summer 2023. The Census 2021 [Outputs Prospectus](#) provides more information on the release schedule for Census 2021 outputs.

Further information on the Census will also be published online on the NISRA website at [www.nisra.gov.uk/Census2021](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/Census2021). If you have any queries please do not hesitate to email us at [census@nisra.gov.uk](mailto:census@nisra.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,



**Dr David Marshall**  
**Director of Census and Population Statistics**  
**Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency**







**CHAIR**  
**Councillor Anne-Marie Fitzgerald**

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## **JUNE HOUSING COUNCIL BULLETIN**

The Northern Ireland Housing Council met on Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at 10.00 am via Conference Call.

For Information, a report of the attendance is undernoted:-

### **Present by Video Conferencing**

Anne-Marie Fitzgerald	Fermanagh & Omagh District (Chair)
Jim Speers	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon Borough
Allan Bresland	Derry City & Strabane District
Tommy Nicholl	Mid & East Antrim Borough
Catherine Elattar	Mid Ulster Borough
Michael Ruane	Newry & Mourne District

### **Apologies**

Mark Cooper	Antrim & Newtownabbey Borough (Vice Chair)
Michelle Kelly	Belfast City
John Finlay	Causeway Coast & Glens Borough

Discussions on the undernoted matters took place as follows:-

### **Report from Grainia Long, Chief Executive, Housing Executive**

The Report provided the Housing Council with a monthly update summarising a range of strategic, major or routine matters, including any emerging issues. A summary of the current / emerging issues are outlined as follows:-

1. NIHE Revitalisation Programme - Progress Update
2. Finance - Budget Update 2022/23
3. Draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland
4. Services for Women experiencing Chronic Homelessness
5. Supporting People Funding 2022/23
6. Covid Funding
7. COVID-19 Update and Return to the Workplace
8. NIHE Pay and Grading Review
9. Industrial Action
10. 2021/22 Performance Report
11. Cost of Living Crisis

Members also received a Presentation by the Department for Communities on Labour Market Recovery Invention.

Once the minutes of the meeting are ratified at the August Meeting, they can be accessed on the Housing Council website: [www.nihousingcouncil.org](http://www.nihousingcouncil.org)

The next Housing Council Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> August 2022 at 10.00 am via conference call.

Should you require any further information or have any questions regarding the content.

**Contacts**

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2.0	<p><b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b></p> <p>No declarations were received.</p>	
3.0	<p><b>To adopt the Minutes of the 489<sup>th</sup> Housing Council Meeting held on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022</b></p> <p>It was proposed by Alderman Bresland and seconded by Alderman Speers and resolved, that the Minutes of the 489<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Housing Council held on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022 be approved and signed by the Chair.</p>	Chair
4.0	<p><b><u>Matters Arising</u></b></p> <p>There were no matters arising.</p>	
5.0	<p><b><u>Forward Workplan</u></b></p> <p>Councillor Mark Cooper informed Members that the HAPPI principles scheme in Monkstown has now been completed and suggested a visit by the Housing Council.</p> <p><b><u>AGREED:</u></b> the Secretary to liaise with the relevant contacts to progress arrangements for the above visit.</p> <p>The forward workplan was noted.</p>	M Cooper/ Secretary



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6.0

**Update by the Department on the Department for Communities Housing Top Issues**

Paul Price and David Polley gave an update of changes under the specific headings on the Department for Communities (DfC) Housing Issues:-

- Social Housing Development Programme – Newbuild Starts

Disappointment was expressed that the target was not met, 1,713 units against the target of 1,900 units, resulting in an underspend of £6.9m.

Mr Price explained highlighted the impact of schemes lost within the last week of the financial year due to planning / procurement issues, including the added difficulties associated with an annual budget, which could not rollover. The Department has no leverage for Housing Associations to submit schemes earlier in the year. He added that the Department are working on proposals to eliminate these obstacles and also working on multi annual budgets.

**NOTED:** Mr Price undertook to provide a breakdown of the Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) scheme losses that did not make the deadline at the end of the financial year 2022.

- Co-ownership
- Programme for Social Reform
- Fundamental Review of Social Housing Allocations Policy

Concern was expressed that the funding allocation required to implement the proposals has not yet been allocated to proceed.

- Reclassification of Northern Ireland Social Housing Providers
- Supporting People Delivery Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy
- Regulation of the Private Rented Sector
- Increasing Housing Supply
- Affordable Warmth Scheme
- NIHE Rent Increase
- ERDF Investment for Growth and Jobs Programme 2014 -2020

Mr Price explained that the original programme of works is under pressure to meet the deadline by 2023, due to several factors, and that a request has been made to the Department for Economy (DfE) for a possible extension to the deadline.

**NOTED:** Members requested a detailed report on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), outlining progress to date and the proposed schedule to the end of 2023.

P Price

P Price

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Executive historical debt and exclusion from having to pay Corporation Tax</li> <li>• Programme for Government (PfG) Outcomes Framework</li> <li>• Long term rent trajectory</li> <li>• Affordability of social rents</li> <li>• Update on the Ukraine Refugee Scheme</li> </ul> <p><i>Catherine McFarland and Michelle Kelly joined the meeting.</i></p> <p>Councillor Cooper reinforced the need for collaboration with local Councils in relation to the Ukraine Refugee Scheme. Mr Price confirmed Council engagement adding that Councils are also part of the wraparound support working group, which is a sub-group of the Operational Planning Group.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> Paul Price undertook to provide an account of the role of local Councils within the Ukraine Resettlement Programme arrangements.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed and thanked the DfC representatives for their comprehensive briefing.</p>	<b>P Price</b>
7.0	<p><b>Update on the Housing Executive's Budget 2022/23 and the year ahead</b></p> <p>Catherine McFarland, Director of Finance Audit &amp; Assurance gave an update on the Housing Executive's Budget 2022/23 and the year ahead.</p> <p>It was explained that the Housing Executive had a draft 3 year budget which was withdrawn and remain in an annual budget process for 2022/23. Mrs McFarland highlighted the current financial position and the priorities to be delivered for the coming year.</p> <p>Members received a detailed breakdown of allocated monies received and how the resources will be allocated.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> Councillor Cooper requested a breakdown of the £260m for 2022/23 landlord spend by Council areas.</p> <p>Mrs McFarland explained that all of the programmes to be delivered for the forthcoming year around the areas. She added that the Housing Investment Programme is delivered annually to each Council which provides in detail the planned schemes for each area.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mrs McFarland for a very comprehensive presentation.</p>	<b>Secretary</b>

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8.0	<p><b>Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) Year End 2021-2022</b></p> <p>Members noted the Report.</p>	
9.0	<p><b><u>Housing Starts February 2022</u></b></p> <p>Members noted the Report.</p>	
<p>10.0</p> <p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p> <p>10.3</p> <p>10.4</p>	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b></p> <p><b>Chartered Institute of Housing All Ireland Housing Awards Friday 27<sup>th</sup> May in the Europa Hotel Belfast.</b></p> <p><b>AGREED:</b> that the Vice Chair, Councillor Mark Cooper, would represent the Housing Council at the above event. The Secretary also undertook to seek availability from another Member to fill the additional seat.</p> <p><b>Housing Executive Cavity Wall Insulation – Action Plan</b></p> <p>Members noted the Action Plan.</p> <p><b>Co-Own for over 55's</b></p> <p>Members noted the publication.</p> <p><b>Travellers</b></p> <p>The Chair referred to an influx of travellers in certain areas, and sought information on the support they are being offered.</p> <p><b>NOTED:</b> the Chair undertook to provide specific details to the Secretary for follow up.</p>	<p>Secretary</p> <p>Chair</p>
10.0	<p><b><u>Date of next Meeting</u></b></p> <p>The next Housing Council Meeting is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022 at 10 am via Zoom.</p>	

The Meeting concluded at 11.30 am.