

October 24th, 2022

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Wednesday, 26th October 2022** at **7:00 pm** in **Virtual via Zoom**.

Agenda

Agenda

[C 26.10.2022 Agenda.pdf](#)

Page 1

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

[October 2022.docx](#)

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6. Minutes of Council Meeting held on 28 September 2022 (Copy attached)

[C28.09.2022 MinutesPM.pdf](#)

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

- 6.1 Matter Arising - Item 8.4 Community and Wellbeing Minutes - Leisure Target Operating Model (Report attached)

[6.1 Matter Arising out of Council minutes. Leisure Target Operating Model.pdf](#)

Not included

7. Minutes of Committees

- 7.1 Planning Committee dated 4 October 2022 (Copy attached)

[221004 PC Minutes PM.pdf](#)

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- 7.2 Environment Committee dated 5 October 2022 (Copy attached)

[EC.05.10.22 MinutesPM.pdf](#)

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- 7.3 Regeneration and Development Committee dated 6 October

2022 (Copy attached)

📎 *RDC 6.10.2022 MinutesPM.pdf*

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7.4 Corporate Services Committee dated 11 October 2022 (Copy attached)

📎 *221011 CS MinutesPM.pdf*

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7.5 Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 12 October 2022 (To follow)

📎 *CWB 12.10.2022 Minutes PM.pdf*

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

7.5.1 Matter Arising - Item 22 - Legal Advice on the Council Continuing its Market Surveillance in Accordance with the General Product Safety Regulations 2005 as they are applied in Great Britain (Copy to follow))

7.6 Minutes of Special Corporate Committee dated 13 October 2022 (Copy attached)

📎 *CS 13.10.2022 Minutes PM.pdf*

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8. Consultation Documents

8.1 DAERA, Forestry Planning, Strategies and Silviculture, Down Forestry Planning Area Consultation

📎 *8.1 DAERA - Down Forestry Consultation.pdf*

Page 249

8.2 Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority - Draft Strategic Plan Consultation Online

📎 *8.2 RQIA Draft Strategic Strategic Plan.pdf*

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📎 *8.2 RQIA Draft Strategic Plan Consultation Online Events October 2022.pdf*

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8.3 Department of Justice, Consultation on Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility

📎 *8.3 DOJ - Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility.pdf*

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9. Courses and Conferences

9.1 NAC UK Conference and AGM 25-27 November 2022, Carlisle (Report attached)

[9.1 C&C NAC Conference - cover report.pdf](#) *Page 254*

[9.1 NAC National Association of Councillors.pdf](#) *Page 255*

[9.1 NAC UK AGM Agenda 261122.pdf](#) *Page 256*

[9.1 NAC UK Booking form 25-27 Nov 22 Carlisle.pdf](#) *Page 258*

10. Resolution

10.1 Correspondence from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council - Motion - Justice for Noah Donohoe

(Correspondence attached)

[10 Resolution - Ferm and Omagh - Justice for Noah Donohoe.pdf](#) *Page 259*

11. Arrangements for Remembrance Sunday (Report attached)

[11 Arrangements for Remembrance Sunday.pdf](#) *Page 260*

12. Nominations to Working Groups (Report attached)

[12 Nominations to working groups.pdf](#) *Page 263*

13. Sealing Documents

14. Transfer of Rights of Burial

15. Notice of Motion Status Report (Report attached)

[15 NOM Covering Report - October.pdf](#) *Page 265*

[15 NOM Tracker October 2022.pdf](#) *Page 266*

16. Notices of Motion

16.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor McRandal, Alderman Wilson and Councillor Irwin

That this Council notes with concern the situation regarding Priory Surgery, with the potential of services

ceasing from February 2023 affecting over 14,000 patients across Bangor West and Holywood.

We ask that this Council calls for a deputation from the Department of Health and British Medical Association alongside the Royal College of Surgeons to discuss options for the practice should partners not be found to take over the contract. Given the urgency of the situation, this should happen at the earliest possible opportunity.

16.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Adair and Councillor Edmund

That this Council agree to install signage to identify the townlands of Ballyblack and Kirkistown and that officers are tasked to bring forward proposals to incorporate townland signage across our Borough.

16.3 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cooper and Councillor Irvine

That this Council opts out of the Service Level Agreement commitments, under Item 5, in the Community and Wellbeing Committee in January 2022 and subsequently ratified in Council in January and will write to all other Councils in Northern Ireland to urge them to follow our lead.

16.4 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor MacArthur and Councillor Gilmour

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

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

That this Council reviews its policies in relation to the Northern Ireland Protocol; provides a list to Members of what measures are currently undertaken in the implementation of that Protocol;

highlights which of these measures being taken by Council are obligatory and which are discretionary;

and in the meantime, cease actions which relate to the now expired Service Level Agreement with Causeway Coast and Glens Councils and reverts to actions undertaken pre-Service Level Agreement.

Council requests that officers action these matters with due urgency in order that Members may take any necessary actions without undue delay.

16.6 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Moore and Alderman McDowell

That this Council recognises the important contribution of Strangford Integrated College to integrated education in the Ards and North Down Borough, and writes to the school offering congratulations on the event of their 25th anniversary.

Circulated for Information

- (a) Choice Housing Ireland Limited, Annual Report 2021/22**
📄 *Choice Housing Annual Report.pdf* *Page 281*

- (b) Department of Justice, Youth Justice Agency Performance Impact Report 2021-2022**
📄 *Department of Justice, Youth Justice Agency PIR 2021-2022.pdf* *Page 282*

- (c) CAWT Cross Border Health and Social Care Annual Progress Report 2021**
📄 *CAWT Cross Border Health and Social Care Annual Report 2021.pdf* *Page 303*

- (d) The Gas (Designation of Pipe-lines) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022**
📄 *The Gas (Designation of Pipe-lines) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022.pdf* *Page 304*

- (e) Children's Services Review Secretariat (DOH) , Children's Social Care Services NI, An Independent Review, October Newsletter**
📄 *Children's Social Care Services - October 2022 Newsletter.pdf* *Page 305*

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

- 17. Legal advice received regarding Notice of Motion at Special Council Meeting (Report to follow)**

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

20 October 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, 26 October 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 October (Copy attached)
6. Minutes of Council meeting dated 28 September 2022 (Copy attached)

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9. Courses and Conferences
 - 9.1 NAC UK Conference & AGM 25-27 November 2022 Carlisle (Report attached)
10. Resolutions
 - 10.1 Correspondence from Fermanagh and Omagh District Council – Motion – Justice for Noah Donohoe (Correspondence attached)
11. Arrangements for Remembrance Sunday (Report attached)
12. Nominations to Working Groups (Report attached)
13. Sealing Documents
14. Transfer of Rights of Burial
15. Notice of Motion Status Report (Report attached)
16. Notices of Motion
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*****IN CONFIDENCE*****

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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 Kennedy
Alderman McIlveen	Councillor MacArthur
Alderman Smith	Councillor McAlpine
Alderman Wilson	Councillor McClean
Councillor Adair	Councillor McKee
Councillor Blaney (Deputy Mayor)	Councillor McKimm
Councillor Boyle	Councillor McRandal
Councillor Brooks	Councillor Moore
Councillor Cathcart	Councillor Smart
Councillor Chambers	Councillor P Smith
Councillor Cooper	Councillor T Smith
Councillor Cummings	Councillor Thompson
Councillor Douglas (Mayor)	Councillor Walker
Councillor S Dunlop	Councillor Woods

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

Monday 3 October

17:00 hours Join the Community: Future of our Towns and City – Comber Leisure Centre

Tuesday 4 October

09:45 hours Casual Launch of the Well Fed Community Shop – Glenford Way, Newtownards

13:00 hours Launch of Ards West Reminiscence Booklet – Killinchy Community Hall

17:00 hours Join the Community – Future of our Towns and City – Queen's Leisure Complex, Holywood

Wednesday 5 October

16:30 hours Visit and Tour of HMS Magpie – Bangor Marina

19:30 hours Poetry Event – Castle Street, Comber

Thursday 6 October

12:30 hours Photo Opportunity – Ulster in Bloom Success – Comber Square

13:30 hours Photo Opportunity – Ulster in Bloom Success – Slipway, Donaghadee

17:00 hours Event to Welcome Ukrainian Refugees – SERC Space Theatre, Castle Park Avenue, Bangor

Friday 7 October

20:00 hours Launch of Black Asian Minority Ethnic Integration Awards NI – Stormont Hotel, Belfast

Saturday 8 October

12:30 hours Visit to Kirkistown Castle – Cloughey

19:00 hours K9 Search & Rescue 5th Birthday Party – Clandeboye Lodge Hotel, Bangor

22:30 hours North Down & Ards Women's Aid 80s Night – Carnalea Golf Club, Bangor

Sunday 9 October

15:15 hours Ards Boys Brigade Annual Parade and Church Service – Newtownards Presbyterian Church, Frances Street, Newtownards

19:00 hours Aspects Festival – Phil Coulter – Town Hall, Bangor

Tuesday 11 October

12:00 hours Portaferry Orchard Clean Up Day – Portaferry Open Space

Thursday 13 October

17:30 hours U3A 25th Anniversary Celebration Dinner – Bryansburn Inn, Bangor

20:00 hours Integrated Education Comedy Night – Ulster Hall, Belfast

Friday 14 October

10:00 hours Meeting with Chief Executive of SERC – Bangor Campus

18:00 hours **Deputy Mayor** – Social Enterprise NI Awards – Crowne Plaza Hotel,

19:30 hours Donaghadee Male Voice Choir 90th Anniversary Dinner – Clandeboye Lodge, Bangor

Saturday 15 October

13:30 hours The 100 Project Festival – Mount Stewart, Newtownards

14:30 hours **Deputy Mayor** – Autumn Fayre – Ballyblack Presbyterian Church, Milltown Road, Belfast

Tuesday 18 October

11:00 hours Launch of Bangor Court House – Quay Street, Bangor

12:00 hours 2022 Best Kept City, Towns, Villages and Housing Area Awards – Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn

Wednesday 19 October

07:20 hours Rotary Breakfast – Clandeboye Golf Club, Conlig

11:00 hours Positive Ageing Roadshow Event – Comber Leisure Centre, Castle Street, Comber

14:30 hours Love Your Library Day – Bangor Carnegie Library

Thursday 20 October

19:00 hours Civic Reception to Mark the Centenary of the Sir Henry Wilson Memorial Temperance Royal Black Preceptory NO. 1104 Royal Black – Town Hall, Bangor

21:30 hours Simon Community NI Big Sleep Out – Stormont Estate, Belfast

Friday 21 October

11:00 hours Roundtable Discussion – Signal, Bangor

13:00 hours In Bloom Prize Giving Event 2022 – Banqueting Hall, Clandeboye Estate, Bangor

15:45 hours Visit by Peter Roddie for United Nations Day – Town Hall, Bangor

19:25 hours Visit to Web Theatre – North Street, Newtownards

Sunday 23 October

15:00 hours Restoration of St Patrick's Church and Dedication of the Altar – Upper North Street, Newtownards

Monday 24 October

18:30 hours **(TBC) Deputy Mayor** – Exhibition – 130th Anniversary of the Birth of Three Great Polish General – The Long Gallery, Stormont

19:30 hours The Link's 25th Anniversary Celebration – Movilla Abbey Church, Newtownards

Tuesday 25 October

10:30 hours Photoshoot – Raise Your Voice – Town Hall, Bangor

12:30 hours Royal British Legion – Launch of Poppy Appeal 2022 – Mayor's Parlour, Town Hall, Bangor

19:15 hours Visit to Bangor Football Club – Clandeboye Road, Bangor

Wednesday 26 October

13:00 hours Bangor Rotary Club Tree Planting – Castle Park, Bangor

Thursday 27 October

17:00 hours Girl Guiding UK Event – Lorne, Craigavad, Holywood

18:30 hours Mayor's Thanksgiving Dinner – Town Hall, Bangor

Friday 28 October

13:30 hours **(TBC) Deputy Mayor** – Regent House School Prize Distribution Day – Circular Road, Newtownards

14:00 hours (TBC) Glashy College Annual Prize Distribution – Victoria Road, Ballyhalbert

19:00 hours Heart of Peninsula Care Awards – Stormont Hotel, Belfast

Saturday 29 October

10:00 hours Ards Suicide Awareness Group Breakfast – The Warehouse, Newtownards

Sunday 30 October

14:00 hours Service at Garden of Remembrance – Outside Former Danske Bank, Main Street, Bangor

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Ards and North Down Borough Council was held remotely using Zoom on Wednesday, 28 September 2022 commencing at 7.00pm.

In the Chair: The Mayor (Councillor Douglas)

Aldermen:	Armstrong-Cotter	McDowell
	Gibson	McIlveen
	W Irvine	M Smith
	Keery	Wilson

Councillors:	Adair	Kennedy
	Blaney (Deputy Mayor)	MacArthur
	Brooks	McAlpine
	Cathcart	McClellan
	Chambers	McKee
	Cooper	McKimm
	Cummings	McRandal
	Dunlop	Moore
	Edmund	Smart
	Gilmour	P Smith
	Greer	T Smith
	Irvine	Thompson
	Irwin	Walker
	Johnson	Woods

Officers: Chief Executive (S Reid), Director of Organisational Development and Administration (W Swanston), Director of Community and Wellbeing (G Bannister), Director of Finance and Performance (S Christie), Director of Regeneration, Development & Planning (S McCullough), Director of Environment (D Lindsay), Head of Communications and Marketing (C Jackson) and Democratic Services Officers (P Foster & R King)

1. PRAYER

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

NOTED.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Alderman Carson, Alderman Girvan and Councillor Boyle. Apologies for lateness from Councillor Dunlop and Councillor Greer.

NOTED.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor Cathcart

Item 22 – Rescinding Motion

Item 23 - Newtownards Citizens Hub - Outline Business Case

Alderman McIlveen

Item 9.1 - Consultation on Department of Education Consultation on Period Products (Free Provision) Regulations

Item 9.4 - Every Child Department of Education's Corporate Plan (2023-2028) Consultation

Councillor Johnson and Councillor McAlpine

Item 11 - GCSE Support Revision Programme

NOTED.

4. MAYOR'S BUSINESS

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor extended thanks and best wishes to Lauren Kendall who resigned from her position as a Councillor the previous week and welcomed back to Councillor Rachel Woods, who had replaced Ms Kendall as a representative for Holywood and Clandeboye.

The Mayor reflected on the events of the last few weeks following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and gave thanks to those who attended the Proclamation for County Down and Special Council meeting on 11 September to pay tribute to Her Majesty. It had been an honour for the Mayor to represent the Council, alongside the Chief Executive at the Service of Reflection in St Anne's Cathedral in the presence of the new King, His Majesty King Charles III and the Queen Consort.

The Mayor noted the overwhelming response of residents of the Borough in their offering of respects through floral tributes and signing the books of condolence.

C.28.09.2022PM

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On a final note, the Mayor referenced negotiations on pay between the Council and the Trade Unions having reached a conclusion and was pleased to see an agreement had been reached without strike action.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Irvine, seconded by Councillor Moore, that the Mayor's business be noted.

5. MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR ENGAGEMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2022
(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Engagements for the month of July 2021.

The Mayor referred members to her List of Engagements undertaken for the month and was humbled to meet many volunteers. Donaghadee had won the Best Medium Town in the Ulster Bloom with Comber being second. Thanks had been given to the efforts of those involved. The Mayor had also met with two organ recipients.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Thompson, seconded by Councillor McRandal, that the Engagements be noted.

6. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 24 AUGUST 2022

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above minutes.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor McKimm, that the minutes be agreed.

7. MINUTES OF SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2022

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above minutes.

Councillor Gilmour noted that an apology had been listed for Councillor Tom Smith and believed this should instead be Alderman Marion Smith.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor P Smith, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the minutes be agreed.

8. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

8.1. Planning Committee dated 6 September 2022

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

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

8.2. Environment Committee dated 7 September 2022

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

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

8.2.1 Matter Arising – Item 20.1 - NOM on Naming and Signage Associated with Bangor Platinum Jubilee City Status (Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Environment detailing that at the Environment Committee held on 8th September 2022, it was agreed to recommend the following amendment to a Notice of Motion:

“That this Council, in recognition of Her Majesty’s Platinum Jubilee and her conferment of City Status upon Bangor, agree to name an appropriate place or building within Bangor in her honour and that future Council Bangor entrance signs make reference to Bangor being a Platinum Jubilee City.”

In view of the nature and substance of the agreed amended motion and subject to approval of the recommendation from the Committee by Council, it was proposed that this matter be referred to the Administration and Corporate Communications Departments – and be managed and taken forward through the Corporate Services Committee.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees to the proposal set out in this report.

Councillor Cathcart welcomed the timing of the proposal given the recent passing of Queen Elizabeth II. The Chief Executive advised that the matter would be dealt with at Corporate Services Committee in the near future.

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

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

8.3. Minutes of Corporate Services Committee dated 20 September 2022

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

Councillor T Smith wanted to discuss Item 8, an in-confidence item that would be dealt with later in the meeting.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor P Smith, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that the minutes be adopted with the exception of item 8.

8.4. Minutes of Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 21 September 2022

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

Item 12 – Update on Play Park Refurbishments 2022-2023

Councillor Chambers, in relation to the above item of the minutes, suggested that the proposal put forth could cause funding to be lost and so he had arranged a meeting to clarify some of the discussion points. It was confirmed that a hybrid design would not pose any problems nor delay or risk of losing funding. He gave thanks to Officers as well as Councillor T Smith and Councillor MacArthur for their assistance in reaching a satisfactory conclusion on the matter. Councillor T Smith agreed with his colleague. He referred to Ballycrochan Ashbury play park and asked if any planning application had been made. The Director of Community & Wellbeing explained that the application was nearing completion and would provide an update report at a future meeting.

Councillor MacArthur praised the proposed improvements to Groomsport paddling pool and was also keen to hear of updates on play parks near Ballycrochan/Ashbury.

Responding to a query from Alderman McIlveen, the Director of Community and Wellbeing explained the genesis of the Groomsport Paddling Pool subject had been raised due to knowledge of sustainability and maintenance costs. External funding had been received recently to provide improvements. The Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning advised that checks would be done to discover if this had been part of the village plan. Alderman McIlveen referred to Dixon Park, Ballygowan and his attempts to have health & safety issues addressed such as fencing due to works being carried out at the nearby Water Treatment works as well as a busy car park.

Although a basic barrier existed, it was not fit for purpose and Alderman McIlveen, albeit in support of the improvements to Groomsport Paddling Pool, queried how it had been granted a go-ahead despite no knowledge of being part of a village plan. He had hoped health & safety would have levered external funding to the same extent.

(Councillor Cooper left the meeting – 7.25pm)

Councillor Adair commended Officers for their efforts in Item 12. He asked if Ballyhalbert's play park would be rejuvenated and when it had last been checked as well as whether an additional play park could be constructed at the opposite end of the village. The Director of Community & Wellbeing advised that damage at play parks, if reported, would be allocated to Assets and Property and that a timeline would be sought. In regard to the rejuvenation of play parks, Ballyhalbert was near the top of the list in terms of urgency and may be dealt with potentially by year two or three. In regard to a second play park at Ballyhalbert, he did not believe one was agreed in the play strategy.

Alderman Gibson recalled, in relation to Dixon Park, Ballygowan, that works had been agreed for the large water treatment plant and for installation of a fence in relation to health and safety but was unsure as to whether it required consultation to take place with NI Water. The Director of Community & Wellbeing advised that he would investigate the matter.

Councillor Edmund agreed with Councillor Adair's comments regarding Ballyhalbert. He explained that a developer may be offering to build a play park at the opposite end of Ballyhalbert, one that the Council would take charge over maintenance requirements. He also raised a health and safety issue regarding footpaths being unsatisfactory in linking the town.

Councillor Thompson was happy to see progress on Groomsport Paddling Pool and discussions surrounding Ballyhalbert play parks. He hoped that Cloughey and Portaferry play parks would receive similar attention in the near future.

Alderman Keery asked for clarification as to whether the Ballycrochan play park was in Linear Park or if it was upon land owned by a developer. The Director of Community & Wellbeing explained that works would be alongside a development on land which they owned where other additional works may take place but could not discuss the item further at this time, as it would be of an in-confidence nature.

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

8.5. Minutes of Audit Committee dated 22 September 2022

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

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

9. CONSULTATIONS

(Alderman McIlveen was excluded from the meeting having declared an interest in Items 9.1 and 9.4 – 7.36pm)

9.1 Consultation on Department of Education Consultation on Period Products (Free Provision) Regulations (Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Correspondence from the Department of Education stating that the consultation document was available at https://consultations.nidirect.gov.uk/consultation_finder. The consultation closed on 16 October 2022.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor P Smith, seconded by Councillor Johnson, that the consultation document be noted.

9.2 Consultation on RQIA's Draft Strategic Plan 2022-27 (Appendix IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Correspondence stating that the consultation document was available at www.rqia.org.uk. Consultation closed on 17 November 2022.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor P Smith, seconded by Councillor Johnson, that the consultation document be noted.

9.3 Probation Board for Northern Ireland – Consultation on Draft Corporate Plan for 2023-26 (Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Correspondence from PBNI stating that the consultation document was available at <https://www.pbni.org.uk/publication/probation-board-northern-ireland-draft-corporate-plan-2023-26>. Consultation was open for 10 weeks from 01 September 2022

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor P Smith, seconded by Councillor Johnson, that the consultation document be noted.

9.4 Every Child Department Of Education's Corporate Plan (2023-2028) Consultation. (Appendix VI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Correspondence from the Department of Education stating that the consultation document was available at <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/consultations/department-educations-draft-2023-2028-corporate-plan>. Consultation closed on 15 November 2022

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor P Smith, seconded by Councillor P Smith, that the consultation document be noted.

(Alderman McIlveen returned to the meeting – 7.38pm)

9.5 Request for Delegated Authority to October Environment Committee - Consultation Response to Review of Drinking in Public Bye-Laws and Powers (Appendix VII - VIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment stating that the Department for Communities had issued a pre-consultation letter to Council in relation to a proposed review of drinking in public byelaws and powers. Since the closing date for receipt of responses is 14th October 2022, it was proposed that the October meeting of the Environment Committee be granted delegated powers to agree and issue a Council response to this pre-consultation letter.

RECOMMENDED that approval is granted for the proposed delegated authority.

Councillor McKee proposed, seconded by Councillor Johnson, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor T Smith wished to be recorded as against the recommendation as he did not know what the reply was going to be.

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

9.6 Consultation on the Housing Executive's Draft Corporate Plan 2022/23 – 2024/25 (Appendix IX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Correspondence from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive stating that the consultation document was available at <https://www.nihe.gov.uk/Working-With-Us/Partners/Consultations>. Closing date for responses was 14 December 2022

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor P Smith, seconded by Councillor Johnson, that the consultation document be noted.

10. REQUEST FOR DEPUTATIONS

10.1 ST ANNE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, DONAGHADEE

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive stating that a request to make a deputation had been received from Mr John Hennessy of St Anne's Primary School, Donaghadee, stating the following:

"In December 2021, the parents of pupils at St. Anne's Primary School voted overwhelmingly to begin the process of transforming the school to Integrated status. A Development Proposal and Case for Change was submitted to the Education Authority in March 2022, followed by consultation with local schools in April.

"In June 2022, the Department of Education began a public consultation which closes on October 14, 2022. On behalf of the Board of Governors, I would appreciate a little time to update Council on our progress to date, to share the huge support within the community for Donaghadee's first Integrated Primary School, and to answer any questions from Councillors about the Proposal. I would also like to ask Councillors to write in support of our Transformation proposal to the Department of Education's public consultation."

RECOMMENDED that Council considers the deputation request from St Anne's Primary School for hearing at the Corporate Services Committee.

Councillor Walker proposed, seconded by Councillor Brooks, that the deputation request from St Anne's Primary School be referred for hearing at the Corporate Services Committee.

Proposing, Councillor Walker was aware the school are working hard towards integration. There would also be growing demand in Donaghadee for integrated education as the town grew in population and the school would feed in to secondary schools. He added that Council needed to give its support to the school.

Councillor Irwin welcomed the opportunity to hear from the school and said she had submitted her own response to the consultation to support the school and urged Members to do the same. Councillor T Smith added his support, believing it was important that Council voices its support. Donaghadee could not afford to lose another school in the town.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Walker, seconded by Councillor Brooks, that the deputation request from St Anne's Primary School be referred for hearing at the Corporate Services Committee.

10.2 IRISH LEAGUE OF CREDIT UNIONS

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive stating that a request to make a deputation had been received from Mr Martin Fisher of the Irish League of Credit Unions, requesting an opportunity to engage and present to Council Members to discuss the importance of credit unions within Northern Ireland.

An application was received, stating the following:

"The ILCU is the main trade and representative body for credit unions on the island of Ireland with 85 affiliated credit unions in Northern Ireland. We have presented to a number of other councils (and the NILGA Executive) and we would appreciate the opportunity to brief elected officials at Ards and North Down on the credit union movement in Northern Ireland. The short briefing will include background, credit union facts and figures for Northern Ireland overall and within the council area, credit union strengths and challenges, cost of living crisis, our social impact and educational initiatives as well information on our policy manifesto.

"We have a close working relationship with the other credit union trade body in Northern Ireland, the Ulster Federation of Credit Unions (UFCU) who have also give short briefings alongside the ILCU to other councils.

"We would kindly request that UFCU be considered as part of any briefing request (subject to their availability) as well. We believe it would be beneficial for elected officials to hear from both credit union trade bodies."

RECOMMENDED that Council considers the deputation request from Irish League of Credit Unions for hearing at the Corporate Services Committee.

Councillor McKimm proposed, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the deputation request from Irish League of Credit Unions be referred for hearing at the Corporate Services Committee.

Councillor McKimm felt that Credit Unions made a vital contribution to affordable borrowing and many businesses had benefited and he looked forward to the deputation. Councillor Thompson emphasised the importance of Credit Unions, pointing to the benefits it had brought to the village of Millisle in recent months.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McKimm, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the deputation request from Irish League of Credit Unions be referred for hearing at the Corporate Services committee.

(Councillor Johnson and Councillor McAlpine were excluded from the meeting having declared an interest in the following item – 7.46pm)

11. GCSE SUPPORT REVISION PROGRAMME (FILE ED90)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning stating that building upon the highly successful Easter School operating in West Belfast for over 20 years, Ards and North Down Borough Council was approached by Belfast City Council in 2019 as it was exploring extending this provision outside the city. The intention of the project was to engage young people (Year 12) who had the potential to achieve a grade C in GCSE English and Maths but who were at risk of not achieving this.

The Economic Development Section made several approaches to the schools in the Borough where GCSE levels of achievement from A* to C in Maths and English fell below 50% of the regional average (Movilla High School; Bangor Academy and 6th Form College; Strangford Integrated College; Nendrum College), in order to assess their interest in the programme.

Two schools responded to express interest and participated in the programme: Strangford Integrated College and Nendrum College. Despite some delays due to the pandemic in implementing the scheme, this was done successfully in 2021 and this report was an interim evaluation of the work that was delivered in the above-mentioned schools.

Programme Delivery

West Belfast Partnership Board agreed the following delivery approach with both Colleges:

- Face to face Maths and English GCSE delivery would begin in the Autumn Term 2021 at both Strangford College and Nendrum College.
- Fifty students would participate (twenty-five at each College).
- The Colleges would identify those students most in need of GCSE revision support.
- All outcomes within contract would be achieved and partnership working efforts would seek to bring as much additionality as possible to ensure the outcomes.
- The majority of participants would be Year 12 students, with a small number of Year 11 students identified and support for Year 13 students who did not achieve in Year 12.
- Year 11 and Year 13 are additional to the original contract in order to provide support to make up for almost two academic years of lost learning. It is anticipated that the numbers of Years 11 and 13 will be no more than 20% of the overall participant numbers. This flexible approach will ensure that students most in need of support will have access to additional classes.

- Participating students would benefit from twenty hours of GCSE support in English or Maths.

Programme Objectives

The objectives of this programme were to:

- Contribute to improving GCSE attainment levels.
- Engage with and develop relationships with schools, educators and parents/guardians that will result in securing their commitment and 'buy in'.
- Address specific learning needs for GCSE Mathematics and English students by providing targeted and focused out of school hours learning support interventions.
- Ensure that each young person receives the supports required within Maths and/or English.

Expected Outcomes

- Increased % in the number of students maintaining predicted Grade C.
- Increased % in the number of students exceeding their predicted Grade.
- Increased % in the number of students attaining Grade C or above.
- 70% participation rate by students (i.e. attendance at GCSE Support classes).
- 67% of participating students achieving Maths and English at Grade C or above (this data will be available in September of the new academic year).

Participant Criterion

The GCSE Maths & English Support Programme would be open to young people:

- Attending Strangford Integrated College or Nendrum College.
- In Key Stage 4 (Year 11/12) studying towards GCSE English and Maths.
- At high risk of not achieving GCSE Maths and/or English at Grade C but have the potential to achieve this.
- Referred into the programme from teachers/educators that can evidence/show projected grades ensuring suitability for the programme.

It was anticipated that the majority of young people participating would be students who were entitled to Free School Meals and / or live in areas of disadvantage.

Programme Quantitative Data

The tables below presented the quantitative data showing student participation in the GCSE English GCSE Support Programme (both Colleges) and the Maths GCSE Support Programme (Nendrum College).

Strangford College: English				
Subject	No. of Students	Year 12	Predicted Grade	Attendance %
English	25	25	B x 1 C x 12 C/D x 5 D x 5 E x 2	18 x 100% 4 x 90% 2 x 80% 1 x 70% Average: 95.6%

Nendrum College: English				
Subject	No. of Students	Year 12	Predicted Grade	Attendance %
English	12	12	C x 4 C/D x 2 D x 6	12 x 100% Average: 100%

Nendrum College: Maths					
Subject	Tier	No Students	Year 12	Predicted Grade	Attendance %
Maths	13 x Foundation	13	13	C x 6 C/D x 3 D x 2 E x 2	11 x 100% 1 x 90% 1 x 80% Average 97%

The table below provided an overall summary of the quantitative data.

Overall Totals for Strangford and Nendrum				
Subject	No Students	Year 12	Predicted Grade	Attendance %
English	37	37	B x 1 C x 16 C/D x 7 D x 11 E x 2	97.8%
Maths Foundation Tier	13	13	C x 6 C/D x 3 D x 2 E x 2	90%
Totals	50	50		Average: 95.2%

Super Output Areas and Free School Meal Entitlement

Using the postcodes supplied, it was possible to identify students living in the 30% most disadvantaged Super Output Areas. The Application Forms also identified those students in receipt of Free School Meals. The table below showed the students living in the 30% most disadvantaged Super Output Areas, those who received Free School Meals or both.

College and Programme	Top 30% SOA and FSM	Top 30% SOA and FSM %	Top 30% SOA	SOA %	FSM	FSM %

Strangford English (n=25)	2	8%	3	12%	3	12%
Nendrum English (n = 12)	2	16.7%	3	25%	2	16.7%
Nendrum Maths (n = 13)	5	33.3%	2	15.4%	1	7.7%
Total	9	18%	8	16%	6	12%

Twenty-three students that participated in the GCSE Support Programmes either lived in one of the top 20% most disadvantaged Super Output Areas in NI, were in receipt of Frees School Meals, or both. This represented 46% of the total number of participating students.

GCSE Support Programme outcomes

The table below considered the extent to which the Programme objectives were met:

Programme Objectives	Comment
Contribute to improving GCSE attainment levels	At time of writing this report exam grades have just been released but these have not yet been collated into a full review report, However, student and Tutor assessment of progress suggests that the objectives are likely to be achieved. When available, a full report will be brought back to Council.
Engage with and develop relationships with schools, educators and parents/guardians that will result in securing their commitment and 'buy in'	Fully met, as demonstrated by high level of attendance from all students. 47 (n=48) students said they were treated well by the tutors (1 student was unsure). The majority of students believed this was an environment in which they could learn effectively.
Address specific learning needs for GCSE Mathematics and English students by providing targeted and focused out of school hours learning support interventions.	Yes – evidenced by Teacher comments who were 'able to target areas of weakness'. All students identified benefits, with 47 (n=48) students said they improved in English or Maths. The majority of students said they benefitted from: * learning new things, skills and methods * going over things they didn't understand before * things being explained in different ways so they understood more * studying and learning about topics they were unsure about
Ensure that each young person receives the support required within Maths and/or English.	Yes – evidenced by Tutors assessing that every student progressed in English or Maths; which was also the assessment of the students about their own progress.

Furthermore, the majority of students reported that they felt more confident about studying English or Maths, that they received the support they needed, and that the GCSE Programme was useful.

Student Participation Criterion

As agreed with West Belfast Partnership Board at the outset, fifty Year 12 students participated in the Programme (twenty-five at each College), which was delivered face-to-face with groups of students and was delivered over twenty hours.

All the participant criteria were met. Each participating student was assessed by their English or Maths Teacher, with every Programme application form stating that each student was 'at significant risk of not obtaining a Grade C in English without additional support'. Those students on a predicted Grade C were 'within 5% points of Grade D'. In addition, 46% of students lived in the top 30% most deprived areas, were in receipt of Free School Meals, or both:

- 18% of students lived in the top 30% most deprived areas and were in receipt of Free School Meals
- 16% of students lived in the top 30% most deprived areas
- 12% of students were in receipt of Free School Meals

Additional Feedback from Nendrum College

"I want to take this opportunity to thank you and your team for your help and support in allowing us to facilitate these additional sessions for students. Students responded so positively to them, and parents were very appreciative and thankful that their children were able to access additional support.

"While in context of Covid disruption this funding for additional teaching support has been particularly welcome, we would love to see further opportunities going forward to be able to facilitate additional support to students so that they can achieve their best. While we await student's results in August, the consensus is that those students who have been involved with this additional support really have developed their skills and have a much better chance of gaining their Grade C. We would love to be able to offer this support going forward so that other students can also avail of this opportunity'

"Many thanks".

*Email to WBPB Education Manager
from Vicky Thompson, Vice Principal, Nendrum College*

Other teachers also expressed the hope that the GCSE Support Programme could be delivered again in the next academic year, with the additional hope that the Programmes could start in the Autumn Term.

Conclusion

While students across NI had received their GCSE results further analysis now needed to be done to review how those related to each school and the interventions that had taken place. A full review would take place over the coming months and once the GCSE results were taken into consideration and fully analysed, the West Belfast Partnership Board would produce a final evaluation report in order to inform the council of the following objectives:

- Increased % in the number of students maintaining predicted Grade C.
- Increased % in the number of students exceeding their predicted Grade.
- Increased % in the number of students attaining Grade C or above.

Despite the absence of this information in the report, it was clear from the initial findings, as above, that the programme had had a significant impact on the pupils and that attendance and interest in this initiative has been very high.

It was obvious from the above school testimony that the programme had been welcomed and that the two schools which formed part of this pilot programme would like to see it continue.

Belfast City Council had confirmed that they had secured a one-year extension to the programme for the 2022-23 academic year with the programme re-starting in the Autumn.

The initial commitment to this programme from Ards and North Down Borough Council in 2019 was £14,363.69 at a cost of £287.27 per pupil.

Given the uncertainty resulting from the pandemic around the delivery of the programme in the past two years, a business case seeking reduced funding for £9,000 in order to support an additional year for this pilot programme was agreed as part of the estimates process for this year. Therefore, the funding was available, from existing budgets, to continue delivering this programme for another year for approximately 30 pupils.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves:

1. Participation in the GCSE Support Revision Programme for the academic year 2022-23, with the two participating schools, Nendrum College and Strangford Integrated College, at a cost of £9,000 on the basis on the evidence provided in this report.
2. The Economic Development section proceeding with the signing on a Service Level Agreement with Belfast City Council and West Belfast Partnership Board to deliver the 2022-23 programme as specified in point 1.
3. The Economic Development section bringing back a report on the full achievements and impact of the GCSE Support Revision Programme once it is finalised by the delivery agent.

Councillor P Smith proposed, seconded by Councillor MacArthur, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor P Smith was happy to see the project roll on for another year although he felt it was something that the Education Authority should be funding rather than the Council, but it was important to support it. He asked when final outcomes would be reported given that GCSE results had now been issued to pupils.

The Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning advised that the information would be reported to Members at the December Regeneration and Development Committee.

Councillor MacArthur welcomed the recommendation. She agreed it was not the Council's responsibility to educate and recognised that Council was doing all it could to link up with those able to make a difference. Ards and North Down Borough Council, according to published figures was in the top four Councils for pupils achieving A* to Grade C, at 90.4%, but fell to seventh position once Maths and English results were added which was 72.8% and sitting on the Northern Ireland average. That figure dispelled the myth of a leafy suburbia and well to do area. She pointed out that there were significant areas of social deprivation and she was heartened to read that 46% of the participants lived in the top 20 most disadvantaged areas and she felt that was positive.

The cost worked out at £287 per pupil and she understood that the cost of pupils repeating exams was anything above £400 per pupil, so this represented good value for money. A final point she made was that it was a shame that this provision was not permanently available in the Borough and she pointed to West Belfast Partnership which she felt was doing a fantastic job with outstanding outcomes for English and Maths.

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

(Councillor Johnson and Councillor McAlpine were re-admitted to the meeting – 7.51pm)

12. ITEM WITHDRAWN

It was noted that the above item had been withdrawn.

13. APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODY - NORTHERN IRELAND HOUSING COUNCIL

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive stating that at the Council's meeting in June, appointments were made to Sub-Committees, Working Groups and Outside Bodies by way of nomination. In error, one body was not listed for appointment, the Northern Ireland Housing Council.

The vacancy arose following the election of Nick Mathison MLA to the Assembly. This position would be up until the Annual Meeting in 2023.

RECOMMENDED that the Council proceeds to appoint a Member to the Northern Ireland Housing Council by way of nomination.

Alderman McDowell proposed, seconded by Councillor Irwin, that Councillor Moore be appointed to the Northern Ireland Housing Council.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McDowell, seconded by Councillor Irwin, that that Councillor Moore be appointed to the Northern Ireland Housing Council.

14. SEALING DOCUMENTS

RESOLVED: - (On the proposal of Councillor Edmund, seconded by Alderman Gibson)

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

- (a) Dfl licence agreement: For Environmental Improvement Works at Portavogie Harbour
- b) HA licence agreement: To occupy and carry out works to Harbour Premises at The Harbour, Portavogie
- c) Queen's Parade Legal Agreement
- d) Rights of Burials Nos 14364 – 14412, excluding 14387

15. TRANSFER OF RIGHTS OF BURIAL

The Chief Executive advised that there were no Transfer of Rights of Burial.

16. NOTICE OF MOTION STATUS REPORT

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

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

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

17. NOTICES OF MOTION

17.1. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor McClean and Alderman Smith

That Council notes the extraordinary life and achievements of the Rev. John McConnell Auld. 'Con' Auld was noted as a Princeton scholar, classics and divinity teacher, minister, artist, historian, politician, chorister, philanthropist and Mayor of North Down Borough Council; and that in recognition of the extraordinary life of Con Auld and his cultural and political contribution to the Borough and beyond, agrees to

the request from his family to provide and site a memorial bench at the earliest opportunity.

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

(Councillor Smart left the meeting at this stage – 8.11pm)

17.2. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cathcart and Councillor Cummings

That this Council recognises the amazing work undertaken by care workers in caring for vulnerable people in our Borough, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is deeply regrettable that care workers have received penalty charge notices (PCN) for parking on double yellow lines whilst performing their caring duties.

The Council, therefore, agrees to write to the Infrastructure Minister to urge that the Department amends the Parking Enforcement Protocol to add that care workers, whilst on duty are added to the list of exemptions to restrictions to allow parking outside an address of who they are caring for, to ensure that they can provide essential care in a timely manner.

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

17.3. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Dunlop and Councillor Douglas

That this Council agrees:

- All pedestrians should feel safe on our pavements, yet street clutter can make walking and wheeling unsafe, forcing people onto the road which is dangerous;
- Street furniture should be clean, have a purpose and be consistent; and
- Street clutter should be removed.

Therefore, Council tasks officers to:

- Carry out an audit of street infrastructure including street signage, project information; posts, etc:
- Remove historic street clutter which has no current purpose or future benefit;
- Ensure relevant signage is cleaned and fit for purpose;
- Ensure signs have the appropriately-named Council on it, where this applies;
- Identify a nominated officer within the Council to lead on the audit to ensure items are listed and removed; and
- Write to the Department for Infrastructure to request they complete a similar de-clutter across the Borough.

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

17.4. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor T Smith and Councillor Cooper

This council abhors animal cruelty and believes an Animal Abuse Register would be of immense help in preventing those convicted of animal cruelty from owning or breeding animals.

Given the failure of Stormont to introduce a central register for all of N Ireland, this Council tasks officers to bring back a report detailing how it can set up a local animal welfare offenders register for this borough.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor T Smith, seconded by Councillor Woods, that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Environment Committee.

17.5. Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman McIlveen and Alderman Armstrong-Cotter

Given the public health issues and the desire to encourage outdoor eating and entertainment in Conway Square, that officers look at humane means to address the pigeon problem in the Square to include a new bylaw to prohibit feeding of the birds in and around the Square and to erect in the meantime advisory signs to deter feeding of birds in the area.

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

Circulated for Information

- a) DAERA Annual Progress Report 2021/22 (Correspondence attached)
- b) NI Libraries Quarterly Screening Report (Documents attached)
- c) The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (Correspondence attached)
- d) Letter from the Private Office of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on the Platinum Jubilee

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

8.3 MINUTES OF CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE DATED 20 SEPTEMBER 2022 (CONTINUED)

****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)

8.4 MINUTES OF COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE DATED 21 SEPTEMBER 2022 (CONTINUED)

****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 Irvine, Councillor Blaney and Councillor Chambers declared an interest in the above item and were excluded from the meeting – 8.44pm)

(Councillor McClean returned to the meeting – 8.49pm)

(Alderman Irvine, Councillor Blaney and Councillor Chambers were returned to the meeting – 9.05pm)

(The meeting went into recess at 9.05pm and resumed at 9.11pm)

18. SHINE PROGRAMME EXTENSION (FILE ED79)

*****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. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FLEXIBLE FUND UPDATE (FILE DEVP25) (Appendix X)

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

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

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

20. TENDER FOR REVIEW OF 5 MASTERPLANS (FILE REG83)

*****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. MARINE SERVICES TENDER (Appendix XI)

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

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

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

(Councillor Cathcart was excluded having declared an interest in Items 22 and 23 – 9.26pm)

22. RESCINDING MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR IRWIN, ALDERMAN WILSON, ALDERMAN IRVINE, COUNCILLOR GILMOUR, COUNCILLOR MACARTHUR, COUNCILLOR MCKIMM, COUNCILLOR GREER AND COUNCILLOR MCKEE

*****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)

(Councillor Greer joined the meeting – 10.39pm)

23. NEWTOWNARDS CITIZENS HUB - OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE
(Appendix XI)

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

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

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

It was noted that the above item had been withdrawn following the decision of Item 22.

(Councillor Cathcart was returned to the meeting – 10.49pm)

24. TENDER FOR THE SUPPLY, DELIVERY, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT FOR HYBRID MEETINGS

*****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)

(Councillor Walker left the meeting – 10.57pm)

25. LDP DRAFT PLAN STRATEGY (Appendix XI)

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

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

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

(The meeting went into recess at 11.05pm and resumed at 11.15pm)

(Alderman McIlveen, Alderman M Smith, Councillor Blaney, Councillor Brooks, Councillor Greer, Councillor Kennedy, Councillor MacArthur, Councillor McKimm, Councillor S Irvine, Councillor Smart and Councillor Woods had left the meeting at this stage)

READMITTANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 11.50pm.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Planning Committee was held virtually on Tuesday, 4th October 2022 at 7.00 pm via Zoom.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Alderman Gibson

Aldermen: Keery (7:22 pm)
Mcllveen

Councillors:	Adair (7.22 pm)	McClellan
	Brooks	McKee
	Cathcart	Moore
	Kennedy	P Smith
	McAlpine (7:04 pm)	Walker

Officers: Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning (S McCullough), Head of Planning (A McCullough) and Democratic Services Officers (M Mcllveen & S McCrea)

1. APOLOGIES

An apology was received from Councillor McRandal and Councillor Thompson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2022

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

RECOMMENDED that the minutes be noted.

AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor McKee, that the minutes be noted.

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

4.1 LA06/2021/1031/F- Two storey replacement dwelling with integral garage 3 Bridge Road, Helen's Bay (Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report outlining the planning application.

DEA: Hollywood & Clandeboye

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

Proposal: Two storey replacement dwelling with integral garage.

Site Location: 3 Bridge Road, Helen's Bay

Recommendation: Approval

The Head of Planning advised that the proposal was for the demolition of an existing dwelling and construction of replacement dwelling, incorporating integral garage at 3 Bridge Road, Helens Bay. The proposal was being presented at committee as it attracted 17 objections from 10 separate addresses.

The site consisted of detached two-storey dwelling along with an attached outbuilding and carport, sitting within its own grounds. The site was accessed by a laneway leading from Bridge Road with boundaries of the site defined by hedging and thick vegetation. The topography of the site was predominantly flat and was located within the settlement limit of Helen's Bay as defined by extent and draft Plans. The site lay within the proposed Helen's Bay Area of Village Character and had attracted a number of objections from 10 separate addresses; 6, 6a, & 9 Church Road objected, but other objections had been submitted from addresses not within the Borough, and those submitted by elected members, which tipped the trigger for referral to Planning Committee.

The proposal as originally submitted was considered to be unacceptable, so the agent worked with the Council and reduced the overall scale and massing as well as removing a first-floor terrace which 3rd parties had raised concerns about.

The plans were amended reducing the ridge height from 8.3 to 7m, 1st floor windows and a 1st floor terrace on gable elevation removed and better window placement to improve solid to void ratio.

Objections raised were concerned with:

- Overlooking from terrace and first floor windows facing No6 and 6A
- noise disturbance from terrace; both of which have been addressed by removal of the terrace and subject windows from the plans.

The remaining issues to consider were as follows:

Scale, overdevelopment of plot, design, overlooking of church, impact on setting of listed building, sewers, precedent, and overlooking and overshadowing of 6 and 6A, which have been comprehensively addressed within the Case Officer Report.

This proposal was in line with the SPPS as it was the reuse of existing land within the settlement limit and would be of high-quality design and landscaping. Of note, this proposal was to replace one single-family unit house with another single-family unit house and did not represent an increase in density within the established residential area.

The relevant policies for this proposal were PPS2, PPS3, PPS6A, PPS7 and PPS7A Safeguarding the character of Established Residential Areas. The principle of development was acceptable as the site lay within the settlement limit and was for

housing within a residential area. The existing dwelling on site did not make a significant material contribution to the AVC and therefore its demolition was considered acceptable.

The area was characterised by predominantly detached dwellings. The proposed replacement would not lead to any subdivision of the existing plot and there would be no change to the plot size or the intensification of the use of the plot. The replacement would be for one dwelling with an integral garage in its own gardens and grounds.

The proposed dwelling would be two-storey with a single storey portion to the side to break up the massing and scale with a ridge height of 7.5m at the highest point. Whilst larger in scale than the existing, the proposed dwelling would have a similar footprint. When taking in the surrounding context, the proposed dwelling appeared appropriate for the locality. When considering scale, it was important to note that the existing dwelling on site could avail of householder extensions as it stood and therefore the footprint and scale had the potential to increase in the absence of this proposal. The scale of this proposal was not considered out of character for the area. The finishes proposed were of high quality and included a natural slate roof, smooth render, stone cladding and grey/black aluminium windows and doors. Those finishes were to be in keeping with the surrounding area. The proposal would maintain the character of the AVC.

The setting of the listed church was assessed by HED which was content with the proposal subject to conditions regards finishes *'To ensure the detailed design respects the listed building in terms of scale, height, massing and alignment; and To ensure the works proposed make use of traditional or sympathetic building materials and techniques which respect those found on the building.'*

With regard to residential amenity, it was noteworthy that a dwelling already existed on the site which could be extended. The main neighbouring dwelling to consider was No. 6 Church Road directly adjacent to the site to the east which was already located in close proximity to the site. The proposed replacement dwelling was to be sited so that the gable end of the house was the elevation directly facing the rear elevation of No. 6. There were no 1st floor windows proposed in this gable end to ensure no direct overlooking due to the limited separation distance (2m). With regard to No. 6's garden area, due to positioning of the dwelling and the oblique angle, there would be no significant overlooking. The height of the first-floor windows at 4m (to mid-point) would also ensuring overlooking was limited. At the time of writing, 3 existing first-floor windows directly overlooked No.6 therefore this proposal would be a betterment with regard to overlooking. The provision of a 1.8m fence along this boundary would also help screen the dwelling and any potential for overlooking.

In terms of overshadowing, this proposal would have no greater impact than what already existed. The agent amended the plans to have a single storey element closer to No. 6 and also reduced the overall ridge height of the proposal (8.3 to 7m). The proposal would not be dominant considering the existing arrangement. With regard to the overlooking of the church, any overlooking of this public building or its external space was not deemed as a loss of residential amenity.

There was to be 62sqm of private amenity space provided as well as usable front garden area with it noted that the existing amenity space was also limited. As for natural heritage, a bat survey was submitted and NIEA consulted which was content with its methodology.

The proposed dwelling was to use an existing access and did not represent an intensification of use. The proposal was a replacement dwelling in the settlement limit of an appropriate scale and design with no significant further impact on residential amenity than what already existed and therefore approval was recommended.

Mr Marc Ballard and Mr Nick Bell were present to speak in support of the application. Mr Bell gave thanks to the Planning Department and asked for Members to consider that the dwelling's owners were part of a local family and would continue to add character to the village and do so respectively. As for objections, they had been with regard to an earlier version of plans which had long since been rectified and believed that only four to five of the original objections would exist with the current version.

As there were no questions from Members the Chairman thanked the gentlemen for attending and they were moved back to the public gallery.

Councillor P Smith proposed, seconded by Councillor Cathcart that the recommendation be adopted, and outlying planning permission be granted.

Councillor P Smith believed the proposal was for a like-for-like dwelling with a similar footprint and, given that the existing dwelling was uninhabitable as well as most objections being related to an earlier iteration, he was happy to propose.

Councillor Cathcart agreed but asked for some clarification on the considerations of overlooking adjacent to non-residential areas. The Head of Planning explained that the windows on the side of a church tended to be of stained or opaque glass and that objections appeared to be with regard to a communal area outdoors. However, the current dwelling had windows that overlooked this area as did the dwelling on the opposite side of the church and it was believed that the residents within those dwellings would more likely be affected by those attending the communal area as opposed to vice-versa. Councillor Cathcart asked if the plans impinged upon church grounds given some of the plans that had been shown to Members appearing to show such. The Head of Planning advised this was only an overlay issue in the plans and that grounds would not be taken over.

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

4.2 LA06/2022/0115/F - Demolition of existing garage and erection of two storey rear extension, 8 Demesne Park, Holywood
(Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report outlining the planning application.

DEA: Hollywood & Clandeboye

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

Proposal: Demolition of existing garage and erection of two storey rear extension

Site Location: 8 Demesne Park, Hollywood

Recommendation: Approval

The Head of Planning explained that the application sought full planning permission for demolition of an existing garage and erection of a two-storey rear extension at 8 Demesne Park, Hollywood. The application had been brought before Planning Committee as six or more individual objections contrary to the officer's recommendation to approve had been received.

The site was located in a well-established residential area in Hollywood, characterised by detached and semi-detached dwellings within the proposed Hollywood South Area of Townscape Character. The site contained a detached one and a half-storey dwelling which was, at the time of writing, unoccupied. There was a mix of single-storey, one and a half storey and two storey dwellings along Demesne Park.

The plot at No.8 benefited from a generous rear-garden with an existing detached garage which was proposed for demolition. The garage made no material contribution to the appearance of the ATC, therefore the Planning Department had no objection to its demolition. The original application consisted of a large rear extension and a separate garden room. This original proposal was deemed to be unacceptable by the Planning Department due to its design, scale and materials which were considered to be unsympathetic to the host dwelling. It had consisted of a very box like flat roof contemporary design which did not respect the form and character of the existing dwelling. Six separate objections were received from or on behalf of neighbouring properties in relation to this original proposal raising concerns regarding the design and appearance of the extension and loss of privacy. At the request of the Planning Department, the agent amended the scheme and submitted a revised proposal for a smaller scale rear-extension of a more sympathetic design.

The proposed extension was to be located 12.5m from the rear boundary with No. 7 Demesne Avenue in excess of the 10m recommended in Creating Places and would also be 20m from the rear elevation of No. 7, therefore ensuring that there would be no unacceptable degree of overlooking from the proposed first floor windows on the rear elevation. Furthermore, there were to be no proposed windows on the side elevations of the extension which ensured that adequate privacy would be maintained for Nos. 6 and 10 Demesne Park.

The proposed extension was now much more in keeping with the form and character of the host dwelling. The scale of the extension had been reduced, a more traditional pitched roof incorporated, and the materials of smooth render and slate would match the existing dwelling. There would also be no proposed windows on the side elevations of the extension, ensuring that adequate privacy would be maintained for Nos. 6 and 10 Demesne Park. It was also now comparable to scale and design of numerous other rear extensions to properties in the immediate vicinity and it was

noted that no further objections had been received following the submission and advertisement/notification of the amended proposal.

In regard to objectors, four addresses objected, however, the application was being considered because of two additional objections submitted on behalf of residents by a then MLA and a Councillor.

In summary, it was considered that the proposal complied with all of the policy requirements of PPS7 Addendum, Residential Extensions and Alterations. This was a rear-extension and its size and the scale was not considered to be excessive within the generous-sized plot nor would it appear overly dominant from any public viewpoint within the area. Furthermore, all representations had been carefully considered and the Planning Department was content that the amended proposal would ensure that there would be no adverse impact on the amenity of adjacent properties. On that basis it was recommended that full planning permission should be granted.

Councillor P Smith proposed, seconded by Councillor Cathcart that the recommendation be adopted, and planning permission be granted.

Councillor P Smith agreed that the second iteration of plans was much improved and in keeping with other locations in the locality, even to a lesser extent. Councillor Cathcart agreed in that the original design was more of an office design than a residential one and he commended Officers for their assistance in reaching a satisfactory conclusion. Councillor McClean added that this and the previous item had been great examples of planning work in creating locality-appropriate designs for areas.

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

4.3 LA06/2022/0774/F - Installation of roller shutter and ball net Blair Mayne Wellbeing Complex and Leisure Centre 1 Dairy Hall Lane, Newtownards
(Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report outlining the planning application.

DEA: Newtownards

Committee Interest: An application made by the Council

Proposal: Installation of roller shutter and ball net

Site Location: Blair Mayne Wellbeing Complex and Leisure Centre, 1 Dairy Hall Lane, Newtownards

Recommendation: Approval

The Head of Planning explained to Members the issue of the leisure centre suffering from periods of ongoing anti-social behaviour, especially in the blue entrance area subject of this application. The proposed solution was to install a roller shutter and net nearer the opening end of the entrance to keep perpetrators outside and away from the most affected area, i.e. the blue wall entrance corridor and entrance doors.

The roller shutter would be used to secure the area during out of hours and the netting was designed to prevent climbing over to cause damage or graffiti to the walls and doors and to stop rubbish and objects being thrown over, and; as it was suspected that the roller shutter would be used to kick balls against, to stop the ball going over and prevent climbing over to retrieve.

If any rubbish was to be thrown at the net, it was hoped that it would not attach itself to the netting but just accumulate at the outside of the shutter, which could then be easily lifted. It was also suspected that the shutter may suffer from graffiti, but staff would monitor accordingly. The proposal had been assessed and it was considered that planning permission should be granted.

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

Both Councillor P Smith and Alderman McIlveen expressed disappointment that such measures were required, especially considering the millions of pounds of investment which had been intended to improve a local area, only to be treated in such a manner.

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

5. UPDATE ON PLANNING APPEALS (Appendix IV)

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

New Appeals Lodged

1. No new appeals had lodged since date of last report.

Decisions

2. The following appeal was withdrawn on the 2 September 2022.

PAC Ref	2021/A0100
Application ref	LA06/2018/0324/O
Appellant	Belfast Central Mission
Subject of Appeal	Development of 24 no. extra care living units and shared communal facilities
Location	Lands at 95 & 97 Donaghadee Road, Millisle

3. The following appeal was upheld on 15 September 2022.

PAC Ref	2019/A0234
Application ref	LA06/2018/0417/F
Appellant	J & W Wightman

Subject of Appeal	Erection of farm shed as cattle house and general purpose shed with underground slurry tank and hardstanding
Location	Agricultural fields 415m SW of No. 4 Drumhirk Way, Newtownards

The Council refused planning permission on 04 December 2019 for the following reasons:

- i. The proposal was contrary to Policy CTY 1 and Policy CTY12 of PPS 21 - Sustainable Development in the Countryside in that it had not been demonstrated that the site was on an active and established agricultural holding and:
 - it was necessary for the efficient use of the established agricultural holding;
 - it was appropriate to this location due to the unacceptable scale of the development;
 - the development, if permitted, would visually integrate into the local landscape; and
 - the development would not have an adverse impact on natural heritage.
- ii. The proposal was contrary to Policy CTY12 of PPS 21 -Sustainable Development in the Countryside, in that the applicant has not provided sufficient information to confirm:
 - there were no suitable existing buildings on the holding that could be used; and
 - why the proposal was not sited beside existing farm buildings.
- iii. The proposal was contrary to Policy CTY12 of PPS 21 -Sustainable Development in the Countryside, and did not merit being considered as an exceptional case as it had not been demonstrated that health and safety reasons existed to justify an alternative site away from existing farm buildings or that the alternative site away from existing farm buildings was essential for the efficient functioning of the business.
- iv. The proposal was contrary to Policy FLD 3 of PPS 15, Revised Planning and Flood Risk as insufficient information had been submitted to demonstrate that the proposal would not be at risk from flooding or that it may increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- v. The proposal was contrary to Policy NH1 of PPS 2, Natural Heritage, as insufficient information had been submitted to demonstrate that the proposal, if permitted, would not be likely to have a significant effect on Belfast Lough SPA/Ramsar, Belfast Lough Open Water SPA, Outer Belfast Lough ASSI, Blaeberry Island Bog ASSI, Ballymacormick Point ASSI, Craigantlet Woods ASSI, Outer Ards ASSI/SPA/Ramsar, Strangford Lough SAC/SPA/Ramsar/Part 1 ASSI, Scrabo ASSI & Whitespots ASSI.
- vi. The proposal was contrary to Policy NH5 of Planning Policy Statement 2, Natural Heritage, as insufficient information had been submitted to demonstrate

that the proposal, if permitted, would not have an unacceptable adverse impact on priority habitats and other natural heritage features worthy of protection.

- vii. The proposal was contrary to the SPPS as insufficient environmental information had been submitted to demonstrate that the proposal would not have significant adverse impacts on the water environment.

The appellant submitted information not made available during the processing of the application including farm maps and other supporting evidence relating to the location of the rented lands and buildings. Whilst the Commissioner was of the view that it would have been helpful for the Council to have had this information earlier, it nevertheless had to be considered and he did not consider that its introduction posed any prejudice to any party.

The Commissioner was of the view that the appeal site, although being a more recent acquisition compared to the long-term rented lands along with the farm business when taken as a whole has, nevertheless, had been established for more than 6 years.

It was pertinent to highlight the following dates:

- The Refusal Decision issued **04 December 2019**
- The Appeal was lodged on **26 February 2020**
- The Appeal Hearing took place on **11 November 2021**
- Compliance with the requisite six-year period was achieved in **June 2022**
- The Commissioner's decision issued on the **15 September 2022**

From the submitted evidence and the Commissioner's own observations, it was considered that there were no suitable buildings on the holding that could be used therefore the first additional criterion of Policy CTY12 was met. There was no dispute that the appeal development would not be sited beside an existing building given it would be the first building on that part of the holding. Policy CTY12 states that exceptionally, consideration may be given to an alternative site away from existing farm buildings, provided there are no other sites available at another group of buildings on the holding and where it is essential for the efficient functioning of the business, or there are demonstrable health and safety reasons. This element of the policy includes the matters pertaining to necessity of the building encompassed within criterion (a) of Policy CTY12. It was accepted that the appeal building would be essential for the efficient functioning of the business and although the Appellants would have to travel from their home to the appeal development, that did not persuade him that the proposed building would not be essential. The exceptional test under Policy CTY12 of PPS21 is therefore met.

The Commissioner considered that although the building would be evident in the landscape travelling either direction, it would have the benefit of backdrop from the line of vegetation to the east, along with sections of intervening vegetation along the roadside, obscuring a large proportion of the overall development, including much of the hardstanding therefore it was considered that the appeal development satisfies criteria (b) and (c) of Policy CTY12.

The Commissioner considered that the proposed development satisfies Policy CTY12 of PPS21 read as a whole and accordingly it also met Policy CTY1 of PPS21 and the related provisions of the SPPS and therefore the Council's first, second and third reasons for refusal were not sustained.

The application as considered by the Council required a Drainage Assessment given the expansive area of hardstanding accompanying the proposed building. However, as referenced earlier the additional information submitted included an amended Site Layout showing a reduced hardstanding area below the threshold in the policy of 1000m² therefore Policy FLD3 is not engaged and the Council's fourth reason for refusal is not sustained.

During processing of the application, Council was advised of potential for contaminants in the land given the previous nearby industrial uses, constituted of several quarries and lands associated with an old railway line. The Council stated that there was insufficient information to assess the extent of any contamination at the site, the nature and extent of unacceptable risks and whether they could be mitigated through a remediation strategy. Concerns were also raised at potential adverse impacts on the water environment.

The Commissioner's assessment of the evidence submitted at the appeal and on-site observations led him to have no reason to disagree with the analysis and conclusions of the information submitted and found the development would satisfy the policy provisions of the SPPS in this respect and the Council's seventh reason for refusal was not sustained.

During the processing of the application NIEA Natural Environment Division and Shared Environmental Service considered there was insufficient information provided to undertake an assessment on any features of protected designations against the appeal development. The concerns pertained to the potential impacts of ammonia emissions altering the vegetation community structure within those sites and degradation of the aquatic environment arising from contaminated run-off during construction and operation of the development, as well as nitrogen deposition.

The Commissioner considered the submitted information and was of the opinion that subject to conditions relating to a maximum number of cattle housed in the proposed building at any one time, along with implementation of the Nitrates Management Plan as submitted there would not be likely to have a significant effect on any of the identified designated areas. In addition, the recommendation pertaining to implementation of a buffer along the eastern site boundary during construction to protect the watercourse would be necessary and could be secured by a condition in the event of permission being granted. The Commissioner therefore considered Policies NH1 and NH5 of PPS2, as well as the related provisions of the SPPS were satisfied and the Council's fifth and sixth reasons for refusal were not sustained.

The PAC report is attached to this report.
Details of appeal decisions, new appeals and scheduled hearings can be viewed at www.pacni.gov.uk.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

Councillor Cathcart proposed, seconded by Alderman Keery that the recommendation be adopted, and the report be noted.

Councillor Cathcart was curious as to the late withdrawal by the Belfast Central Mission and asked if any indications existed as to a new planning application. The Head of Planning explained that the power existed to refuse future applications of the same content if policy context remained unchanged, and that no reason had been given by the Belfast Central Mission. Alderman Keery was pleased to hear that the Wightman shed had gone through.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Alderman Keery, that the recommendation to note be adopted.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman Keery seconded by Councillor Cathcart, that the public/press be excluded during the discussion of the undernoted item of confidential business at 7.42 pm.

Councillor Adair left the meeting.

6. UPDATE ON PLANNING PORTAL REPLACEMENT PROJECT

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

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

7. UPDATE ON JUDICIAL REVIEW STATUS

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

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 McClean, seconded by Councillor Cathcart, that the public/press be readmitted to the meeting.

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 8:29 pm.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Environment Committee was held remotely via Zoom on Wednesday, 5 October 2022 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Alderman McDowell

Aldermen: Armstrong-Cotter

Councillors:	Boyle	Johnson
	Cathcart	MacArthur (7.17 pm)
	Cummings	McAlpine
	Edmund	McKee
	Greer	Woods
	Irwin	

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

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Aldermen Carson and M Smith, and Councillor Smart. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor MacArthur.

The Chair welcomed Councillor Woods back to both the Council and the Environment Committee and reported that she would take up the role of Vice Chair of the Committee.

NOTED.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair asked for Declarations of Interest and none were indicated.

NOTED.

3. Q1 SERVICE PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORTS

3.1 Waste and Cleansing Services (Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment 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 2022)
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2022)

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

Reporting approach

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

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

The report for Quarter 1 2022-23 was attached.

Key points to note:

- Landfill tonnage had fallen by over 1,000 tonnes for the same period in 2021/22.
- The recycling rate had increased by 5.5% for the equivalent period in 2021/22, although still 2% lower than in 2019.
- Overspend related to Covid social distancing measures that were still in place during Q1.
- The in-house public realm deep cleaning service did not commence during Q1 on account of delays with the recruitment of staff.

Key achievements:

- The LEAMS Cleanliness Index had improved from 73 to 76 for the same period during 2021/22.
- Recycling through the Council HRCs exceeded the 60% target.

Emerging issues:

- There was a definite downward trend in terms of waste arisings resulting in less waste being sent to landfill and an increase in the Council's recycling rate towards pre-Covid levels.

- Several waste contracts were subject to annual price reviews during the current year and with RPI around 10%, that would add to budgetary pressures.
- DfI Roads had reduced the frequency of grass cutting on a number of major arterial routes, meaning less opportunity to take advantage of temporary traffic controls to enable litter picking under safe conditions.

Action to be taken:

- Review of HRC (and kerbside recycling) measures to be carried out. That was the subject of a separate report to this month's Committee meeting.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

Councillor Woods asked about staff recruitment within Waste and Cleansing and if the section was now fully staffed, she also queried the Council's waste contracts and if any of the Borough's waste was being sent overseas. The Head of Waste and Cleansing informed Members that the majority of the vacant posts within the section had now been filled but it was a continual cycle to maintain a full complement. He confirmed that no waste was sent directly overseas but that some contractors could send materials to overseas markets where there was no local market available. He agreed to supply the Member with more detail on that.

Councillor Boyle referred to emerging issues and had been startled by the increase in costs for waste contracts. He was also concerned that DfI would be reducing the frequency of its grass cutting on a number of main roads within the Borough, many of those only having two cuts per year. He considered that parts of the Borough would look like forgotten areas and in many rural areas particularly, clear sight lines were essential for road users. He hoped that the Department's stand on biodiversity would not impact adversely road users and he urged the Council to monitor the position.

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

3.2 Assets and Property Services

(Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment 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

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

Reporting approach

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

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

The report for Quarter 1 2022-23 was attached.

Key points to note:

- Roadside audits were still suspended due to Covid. That was expected to change when the risk assessment for cleansing vehicles was updated.
- Completion rate for maintenance jobs was slightly behind target, due to staff shortages.
- Staff attendance was slightly below target due to several members of staff being off on long term sick.

Key achievements:

- Church Street offices windows
- Movilla Cemetery Toilet Block refurbishment
- Clandeboye Cemetery Toilet Block refurbishment
- West Winds Community Centre refurbishment
- Spafield Lighting
- Cycle Shelter Installations (Regen Project)

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

Councillor Woods referred to roadside audits that had been suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic and if they would be reinstated. The Head of Property and Assets reported that his team was waiting for a revised risk assessment and those would restart as soon as revised vehicle safety arrangements were put in place. She also asked about the trial that the Council had hoped to undertake using biofuel and

it was reported that the price of that had risen considerably and it was not competitive at the current time but would be kept under review.

Following a further question from Councillor Woods about lifebelts in coastal areas it was explained that a monitoring system was in place and that equipment was checked on a weekly basis. Councillor Edmund stressed the importance of warning messages around life-saving equipment and the Head of Property and Assets agreed stating that disturbance was mainly seasonal, and he would review what was in place.

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

4. DRINKING IN PUBLIC BYE-LAWS AND POWERS

(Appendices III & IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing that Byelaws were historically introduced by both legacy Councils (as they were across Councils in Northern Ireland), under the provisions of the Local Government Act (NI) 1972.

DfC had policy responsibility for those byelaws and by virtue of Section 91(1) of the Act, they did not have any legal effect until they were confirmed by the Department. Byelaws currently in force across Councils were based upon a model approved by the Department and were consistent across all Councils in terms of offences created and enforcement powers.

The current Drinking in Public Bye Laws had been in existence for some considerable period of time, and as part of the ongoing ASB Legislation Review, the DoJ and DfC were planning a joint public consultation on ASB. The Council's views were being sought on several issues relating to the Byelaws (see letter at appendix).

The Council's views on those issues, or any alternative options suggested, would be used to inform proposals within the consultation document which was expected to be issued early next year. A response was requested by 14 October 2022. Delegated powers were granted at the September meeting of the Council to allow the Environment Committee to agree and issue the response on behalf of the Council to DfC.

Proposed Response

It was proposed that the following responses were provided to each of the key questions/issues set out in the letter from DfC:

The effectiveness of the operation of the current byelaws prohibiting the consumption of alcohol in public places

Due to the nature of the offence covered in those byelaws, whereby there was a high probability of aggression, non-cooperation, and obstruction by alleged offenders, Councils had always relied very heavily upon partnership working with PSNI for

enforcement - with PSNI officers detecting offences and supplying relevant evidence material/witness statements to Councils who then processed prosecution cases through the Courts. PSNI officers were appropriately trained professional law enforcement officers who were experienced in dealing with volatile and potentially aggressive alcohol bye-law offenders, and they had powers of arrest for failure to supply name and address etc. which civilian Council officers did not have. Therefore, whilst the offence of consuming alcohol in a designated public place was contained within a Council administered byelaw, in effect the enforcement of the byelaw could not be carried out without the key involvement of PSNI.

The level of offence detections and supply of evidence to Councils by PSNI had reduced significantly in recent years, undoubtedly as a consequence of diminishing/stretched PSNI resources. The current enforcement powers were also somewhat limited as indicated below, also hampering detections. Therefore, the effectiveness of current byelaws as a means of controlling instances of problematic consumption of alcohol in public places, was now very limited.

Potential additional powers which the Council considers may assist Council officers and PSNI address the problems caused by drinking in public places. Councils may wish to consider having access to enforcement powers e.g. fixed penalty notices.

For reasons given above, it was difficult to see how additional powers provided under the auspices of modified Council byelaws on this subject, would be effective. Council considered that enactment of powers as envisaged under the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 were much more likely to lead to greater control of problematic instances of alcohol consumption in designated public places, as outlined below.

The proposals contained in Articles 68-72 of the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008, which were to replace the current bye-laws, whether these proposals would address on-street drinking problems.

It was considered that replacement of a Council administered byelaw with enforcement arrangements and powers set out in Articles 68-72 of the Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2008 was long overdue. As already indicated, the nature of the offence meant that it could only be safely and effectively enforced by the PSNI.

The expansion of offences as set out in Article 68 would be considered by the Council to significantly enhance the effectiveness of addressing the problem. That would allow PSNI officers to not only enforce against actual consumption of alcohol (which it was understood could be difficult to prove especially when alleged offenders were aware that PSNI officers were present in the locality), but also deal with situations where they reasonably believed that alcohol had or was intended to be consumed in a designated public place. It was considered that that adjustment to the threshold of proof in relation to consumption of alcohol in a public place was reasonable, justifiable and proportionate.

The power of a PSNI officer to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for a prescribed Article 68 offence, as set out under Article 69 of the Order would be considered by the Council to significantly enhance the level of enforcement activity and streamline the enforcement process itself. Currently, all alleged offences of alcohol consumption in a public place must be taken through the Courts - which was not necessarily the most appropriate route to deal with many such incidents, in the first instance.

The Council considered that the provisions in Article 70 of the Order meant that it could continue to be meaningfully involved in the regulation of alcohol consumption in public places, by playing a role in deciding which locations within its Borough should become 'designated public places' where consumption of alcohol was to be prohibited.

Further Comments

The Council was cognisant that whilst it had expressed its views in relation to the nature and range of enforcement powers that should be introduced to more effectively deal with the issue of alcohol consumption in public places, it was the PSNI that would bear responsibility for implementing those powers. It was therefore crucial that the views, support and buy-in of PSNI was secured before any new regime was agreed and taken forward.

The Council and its constituents were considerably exercised by the continued (and in some instances growing) problem of anti-social behaviour fuelled by the consumption of alcohol in public places, in particular, at certain popular amenity locations in the Borough where the rights of the majority to enjoy such areas was being severely compromised by such a problem. The Council was therefore very supportive of an overhaul of enforcement controls and powers in relation to that issue, preferably in the manner outlined in this response.

RECOMMENDED that the Council agrees to submission of the response outlined in this report, to DfC.

The Director spoke about the report explaining that the Council had written to the Department some time ago in relation to issues including Alcohol Bye Laws and whether they were fit for purpose. This was a pre-consultation, but the Department was interested in the Council's views on the matter.

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

(Councillor MacArthur entered the meeting at 7.17 pm)

Proposing the recommendation Councillor Cathcart welcomed the response and progress on the matter and did not think that the current position was working well.

He thought that Council officers did not have the training or resources to carry out the role and would be interested to see how the matter developed.

Councillor Boyle was in agreement believing that it was right that the Council responded but could not help but think it was a paper exercise. He thought that if resources were unavailable then controls themselves would be useless and referred to the annual festival which had taken place recently in Portaferry where the town had wanted a police presence but on three days of the festival no police were made available. He understood that 150 additional police officers had been trained in Northern Ireland but there was no budget to put them in place. He did not want to see Council staff on the front-line taking abuse and aggravation over what could be considered a policing matter.

Councillor Woods recognised that the police service was stretched and there were often more serious issues to be addressed. The Director had replied reflecting the concerns raised and that the PSNI had the primary burden, but the regulation of drinking behaviour was of general public concern when it was being consumed in public places and leading to public disorder. The matter was complex, and the response given was ultimately something for Members to agree. The PSNI was undoubtedly a key consultee and they, along other statutory bodies, would no doubt respond with their own views on the matters raised.

Councillor Greer welcomed the consultation and considered it to be something that the Council had hoped for over some considerable time. She anticipated that it would help in time within her own DEA, such as in Helen's Bay, during the summer months and she hoped that the controls on consumption of alcohol in public places would be tightened.

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

5. RECYCLING ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGNS REPORT (Appendices V, VI & VII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing that Members would be aware of the worrying trend over a now prolonged period, of declining recycling rates and increased landfill - as indicated in successive quarterly municipal waste statistics reports during the past couple of years.

The Climate Change Act (NI) 2022 was passed in June this year and introduced a new very challenging recycling target of 70% by 2030. During the past 12 months, the Borough recycling rate had slumped to 48.3% (from a previous high of 54.7%); the task ahead of the Borough to meet the new statutory recycling target was therefore very significant indeed and would call for further huge step changes in levels of resident recycling engagement.

During the last financial year (2021/22), the Council collected 40,124 tons of waste for landfill. The landfill cost of that at current gate fees/landfill tax rates was almost

£4.8M. For each ton of waste receipt that was avoided - by promotion of waste reduction by residents and/or preventing infiltration of illegitimate waste from our waste management system - the full cost of waste processing was avoided. The unit cost of recycling major categories of recyclable waste streams was half or less than that of landfill, therefore the saving opportunity by recycling more of what was collected was extremely significant.

Waste Stream	Cost per Ton
Landfill	£121.60
Blue Bin	£36.38 (net of revenue share)
Separated Garden Compostable Waste (HRCs)	£49.68
Brown Bin Compostable Waste	£63.95

It was anticipated that the cost of disposing of residual (non-recycled waste) would rise sharply above current rates, next year; although the level of increase was yet to be determined depending upon the outcome of procurement exercises and the level of landfill tax rise in April 2023, it was not unreasonable to estimate a potential rise of 20% or more - bearing in mind that landfill tax rises alone were linked to RPI and that was projected to reach up to 18% later this year. Therefore, if landfill levels were to remain on a par with the 2021/22 year, the £4.8M landfill bill could rise to around £5.8M.

If our municipal waste arisings per capita was brought down to the average for other NI Councils, based upon the 2021-22 baseline, that would reduce total municipal total waste arisings by some 3,240 tons to c88,193 tons. Achievement of the statutory 2030 recycling target of 70% of the lower 'average' total Council tonnage, would result in a landfill figure of 26,458T. That was some 14k tons less than the amount of municipal waste the Council landfilled last year.

The combined potential savings in terms of avoided waste arisings through both alignment/reduction to average NI Council waste receipt levels and compliance with the statutory recycling target for waste we did receive, was estimated at around £1.1M per year. The estimate was based upon current prices and an average cost of recycling across all recyclable waste types of c50% of the cost of landfill. As indicated above, with the ever-increasing focus in the move to a circular economy and a likely rise in the commodity value of recyclables along with the projected rising cost of landfilling and incineration of residual waste, the potential savings were likely to be even greater – potentially significantly so.

2021-22 Baseline Municipal Waste Tonnage	91434 T
Tonnage Based Upon NI Council Average	88193 T
Landfill 2021-22 Baseline	40142 T
Landfill Based Upon Alignment with NI Average plus Achievement of New Statutory 70% Recycling Target	26458 T
Disposal Cost Saving from Avoided Waste Receipt (Alignment with NI Council Average)	£35410 6

Disposal Cost Saving by Achievement of New Statutory 70% Recycling Target	£66300 0
Potential Total Estimated Annual Saving in Waste Disposal/Treatment Costs (Alignment with NI Council Average Waste Receipts plus Compliance with New 70% Statutory Recycling Figure	£1.057 M

Following discussions with Party Group Leaders over the past few months, it was now planned that major campaigns would be launched in a bid to address a range of issues that had been identified as adversely impacting our sustainable waste resource management agenda, and to reinvigorate levels of recycling engagement amongst residents.

As part of the programme, both key elements of the Council's waste management service - the Household Recycling Centre service and the Kerbside Waste and Recycling Collection service – would see a structured and rigorous implementation of various terms and conditions of service use that had been agreed by the Council and built up over the past number of years with the aim of minimising landfill and maximising recycling. Whilst those rules around service use had been promoted and enforced to varying degrees in the past, the forthcoming programme would see a much more structured, continuous and consistent application during the course of routine service delivery.

Household Recycling Centre Service

It was planned that site operational management arrangements would be put in place to ensure that everyone accessing and using the Council's HRCs, did so in compliance with agreed terms and conditions of use of the service. That would include the following resourcing measures to achieve delivery of agreed rules/outcomes:

- Everyone presenting to access all HRCs would be required to show proof of residency within the Borough (such as driving licence, rates bill, utility bill or bank statement showing residential address). Site access points would be restricted and supervised to enforce that rule.
- All prospective site users would be asked on entry to confirm that all items they were bringing for disposal are their own household waste items, arising from their residence within the Borough. Site staff would refuse entry where they had reason to believe that that was not the case, for example the frequency of visits and/or the nature of waste being transported was not consistent with legitimate householder use of the HRC service.
- All prospective site users would be asked if they had separated all recyclable from landfill waste items, otherwise they would be directed to newly designated 'waste sorting areas' on sites.
- Recyclable waste items and mixed waste that may contain recyclable waste, would not be permitted to be deposited in landfill skips; access to all site landfill skips would be continuously monitored/controlled to enforce that rule.

- The number and configuration of waste containers would be reviewed and changed to reflect the new rules and promote the recycling emphasis on site; that would lead to a reduction in landfill skips and an expansion of recycling containers/options on sites.
- Those accessing sites with a van/trailer would be required to apply for a permit and would be asked to produce proof of residency ID along with their valid permit at the point of entry; use of the permit to gain access would only be allowed by the householder who had applied for it. They would be asked at the point of entry to confirm that all of the waste they were transporting into the site was their own household waste from their own residence within the Borough. Unloading of waste would be supervised to monitor and enforce conformity with rules. Permit access would be refused where those conditions were not fulfilled.
- Use of Charity access permits would be more rigorously monitored and controlled, to promote greater assurance that all waste brought into the Council's HRCs using such permits was waste arising from within the Borough and was from the charitable operations of charities with a registered base within the Borough. Only designated/nominated persons would be allowed to use the permit on behalf of the authorised charity and those persons would be required to produce proof of ID on entry along with the permit itself. Unloading of charity waste would be supervised to monitor and enforce conformity with rules. Permit access would be refused where those conditions were not fulfilled.
- Where contravention of HRC site access and use rules were breached, future access may be denied for up to 6 months.

The site rules referred to above, largely already agreed by the Council over recent years, had been drawn together in a policy document format attached in appendices.

Additional manpower resourcing would be required to implement those rules rigorously and consistently, and it was proposed that that would be achieved in the short term through deployment of temporary/Agency staff to allow the opportunity to gauge success (impact on waste volumes/recycling rates/waste processing costs).

The weekly cost of the required additional manpower resource was estimated at £6k, although full recovery of that would require a reduction in landfill tonnage of just around 50 tons of waste from all the Council's HRCs (c20%); any waste disposal savings accruing thereafter would be a net financial benefit to the Council. Notwithstanding that, the cost of additional manpower could be met in the short term by unbudgeted revenue share from the blue bin processing contract, accrued from higher than projected market value of recyclable materials - therefore no additional budget requirement was anticipated as a consequence of the initiative.

Kerbside Waste Collection Services

Members would recall that pre-Covid, the Council had developed a protocol for monitoring and enforcing compliance with agreed kerbside recycling rules (as set out in the already approved policy document in the appendix). The arrangements in place for checking grey bins for recyclable waste items and implementation of a

warning sticker system (which could ultimately lead to suspension of the grey bin collection until recycling breaches had been corrected), were necessarily suspended during the pandemic.

It was now planned that a renewed and reinvigorated campaign would be implemented to educate around, monitor and enforce proper use of kerbside recycling services – using the same protocols as those that had already been devised and approved. However, concerted efforts would be made to relaunch the campaign in an even more high profile and robust fashion. Each bin collection crew would assume responsibility for monitoring, recording, and reporting grey bin recyclables checks – and supervisors and recycling officers would implement a routine and consistent protocol to promote a sustained focus by householders upon proper use of the various aspects of the Council's kerbside waste and recycling services. The job description of Refuse Collection Vehicle Drivers had been amended in recent times, to emphasise their 'team leader' role as well as several key duties associated with promoting householder engagement in kerbside recycling.

Recycling Education and Communications

A major communications and education campaign would be developed and delivered by the Waste and Cleansing Department, in collaboration with the Council's Corporate Communications team, for each of those two key elements of service development. It was envisaged that that would include direct mail communications to all homes, clearly setting out the key terms and conditions of use for HRCs and Kerbside Waste Collection Services and providing further key recycling information messages to assist residents in improving their levels of recycling engagement.

The estimated cost of the communications campaign was estimated at £25k, with £5k coming from the Corporate Communications budget and c£20k coming from in year surplus in the blue bin contract costs due to the unbudgeted revenue share.

Campaign Monitoring and Review

It was proposed that the above campaigns would be implemented as soon as operationally feasible, anticipated to be November 2022. The impact of the campaigns would be carefully monitored and reported to the Council next year, with an assessment of the scale of their likely contribution to achieving the new 2030 statutory 70% recycling target as set out in the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022. At that stage, depending upon the success of those measures, other measures such as reorganisation of the kerbside bin collection rotas to prioritise recycling capacity and a HRC booking system may need to be further considered.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the proposals set out in this report, including consolidated policy documents at appendices 1 and 2.

(Councillor Johnson left the meeting)

Councillor Cathcart proposed an amendment to the recommendation which was seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter.

The Council approves the proposals set out in the report, including the consolidated policy document Appendix 1 but excluding the policy requiring the householder to be present in a van/large trailer when using an access permit. This policy will be brought back to Committee for further detail and consideration of the exceptions to this policy and how this will operate. Appendix 2 will also be brought back to Committee for further consideration of changes to trailer sizes.

Councillor Cathcart welcomed the report since it had been accepted that urgent changes needed to be made to waste collection services within the Borough. The Ards and North Down area was spending more than any other Council on its waste disposal and a cultural shift was needed to address that. In his opinion the cost of the additional manpower at the Household Recycling Centres would be more than offset by the savings it could bring. He also welcomed the education side to highlight to the public the wasted resources when excessive waste was having to be sent to landfill. However, he explained that he had some concerns with elements of the report particularly with Appendix 1 which referred to permit holders and the level of proof of eligibility that would be required to use the services at each of the recycling centres.

At this point Alderman Armstrong-Cotter reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Woods sought clarity on the saving that the Council could potentially be making and it was explained that if the Council met its climate change target on recycling and brought HRC waste intake down to average levels, it could save around £1.1M per year.

The Director went on to say that considerable discussions on the proposed changes had been undertaken with staff. There was also provision built in to exclude members of the public who breached the conditions of use of the Householder Recycling Centres or who were abusive to staff.

Councillor Woods went on to ask about charity permits and the difference between being registered in the Borough or operating in the Borough. The Director explained that the charity needed to be operating within the Borough and have a base in the area, and the waste being brought to HRCs must have arisen as a consequence of the charitable activities within the Borough and not elsewhere.

The Member went on to say that pedestrian access for the Holywood Household Recycling Centre had been discussed since she had joined the Council in 2016. She understood that a decision had been taken to close that access and that was something that she was uncomfortable with since she had seen no evidence of existing health and safety issues.

The Director made it very clear that the decision made in relation to Hollywood was as a result of operational site safety related issues. Concerns existed over service vehicles, private cars and pedestrians mixing and with the passage of time and experience officers had concluded that continued access by pedestrians into the site brought unacceptable safety risks which could not be adequately mitigated. He thought that Members should bear in mind that the Council already provided a very comprehensive collection service at the doorstep and the Household Recycling Centres were primarily designed for larger, bulkier items that could not be catered for in the household bins and needed to be transported by car. The Council also offered a collection service for those larger items for a small fee but it was not expected that pedestrians would need to walk on to the site with small items. He pointed out that the Council itself did not have absolute discretion on the matter since it was bound by health and safety legislation and the enforcement role of the Health and Safety Executive. He stressed that officers were not making these decisions on a whim but that they were based on valid operational considerations.

The Chair, Alderman McDowell, asked if the Council was leaving itself open to claims if it went against health and safety advice and the Director confirmed that, stating that it would not be his recommendation.

Councillor Woods asked if she could make an amendment to the recommendation with the addition, 'and reintroduces pedestrian access to Hollywood HRC as previously agreed by the Council.'

Councillor MacArthur agreed to second that addition to the proposal to support pedestrian access and had been disappointed that the access had been closed without consultation. Hollywood HRC was in the town centre and sustainable living would suggest that people should be discouraged from using private vehicles as far as possible.

For reasons of clarity Councillor Cathcart suggested that he would be happy to add Councillor Woods amendment to his own if a review was being called for at Hollywood. However, he was mindful of the health and safety decisions which needed to be reviewed. Councillor Woods confirmed that she was agreeable to that.

Councillor MacArthur had been shocked by the costs of landfilling waste and welcomed the potential savings that could be made. She asked the Director to explain briefly how the system would work in practice. In response the Director explained that at entry to the site the user would be asked to show identification and to confirm that the waste was the user's own household waste. The user would be asked if the waste had been separated and if the answer was no, the user would be signposted to a dedicated sorting bay where the waste could be sorted for recycling. A site attendant would continually supervise access to the landfill skip and if a resident approached with recyclable items or bags of mixed waste they would be directed back to the sorting area.

The Director explained that it was against the law to transport other people's waste without being registered as a waste carrier. The arrangements set out in the policy

for the permit scheme included provision for exceptions where a person was unable to attend a HRC by virtue of their health status, a scheme which the Council already had in place for assisted bin collections. Members had been surprised to hear that it was against the law to transport third party waste and thought that it prevented genuine neighbours or family members helping one another. She asked for that to be reconsidered and could therefore not support the officers' recommendation.

Councillor McAlpine referred to the huge financial commitment that dealing with waste was and considered that a further delay to decision making would come with cost and she was not in favour of that and preferred to proceed with the officers' recommendation. She pointed to the substantial exemptions to help those who might have additional needs and those people would be few in number. Not to progress the matter would be to create even more landfill and that was a worry. She asked why the Council could not proceed and then later tweak the system if that was necessary. She also urged caution in relation to Holywood HRC and thought that to go against officers' safety assessment in that area could lead to considerable problems in the future for the Council.

Listening to the debate Councillor Boyle said that he had nearly lost the will to live as Members continued to go round in circles in a shambles of a conversation. He thought it was clear that there were people who simply did not want to make progress and were happy to throw up objections. The financial consequences of failing in this area would be horrendous and he asked some Members how many times they would call for a further officers' report. He asked Members to remember that decisions made would have a bearing on ratepayers and that they should also consider that the vast majority of residents rarely visited HRCs so why should they be held to ransom by the few who used them regularly for whatever reason. All ratepayers should be given consideration and not the few.

Councillor Cummings thanked officers for the report which he thought gave a clear sense of direction but hoped that those residents with special circumstances would not be excluded. The Director reminded the Committee that disposal in HRCs was a fairly infrequent event for most people and that everyone should reasonably be expected to assume proper responsibility for disposal of their own waste. Apart from exceptional circumstances that were catered for in the policy, he felt it was not unreasonable for someone to be required to be present when their waste was being brought to a HRC, otherwise it made the process of controlling correct disposal more difficult for staff.

Councillor Greer referred to the percentage saving on the Rates if the Council was to get the decision right which could be as much as 2%. She thought a key point to the robustness of the initiative would be the monitoring and control of the system. If the Council was not ambitious it would not achieve anything close to its targets and diluting aspects of the report would compromise the Council's overall effectiveness.

At this stage Councillor Greer requested a recorded vote.

On Councillor Cathcart's recommendation being put to the meeting with 7 voting For, 5 voting Against and 4 Absent it was declared CARRIED.

FOR (7)	AGAINST (5)	ABSENT (4)
Alderman	Aldermen	Alderman
Armstrong-Cotter	McDowell	Carson
Councillors	Councillors	M Smith
Cathcart	Boyle	Councillors
Cummings	Irwin	Johnson
Edmund	Greer	Smart
MacArthur	McAlpine	
McKee		
Woods		

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the Council approves the proposals set out in the report, including the consolidated policy document Appendix 1 but excluding the policy requiring the householder to be present in a van/large trailer when using an access permit. This policy will be brought back to Committee for further detail and consideration of the exceptions to this policy and how this will operate. Appendix 2 will also be brought back to Committee for further consideration of changes to trailer sizes.

Pedestrian access to Hollywood HRC as previously agreed by Council should also be considered further.

RECESS 9.00 pm

RECOMMENCED 9.12 pm

6. PROPOSED STREET NAMING – CRAIGDARRAGH RISE, HELEN'S BAY

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing that a small development comprising three dwellings was currently under construction on lands at Craigdarragh Road, Helen's Bay.

The developer had suggested the name Craigdarragh Rise which was accessed off the existing Craigdarragh Road and was in keeping with the general neighbourhood.

RECOMMENDED that the Council:

- (a) adopts the street name Craigdarragh Rise and;
- (b) 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 MacArthur, that the recommendation be adopted.

7. PROPOSED STREET NAMING – CASTLEBAWN AVENUE, CASTLEBAWN CLOSE AND CASTLEBAWN GARDENS, NEWTOWANRDS

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing that a development comprising 108 dwellings was currently under construction on lands at Castlebawn Drive, Newtownards.

The developer had suggested the names Castlebawn Avenue, Castlebawn Close and Castlebawn Gardens. The development was accessed off the existing Castlebawn Drive and was in keeping with the general neighbourhood.

RECOMMENDED that the Council:

- (a) adopts the street names Castlebawn Avenue, Castlebawn Close and Castlebawn Gardens and;
- (b) accepts the general name and delegates acceptance of suffixes to the Building Control department.

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

8. GRANT OF ENTERTAINMENT LICENCE

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

First & Last Bar, 42-44 Bridge Street, Comber

Applicant: Mr Gary McKee, Bridge Street, Comber.

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

Type of entertainment: Indoor dancing, singing and music or any other entertainment of a like kind; Billiards, pool, snooker or any similar game.

Comment

The above application had been publicly advertised and no objections had been received.

The PSNI and NIFRS had also advised that they had no objections.

RECOMMENDED that the Council grants the application.

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

9. GRANT OF PAVEMENT CAFÉ LICENCE

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

Meadowbank Social Club

Applicant: Mr Ivan Moore, Manor Street, Donaghadee.

Venue: 38 The Parade, Donaghadee

Day and hours of use:

Monday to Sunday from 11am to 11pm.

Comment

The application has been publicly displayed on the relevant premises for 28 days as required by the Order. No objections have been received.

DFI Roads, PSNI and the Planning Service have been consulted. No objections have been raised to these applications.

Under the agreed conditions of licence, the pavement cafes will be required to:

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

RECOMMENDED that the Council grants the above licence.

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

10. BUILDING CONTROL Q1 ACTIVITY REPORT (1 APRIL 2022 TO 30 JUNE 2022)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing that the information provided in the report covered, unless otherwise stated, the period 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2022 (Quarter 1). The aim of the report was to provide Members with details of some of the key activities of Building Control, the range of

services it provided along with details of level of performance. The report format had been introduced across Regulatory Services.

Applications

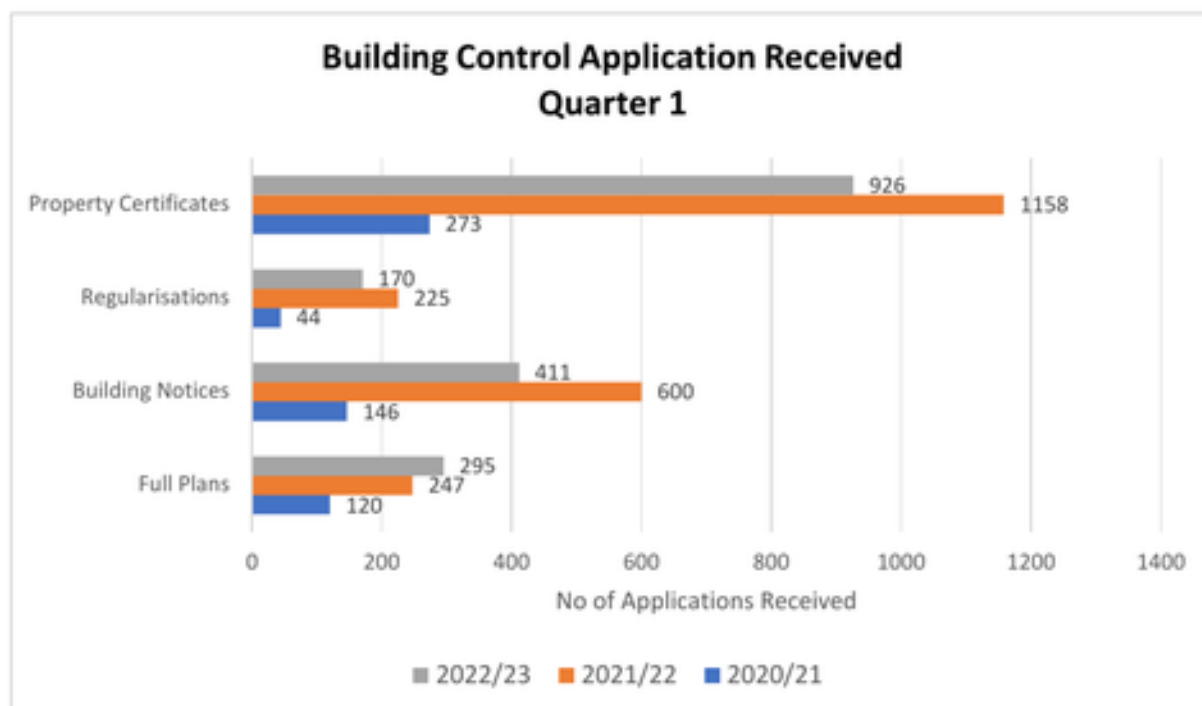
Full Plan applications were made to Building Control for building works to any commercial building, or for larger schemes in relation to residential dwellings.

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

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

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

	Period of Report 01/04/2022 – 30/06/2022	01/04/2021- 30/06/2021	01/04/2020 – 30/06/2020
Full Plan Applications	295	247	120
Building Notice Applications	411	600	146
Regularisation Applications	170	225	44
Property Certificate Applications	926	1158	273



The number of Full Plan applications received was very much determined by the economic climate, any changes in bank lending or uncertainty in the marketplace may cause a reduction in Full Plan applications. There was no internal means to control the number of applications received.

Regulatory Approvals and Completions

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

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

	Period of Report 01/04/2022 – 30/06/2022	Same quarter last year	Comparison	Average number of days to turnaround plan
Domestic Full Plan Turnarounds within target (21 calendar days)	57.8%	63%	↓	23
Non-Domestic Full Plan	62.7%	70%	↓	31

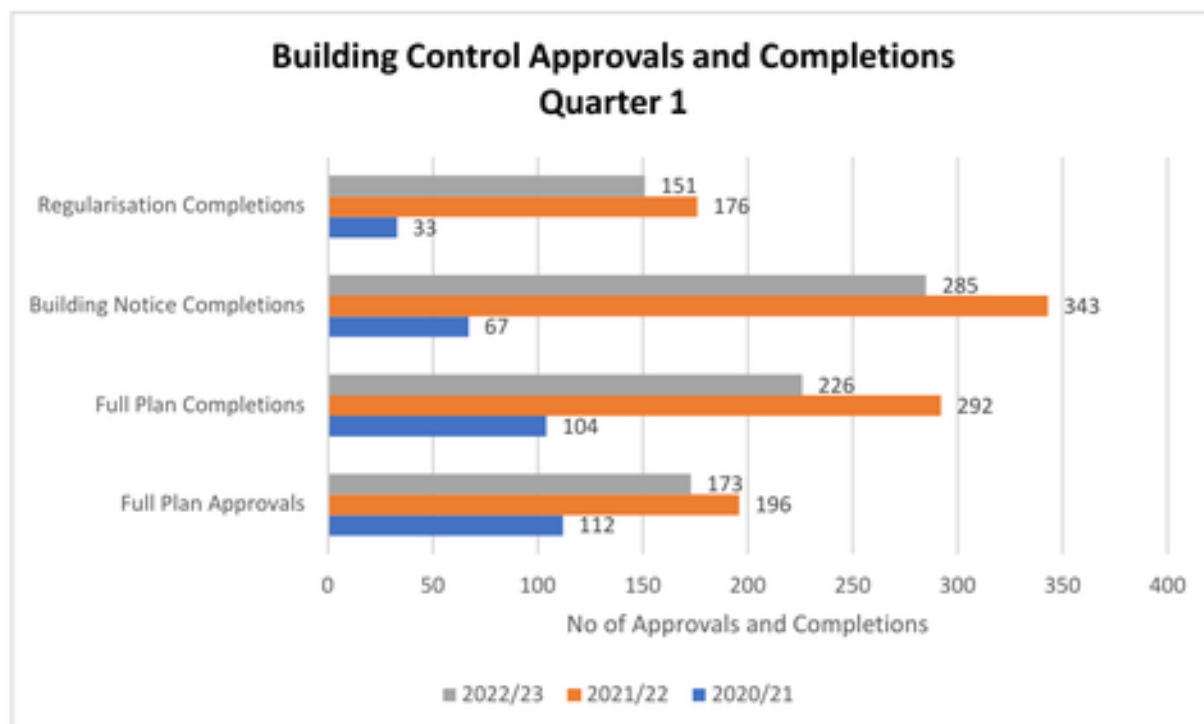
Turnarounds within target (35 calendar days)				
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Regulatory Approvals and Completions

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

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

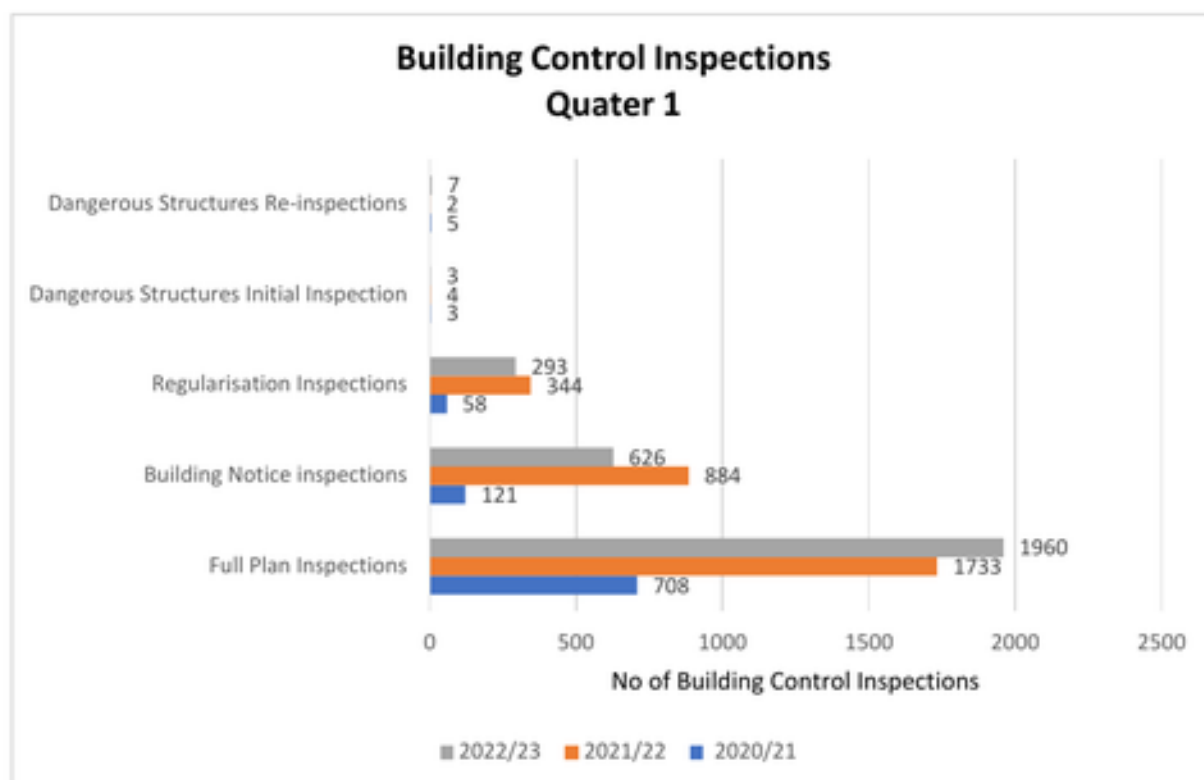
	Period of Report 01/04/2022 – 30/06/2022	01/04/2021 – 30/06/2021	01/04/2020 – 30/06/2020
Full Plan Approvals	173	196	112
Full Plan Completions	226	292	104
Building Notice Completions	285	343	67
Regularisation Completions	151	176	33



Inspections

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

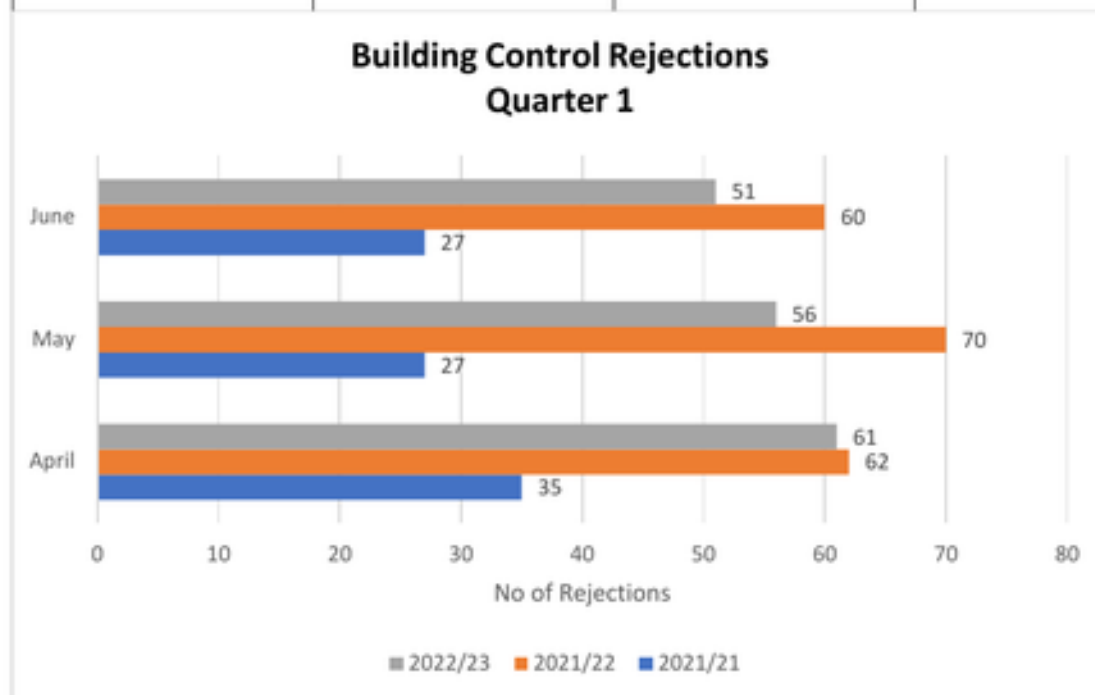
	Period of Report 01/04/2022 - 30/06/2022	01/04/2021 – 30/06/2021	01/04/2020 – 30/06/2020
Full Plan Inspections	1960	1733	708
Building Notice Inspections	626	884	121
Regularisation Inspections	293	344	58
Dangerous structures initial inspection	3	4	3
Dangerous structure re-inspections	7	2	5
Total inspections	4622	2967	865



Non-Compliance

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

	Period of Report 01/04/2022 – 30/06/2022	01/04/2021 – 30/06/2021	01/04/2020 – 30/06/2020
Full Plan Rejection Notice	168	192	89
Dangerous Structure Recommended for legal action	0	0	0
Court Cases	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0



RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

Councillor Woods asked about the increase in energy efficiency performance standards for Building Control which had come in to force at the end of June this year. The Director replied that the Council had lobbied for significant changes and what had been introduced did not come close to what had been called for.

The Head of Regulatory Services suggested that the Member look at the Department's website and also that of Building Control Northern Ireland. He was also happy to pass her more detailed information about initiatives taken by the Building Control team to promote energy efficiency in buildings. The Director suggested that the Head of Planning might also be able to provide further information on taking sustainable energy in new buildings forward through the Local Development Plan.

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

11. LICENCING Q4 ACTIVITY REPORT (1 JANUARY 2022 TO 31 MARCH 2022)

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

Applications Received

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

	Period of Report 1 Jan to 31 March 2022	Same quarter last year 1 Jan to 31 March 2021
Entertainment Licence	33	28
Cinema Licence	0	0
Amusement Permits	2	2
Marriage & Civil Partnership Place Approval	2	0
Pavement Café Licence	0	1
Street Trading Licence	0	4
Lottery Permits	8	2

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

Regulatory Approvals

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

	Period of Report	Same quarter last year
Entertainment Licence	31	7
Cinema Licence	0	0
Amusement Permits	2	2
Marriage & Civil Partnership Place Approval	3	0
Pavement Café Licence	1	0
Street Trading Licence	0	1
Lottery Permits	9	8

Town Centre CCTV

Incidents had been reported via the Town Centre CCTV system as indicated below, during the period of the report.

Incident	Bangor	Newtownards
Assault	5	
Missing person		1
Criminal damage		2
Hit and Run		1

A Review Team was established in January to review the current system and to look at options for the future. That was the subject to a report and recommendation to the September 2022 meeting of the Environment Committee.

Off Street Car Parking

Whilst the Off Street Car Parks usage had been steadily increasing since the lifting of the Covid-19 restrictions, they had not fully returned to pre Covid levels. An indication of the activity in the car parks was shown by considering the level of PCN's issued.

PCN's Issued

	Period of Report	Same quarter last year
Bangor	231	73
Hollywood	259	64
Newtownards	300	76
Total	790	213

The Car Parking Strategy had still to be implemented and offered an opportunity to maximise the value of that valuable asset. As Members would be aware there was a problem with the legislation introduced by the DfI in 2015 and that prevented Councils from changing their Car Parking Orders. That mainly prevented us from changing Tariffs and introducing EV charging etc on our sites. The DfI had now recognised the problem and was establishing a Working Group to look at ways to amend the legislation.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

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

12. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

12.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor McClean and Alderman M Smith

WITHDRAWN

Notes the extraordinary life and achievements of the Rev. John McConnell Auld. 'Con' Auld was noted a Princeton scholar, classics and divinity teacher, minister, artist, historian, politician, chorister, philanthropist and Mayor North Down Borough Council; and that in recognition of the extraordinary life of Con Auld and his cultural and political contribution to the Borough and beyond, agrees to the request from his family to provide and site a memorial bench at the earliest opportunity.

12.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Dunlop and Councillor Douglas

That this Council agrees:

- All pedestrians should feel safe on our pavements, yet street clutter can make walking and wheeling unsafe, forcing people onto the road which is dangerous;
- Street furniture should be clean, have a purpose and be consistent; and
- Street clutter should be removed.

Therefore, Council tasks officers to:

- Carry out an audit of street infrastructure including street signage, project information; posts, etc;
- Remove historic street clutter which has no current purpose or future benefit;
- Ensure relevant signage is cleaned and fit for purpose;
- Ensure signs have the appropriately-named Council on it, where this applies;

- Identify a nominated officer within the Council to lead on the audit to ensure items are listed and removed; and
- Write to the Department for Infrastructure to request they complete a similar de-clutter across the Borough.

Proposing the Motion Councillor Dunlop believed that the Council could be playing a better role in presenting urban centres as clean, well-managed spaces for use by the public. He said that Bangor City Centre would benefit in the coming years from a significant physical uplift with the Belfast City Regional Deal moving on and Queens Parade advancing. The city would be promoted to encourage visitors and the regeneration strategy would aim to improve its attractiveness and accessibility for residents as well. That would hopefully nurture a new sense of pride and local ownership of the area.

He thought that aligned to the large-scale projects the Council must review how it presented the detail in the local streetscapes. Currently there was no evidence of any signs being cleaned and reviewed for their current relevance. He reported that there were several signs along the seafront referring to historic projects around the evening economy which were no longer valid. Those signs had been put in place by the legacy Council and had no contemporary status. They were therefore clutter and unsightly and evidence that care was not being taken to detail.

He said that earlier in the Spring he had been on a litter pick at Castle Park with students from SERC and those students had been able to rub their initials and other messages into the dirt covering the sign to Aurora. That sign was an example of how the detail could be neglected and that would be seen by thousands of people as they made their way to the sports facility.

He was sure that Councillors would know their own DEAs with some level of intimacy and they should convey that knowledge of neglected streetscape elements to a designated officer who would be tasked to ensure that the streetscape was maintained to a standard worthy of the smartest borough in Northern Ireland.

However, he recognised that it was not just a Council that introduced signage and that central government departments shared that responsibility and should be called out when signage and other street furniture became neglected or irrelevant. Having a dedicated contact within the Environment team who could liaise with bodies such as DfI to address its responsibilities would be beneficial to all and collectively improve the image of the whole Borough.

Councillor Douglas explained that she was seconding the Notice of Motion that had come before the Committee in respect of decluttering of the streetscapes around the Borough. She gave the example of Bangor and said that one did not need to travel too far to see the sheer extent of the problem that was street clutter, from damaged metal barriers to promote road safety, to obsolete lampposts, old legacy signage, faded print, dirt-covered signage, disused BT phone boxes, ad hoc A-boards and so on. All of those together gave the impression that parts of the City Centre and some suburban areas were tired looking, unkempt and perhaps uninviting.

She went on to say that in May this year, the Council had received the accolade of being awarded City Status as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations, so the Motion was in many ways timely in that it was seeking both the Council and other bodies to take responsibility for their respective street furniture with a view to auditing what was required and what was redundant. It was her view that redundant items should be removed without undue delay. Items that remained and were therefore required should have the current name of the body on them eg. Ards and North Down Borough Council and be clean and accessible.

She considered that that exercise should be relatively straightforward for the items that were within the remit of the Council. The Council may also have regard for items which other businesses had placed on the public realm which needed to be managed such as A boards which some businesses used to promote deals, in which case owners should be encouraged to comply with the current regulations so that they did not become a health and safety hazard for individuals who were visually impaired or by forcing pedestrians, wheelchair users, parents with prams onto the road. She stressed that the streets of the Borough should be accessible to all.

As part of previous discussions with Council officers over the past few years she had lobbied for historic and relevant information boards which highlighted areas of interest and historic significance around the Borough, however she felt that before those were prepared for installation the Council needed an audit to be conducted to clear out what was not required.

She went on to say that there was also a significant number of matters for the Department for Infrastructure to attend to. She had observed an array of grey metal posts dotted across Bangor city centre and beyond that had been discarded and now served absolutely no purpose so should be removed. There were also damaged signs and plastic bollards that needed to be repaired and proactively managed.

She considered that decluttering streets would make them safe for all pedestrians, whatever their needs, offering relevant and up-to-date signage for visitors and to help inform local residents and visitors alike as to the requirements of a given area such as whether dogs should be on a lead, whether cycling was permitted and so on. That would help everyone navigate shared spaces and show respect to one another.

She hoped that Members would support the Motion where officers would complete the audit of street furniture and liaise with the Department for Infrastructure to follow suit so that clutter could be removed from Bangor before moving on to other towns and villages across the Borough. She and Councillor Dunlop were proposing to start with the City of Bangor since they both represented that area.

Councillor Woods spoke and thanked the Members who had brought the Motion. Further to the comments that had already been made she also suggested that engagement could be made with businesses to encourage cooperation in the display of advertising carefully. Political parties also played a role in that at times of elections.

She had looked at recent research by Guide Dogs that showed that 97% of people with a vision impairment had problems with street clutter such as shop advertising signs and street café furniture and that stricter measures could be put in place to address that. A clearer high street, where obstacles were placed consistently left room for pedestrians to walk and made streets safer for those who experienced the loss of full sight. She stated that she would be supporting the Motion.

Councillor Cathcart thought that the Notice of Motion was well meaning outlining real concerns but there was no reference to where this should take place and if it was intended to be carried out throughout the entire Borough. It would be an enormous task and there was no budget set for the work. He also suggested that much of what had been described in the Motion was outside the Council's responsibility. This was a time of limited finance, and he wondered if now was the right time to be proceeding with the work.

Councillor MacArthur thought that everything within the Motion was commendable and that the Council should have expectations of a clean Borough and clutter free streets. She asked the Director how feasible it would be to have a designated officer to carry out what was expected in a complete audit around the Borough. In response the Director said that there was a maintenance team in place who were fully occupied presently. However, he said the work outlined in the Motion could be progressed in due course, provided there was an understanding that it would take time. He also highlighted that the Council did not have control over the response of DfI and other bodies in relation to action over their street furniture. The Member continued asking about the cleaning of summer seats since she had noticed that some were dirty. Members were made aware that Town Centre Wardens played a role in cleaning town centre seating, but that on occasions seats could get dirty very quickly for example if something was spilled on them. If there were troublesome issues of particular concern, he asked Members to contact officers in the Cleansing and Maintenance units and they would deal with them.

The Director indicated that officers would look at the areas the Council had control of and would encourage other bodies to do likewise.

Members expressed support for the Motion and recognised that it would be a significant piece of work, but health and safety of the public was the priority and a clean environment would foster civic pride in the Borough and they hoped to see it started soon.

In summing up Councillor Dunlop explained that he had not wanted to see his Motion as something which was Bangor centric and hoped that it would apply to all urban centres but if Bangor was the trial area, he would support that.

When the Motion was put to the meeting with 9 voting For, 3 voting Against the Motion was declared CARRIED.

FOR (9)
Alderman

AGAINST (3)
Alderman

McDowell	Armstrong-Cotter
Councillors	Councillors
Boyle	Cathcart
Cummings	Edmund
Greer	
Irwin	
MacArthur	
McAlpine	
McKee	
Woods	

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop, seconded by Councillor Douglas, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

12.3 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor T Smith and Councillor Cooper

This Council abhors animal cruelty and believes an Animal Abuse Register would be of immense help in preventing those convicted of animal cruelty from owning or breeding animals. Given the failure of Stormont to introduce a central register for all of N Ireland, this Council tasks officers to bring back a report detailing how it can set up a local animal welfare offenders register for this Borough.

Amendment from Councillor Woods

This Council abhors animal cruelty and believes an Animal Abuse Register would be of immense help in preventing those convicted of animal cruelty from owning or breeding animals. Given the failure of the Northern Ireland Executive to introduce a central register for all of Northern Ireland, this Council tasks officers to bring back a report detailing how it can set up a local animal welfare offenders register for this Borough, and to consider working at a local government level with other Councils and Departments. It also expresses its disappointment in the failure of the DAERA Minister to introduce Lucy's Law and Reggie's Law into Northern Ireland in the last Assembly mandate and writes to the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to request an update on the development of this legislation.

Councillor T Smith began by stating that he was happy with the amendment which had been put forward and it was proposed by Councillor T Smith, seconded by Councillor Woods, that the amended Notice of Motion be adopted.

Councillor T Smith stated that he would like to see an animal cruelty register set up and that the public was calling on the authorities to do more to protect animals from cruelty. There was widespread support across all parties to help to combat the further abuse of animals. He wanted a system where anyone who had harmed an animal was unable to keep one in the future and thought that there should be a central register to cover the whole country.

He believed that the Council had a role to play in making convictions and if Stormont could not take the lead role a local register could be set up and other Councils could be encouraged to participate. Councillor Woods had included Lucy's Law and Reggie's Law in relation to puppy farms and that should be considered along with a register.

Councillor Woods thanked the Members who had proposed the original Motion and stressed that there was not enough protection given to animals in Northern Ireland. In 2020, 5,000 complaints had been raised in the region and most of those were welfare cases. Ideally there would be a lead nationally but in the absence of that local government could take a lead but it needed to be given resources to address the issue fully. She had submitted a petition in 2020 with 3,000 signatures to implement Lucy's Law in Northern Ireland. Farming of animals incorrectly often led to suffering and action to stop that needed to be taken.

Councillor Irwin, MacArthur and Boyle added their support and thought that changes could only be good for society overall.

Councillor T Smith thanked Members for their support and believed that this was worth exploring at a local level although he would have preferred a central register to be in place to cover the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland as a whole.

Proposed by Councillor T Smith, seconded by Councillor Woods, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

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

Given the public health issues and the desire to encourage outdoor eating and entertainment in Conway Square that officers look at humane means to address the pigeon problem in the Square to include a new bylaw to prohibit feeding of the birds in and around the Square and to erect in the meantime advisory signs to deter feeding of birds in the areas.

Proposed by Alderman McIlveen and seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Alderman McIlveen introduced his Motion and stated that as Members would know, the legacy Ards Council had invested £5.5M in a public realm scheme in Newtownards. The bulk of that money was spent on transforming Conway Square as the heart of the town with one of the aims being to make the town more attractive to local residents and visitors and encourage a family friendly evening economy. It was envisaged that Conway Square would have a continental plaza feel and so encourage a sociable café culture atmosphere.

However, a big problem had arisen in the Square and it was not a new problem but rather was an increasing one with pigeons. It was an issue that constituents were raising with him time and time again. He reported that there were huge numbers of

pigeons roosting on roofs around the Square, swooping down and upsetting people sitting and walking around the area. There were pigeon faeces everywhere on the pavements and around some of the cafes and he stated that that did not make for either a welcoming or healthy environment.

There were a range of diseases which could be caught from pigeon droppings: Cryptococcosis, Histoplasmosis and Psittacosis. Cryptococcosis was a potentially fatal fungal infection that attacked the lungs and brain. Histoplasmosis attacked the lungs and could cause pneumonia and Psittacosis was a lung infection caught from inhaling the dust from droppings. Pigeons were also carriers of bird lice which could cause dermatoses in humans.

He had spoken with environmental health officers in relation to the matter and had been advised that the main cause of the huge growth in pigeon numbers was due to people feeding them. He reported that he had seen one gentleman who brought a large bag of grain to throw out onto the Square, that took place most Wednesday evenings and most recently on a Sunday. He went on that since the publicity about his Motion, he had been sent photos and videos of this taking place.

One constituent had told him about diners at one of the cafes in the area encouraging the birds onto tables to feed them and that was essentially training them onto places where other diners would be eating.

Alderman McIlveen said that he was not against birds and certainly not against feeding them particularly in Winter when sources of food were limited but this was a public space where people gathered to dine and in some cases kilos of grain were being poured out by well-meaning members of the public. There was also the risk that the food being left out would attract other vermin which would also bring disease. The current state of the area had now become a public health issue in his opinion and while he appreciated that not everyone would agree with him, for the sake of businesses around the Square and for the health of those enjoying the Square the Council needed to act to address the growing problem.

He reported that he had spoken with the Director and officers from the Environmental Health section and had become aware that there was no current Bye-law in place to prevent feeding the birds by the public and there was also no signage advising against it.

He called for interim advisory signage to be erected and a Bye-law to be developed to address the matter. Furthermore, he would like to see an action plan developed to humanely deter the pigeons from the area and he felt that doing nothing could not be an option for the Council. He hoped that Members would agree with that.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter could not argue with what her colleague had stated and agreed that pigeons were a blight on The Square with droppings everywhere. People did throw out food to feed them and the pigeons had grown in numbers over the years. The Council owed a duty of care to the businesses who paid high Rates and address the pigeon issue humanely.

Councillor Boyle thought that the café culture that was developing was being stalled by birds becoming more fearless. He thanked the Members for bringing the Motion and looked forward to seeing how it would be addressed.

Proposed by Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

13. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

There were no items of Any Other Notified Business.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC/PRESS

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

14. SINGLE TENDER ACTION – SUPPLY OF DENNIS EAGLE PARTS

*****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 Cathcart, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the public/press be re-admitted to the meeting.

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 10.50 pm.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Regeneration and Development Committee was held remotely via Zoom on Thursday 6 October 2022 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair:	Councillor Walker	
Aldermen:	Armstrong-Cotter Girvan (7.03pm)	McDowell (7.15pm) Wilson
Councillors:	Adair (7.48pm) Blaney (7.17pm) Brooks Cummings Dunlop	Gilmour Kennedy (7.44pm) 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 Officer (P Foster)

1. APOLOGIES

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

Apologies had been received from Alderman M Smith.

Apologies for lateness had been received from Alderman McDowell and Councillors Adair, Blaney and Kennedy.

NOTED.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman expressed his thanks to officers for the Workshop which had been held in September commenting that he had found it to be very helpful and made him more aware of the assistance which was available to local businesses. He suggested that it may be useful for those Members who attended to brief their party colleagues on the work which was carried out and the benefits of that.

NOTED.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Alderman Girvan – Item 13 – Shared Island Local Authority Development Funding Update

NOTED.

3. BANGOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (FILE RDP 60)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing that at the meeting of the Council held on 29 June 2022 it was agreed to invite each of the Chambers of Commerce to make a short presentation about the work they intended to undertake over the current financial year and how they planned to use the Council's grant of £12,000.

The Bangor Chamber had already provided the following indicative proposals and 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:

- 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 support for major capital projects including Queens Parade and the Waterfront Scheme.
- To continue to provide free training opportunities for local businesses. It was hoped to extend this Borough-wide and share the benefits with the other four Chambers.
- To employ a part-time administrative assistant who could deal with day-to-day activities.

For this year the Chamber intended to run a number of events which included:

- Regular monthly meetings / events for members.
- New Legislation events
- Showcasing events for new members.
- Supporting Sea Bangor with Council 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.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee notes the above.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Cummings, seconded by Councillor McKimm, that the report is noted.

3.1. PRESENTATION BY PRESIDENT OF BANGOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, GEOFF THOMPSON

(Mr Geoff Thompson joined the meeting at this stage – 7.05pm)

The Chairman welcomed Geoff Thompson from Bangor Chamber of Commerce and invited him to make his presentation.

Mr Thompson thanked Members for the opportunity to address the Council as President of Bangor Chamber of Commerce.

He stated that Bangor Chamber of Commerce had been formed in 1936 to provide support to local businesses in the town centre, which he added now included businesses at Balloo Retail Park. The Chamber aimed to offer support, signposting to other services, facilitate networking, provide opportunities for its members to get involved with events and activities, provide affordable training opportunities, facilitate networking, and give members access to the Council through its presence on many different working groups. It also designed and delivered a number of its own events including Easter, Summer and Christmas activities and the highly successful, annual Bangor Business Awards.

Continuing he stated that the Chamber comprised many types of businesses large and small who all had the same aspiration to achieve long term objectives for Bangor. The Covid 19 Pandemic provided an opportunity to engage with many new traders with objectives such as:

- Support Major Capital Projects
- Provision of Free Training
- Support Council Led Events

The Chamber was supported by an active and hard-working Board of committee members and a part-time staff member, Sharon Regan who was based in the Bangor office.

At this stage Mr Thompson referred to the Bangor Business Awards expressing his gratitude to the sponsors for their valuable contribution. Other up and coming activities included the roll out of a Members Discount Card and the Christmas Tree Light Switch On to take place 19 November 2022.

In summing up he reiterated the Chamber's desire to make Bangor a great place to live, work and visit.

The Chairman thanked Mr Thompson for his comments and sought questions from Members at this stage. The following comments were made.

Referring to the issue of business rates, Councillor Brooks sought Mr Thompson's view on the matter. In response Mr Thompson agreed that was an issue particularly as the current system was somewhat antiquated. One suggestion made had been to

tax people online, however, substantial legislative requirements would be required to enable that to take place.

(Alderman McDowell joined the meeting at this stage – 7.15pm)

In response to a query from Councillor Cummings about training, Mr Thompson advised that the Chamber had collaborated with Kilcooley Women's Centre at the start of 2022 and successfully offered training initiatives. Mr Thompson offered to be in touch with the Member directly to discuss the matter further and clarify how funding for that was sought.

(Councillor Blaney joined the meeting at this stage – 7.17pm)

Councillor McKimm thanked Mr Thompson for his presentation and sought comment from him on the architectural heritage of Main Street and his views on how that could best be addressed. He also sought further details on the Chamber's membership. Mr Thompson commented that Bangor's topography was challenging as it was very elongated and lacking a close knit community vibe. High Street currently was thriving however Main Street was proving to be a more difficult issue. Buy in from landlords who were willing to negotiate was key and suggestions such as food markets and virtual working space had been put forward for those larger retail units. Continuing Mr Thompson stated that many of the Chamber's new members were smaller businesses and as such further thought would be required on the way forward, perhaps with the inclusion of 'pop up' shops. In respect of membership, Mr Thompson reported that while some members had been lost due to the Covid 19 pandemic, many new ones had now subsequently been secured. He added that the Chamber would approach businesses to ask if they would be interested in joining the Chamber and membership would actively be promoted on its social media outlets.

Also thanking Mr Thompson, Councillor Gilmour welcomed the collaborative working which had been undertaken by the Chamber and she asked what the Council could do to assist.

Mr Thompson stated that the Chamber enjoyed a good working relationship with the Council and engaged regularly with it through a variety of meeting forums. One thing he would ask of elected members would be for them to consider the opinion of the Chamber when making decisions. He added that it was the Chamber's intention to organise further engagement sessions such as coffee mornings in an attempt to further strengthen relationships with elected members.

As there were no further questions the Chairman thanked Mr Thompson for attending and wished him well for the future.

(Mr Thompson left the meeting at this stage – 7.27pm)

4. COMBER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (FILE RDP60)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing that at the meeting of the Council held on 29 June 2022 it was agreed to invite each of the Chambers of Commerce to make a short presentation about the work they intended to undertake over the current financial year and how they plan to use the Council's grant of £12,000.

The Comber Chamber had already provided the following information and planned to return to regular networking events, training events, engagement on Council-led events and support for their members.

The Chamber continued to focus on helping businesses develop skills, promoting the town as a destination and identifying projects that would assist with the economic development of the town. The Chamber worked to increase its membership 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 by taking a vacant unit and offering it 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 had 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 was home to great small independent businesses, amazing restaurants and cafes and tourist and historical attractions. In 2022/2023 the Comber Chamber of Commerce would 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

RECOMMENDED that the Committee notes the above.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Cummings, seconded by Alderman Girvan, that the report is noted.

4.1. PRESENTATION BY CHAIR OF COMBER CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, IRIS MCBRIDE

(Ms Iris McBride and Ms Tracy Burrows joined the meeting at this stage – 7.29pm)

The Chairman welcomed Iris McBride and Tracy Burrows from Comber Chamber of Commerce and invited them to make their presentation.

Ms McBride thanked Members for the opportunity to address them on behalf of Comber Chamber of Commerce. She had only taken up post of Chair in May 2022 however the Chamber had been working for many years under the guidance of Alderman Deborah Girvan. The Chamber now had over 80 members from a wide variety of businesses whose aim was to promote commerce in the town and build relationships. She advised that a website had been created to promote the work of the Chamber through LoveLocalComber which also had a presence on a variety of social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.

Continuing Ms McBride advised that the Chamber was promoted via a Council newsletter and it also had been involved in the Council's Shine Programme. Focus was also placed upon building relationships with other Groups having a presence on Town Advisory Groups, Labour Market Partnership and Five Town Chambers Group. It was noted the Chamber had also worked closely with Comber Rotary to provide free training sessions to Ukrainian refugees living in the town.

Activities recently undertaken by the Chamber included:

- Activity Packs – Comber Regeneration
- Portrait of HM The Queen – Comber Chamber Together
- Comber Square & Christmas Light Switch On – Ards Community Network

It was noted in September 2022 the Chamber had appointed an Administrative Assistant which had proved very successful and alleviated the pressure on already stretched Committee members.

Ms McBride commented that regrettably today had been the last day of trading for the Ulster Bank branch based in Comber. She stated that despite many conversations and negotiations the Chamber had been unable to persuade it to reverse its decision to close the branch.

At this stage Ms Burrows provided Members with an overview of the Pop-Up Shop in Comber. That had provided many businesses with the opportunity to explore retail life with a view to taking on retail premises in the town. Ms Burrows happily reported that so far, each week the Pop-Up Shop had been occupied by a wide variety of businesses and provided a real buzz about the town. She added that to date a total of seven businesses had rebooked the Pop-Up Shop. Continuing Ms Burrows advised that as the result of an existing relationship with the landlord the Chamber had been able to negotiate directly with him to agree favourable rates.

Virtual tours of the town were also under consideration similar to that currently being piloted in Holywood. The tours operated via Google Maps with virtual links to a variety of social platforms associated with the town. Ms Burrows commented on how impressed she had been with that in Holywood adding that it was, in her opinion, a brilliant marketing tool.

The Chairman thanked Ms McBride and Ms Burrows for their presentation and sought questions from Members at this stage. The following comments were made.

In response to a query from Councillor Cummings, Ms McBride confirmed that the administrative post was funded by the Council and the costs associated with the Pop-Up Shop were absorbed by the rent obtained from the tenants.

At this stage Councillor McClean, referring to Holywood Chamber's success of the virtual platform, stated that he had been astounded by what it had achieved. As such he asked how the Council could provide assistance to other Chambers to enable them to enjoy similar success.

Ms Burrows commented that the system used for the virtual tours was amazing and so easy to use enabling the town to keep moving forward. To replicate that success she indicated that Comber Chamber would need to have at least 80% of businesses on board and costings would be in the region of £5,000. She added that as such any help which the Council could provide would be appreciated.

At this stage Ms McBride reported that Hardys General store in the town was currently on the market for sale and a long established chip shop was also shortly closing. She added that as the result of the Covid-19 pandemic 12 shops had been lost in the town and she agreed any help the Council could provide would be greatly appreciated.

(Councillor Kennedy joined the meeting at this stage – 7.44pm)

As there were no further questions from Members the Chair thanked Ms McBride and Ms Burrows for their attendance and added that he hoped the Council could continue to work with them.

At this stage Ms Burrows took the opportunity to ask officers if the Christmas tree in Comber could be more appropriately lit this year. She also asked if the 'Brent Goose' could be placed on the roundabout at the end of the dual carriageway coming into the town from Newtownards.

(Ms McBride & Ms Burrows left the meeting at this stage – 7.46pm)

5. REGENERATION PERFORMANCE REPORT Q1 APRIL-JUNE 2022 (FILE 160127) (Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing that Council was required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements to secure continuous

improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil this requirement Council approved the Performance Management Policy and Handbook in October 2015. The Performance Management Handbook outlined the approach to Performance Planning and Management process as:

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

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

Reporting approach

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

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

The report for Quarter 1 2022-23 was attached.

Key points to note:

- DfC had agreed an extension of the Covid Recovery funding programme until 31 March 2023.
- Planning permission had been received for the parklet schemes in Comber and Newtownards, however, permission for the scheme for Bangor had not been received as DfI had not responded to the Planning Section.
- The covering project for Hibernia Street, Holywood still awaited a planning determination. This was being held up again as DfI had not provided comments on the application.
- The Letter of Offer for the Small Settlements Grants had been received and returned. Permission to commence the projects from DfC had now been received.
- The Portavogie Harbour project, which was to be funded by SEAFLAG, had received permission to commence, however, the Council's request for an extension of the programme until 31 March 2023 was still being considered. The Council's agent was also negotiating with the preferred contractor concerning the tender price and any uplifts they may be seeking.

Key achievements:

- Consultation on the Small Settlements projects had commenced and were proving to be mainly supportive of the proposed projects. Further consultation would be undertaken when concept proposals were developed.
- The Council had obtained confirmation from DAERA that applications for funding under the Rural Development Programme for playpark projects in Portaferry and Cloughey could be considered.
- The installation of the new cycle provisions across the Borough had commenced and were being well received.

Emerging issues:

- The masterplan for the Commons in Donaghadee had been completed, however, further consultation had now been requested. This process was attracting additional costs and staff time.
- Due to a number of vacancies in the unit the commencement of certain projects may be delayed or deferred.
- Funding may become available under the Peace Plus programme within the next year. Funding would be required to develop some projects to be ready to avail of this when the various calls opened.

Action to be taken:

- To continue to monitor the implementation of all projects.
- To try and recruit key staff as quickly as possible.
- To commence a programme of meetings with the various village groups to review and prioritise projects in the village plans that may be suitable for funding under Peace Plus. This process would only commence if the staffing issues could be addressed.

RECOMMENDED that that the Council note the report.

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

The proposer, Councillor McKimm, thanked officers for the report and the ongoing work. Referring to the parklets in Bangor he noted the ongoing frustration with the lack of progress and sought an update.

(Councillor Adair joined the meeting at this stage -7.48pm)

By way of an update the Head of Regeneration concurred with those frustrations adding that the process put in place by DfI was very demanding. He reported however that all seven parklets now had Planning Approval and licence applications had been submitted to DfI for approval. As such Members were advised that the parklets had been ordered and it was hoped they would be rolled out in November.

In respect of emerging issues, the seconder Councillor Cummings, sought an update on the staff recruitment exercise.

The Head of Regeneration confirmed that a temporary Rural Development Manager had been appointed and had taken up post in September 2022.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor McKimm, seconded by Councillor Cummings, that the report be noted.

6. TOWN ADVISORY GROUP MINUTES FOR NOTING (Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Minutes of the following Town Advisory Groups:

- 6.1. Bangor TAG – 14.6.22
- 6.2. Comber TAG – 8.6.22
- 6.3. Donaghadee TAG – 16.6.22
- 6.4. Holywood TAG – 9.6.22
- 6.5. Newtownards TAG – 15.6.22

RECOMMENDED that the minutes be noted.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Wilson, seconded by Councillor Dunlop, that the minutes be noted.

(Councillor Kennedy left the meeting at this stage – 7.52pm)

7. DEVOLUTION OF REGENERATION POWERS (FILE RDP14)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing that at the meeting of Council held on 27 April 2022 the following Notice of Motion was agreed:

“That this Council recognising the potential difference we could make to the lives of residents and businesses throughout our Borough if we were to have full responsibility for a Regeneration budget as envisaged in the Review of Public Administration - does write to the Minister for Communities requesting that they undertake to devolve such powers to Local Councils within the period of the new Assembly Mandate. And further, that Officers are tasked to bring back a report outlining a programme of engagement with other Councils, SOLACE, and NILGA to present a united campaign to secure the Minister’s support.”

It should be reiterated that following the formation of the new Councils in 2015 the transfer of this function was deferred and subsequently removed from the transferring functions. It could be highlighted that at present most of the physical regeneration projects were being led by local Councils, funded by various Departments such as the Covid 19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme and the Covid Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme. In both those Programmes, Councils were best placed to ascertain the needs within their areas and to develop plans to address them.

The Partnership Panel, which included a Councillor representative from each Council, NILGA office bearers and Executive Ministers, had been exploring the

potential future transfer of regeneration powers to Councils. Recent correspondence from NILGA to SOLACE confirmed that progress had been made in this regard, with the DfC Minister agreeing at the August Partnership Panel that Local Government and Central Government could meet to further explore the potential scope of a future transfer of regeneration powers to Councils. This was particularly welcome given that the Communities Minister in 2016 wrote to Councils saying the transfer could not progress as there was no political consensus on the issue.

Local government regionally would now meet to discuss how to progress this with momentum and further updates would be brought to Council in due course.

RECOMMENDED that Council:

- (a) continue to support NILGA and SOLACE and the work being undertaken through the Partnership Panel to explore the potential scope of a future transfer to regeneration powers to Councils and;
- (b) writes to the Minister for Communities welcoming the recent discussions and actions being undertaken as above and once again setting out the case that the Regeneration powers should be devolved to local government, as was previously agreed, with the relevant budget.

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

The proposer, Councillor Dunlop, commented that he sat on the Executive Committee of NILGA and the matter had recently been discussed at length with strong support for it. He added that he agreed with the ethos of 'local solutions for local problems'.

Concurring with those comments the seconder, Alderman Girvan, stated that everyone was familiar with their own area, businesses and needs and as such she was happy to support the recommendation.

Councillor Adair welcomed the report and paid tribute to Council officers for their hard work and welcomed the schemes for lower Ards in both Portaferry and Portavogie.

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

(Councillor Kennedy rejoined the meeting at this stage – 7.54pm)

8. TOURISM PERFORMANCE REPORT Q1 APRIL-JUNE 2022 (FILE TO/TD15) (Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing that Council was required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements to secure continuous

improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil this requirement Council approved the Performance Management Policy and Handbook in October 2015. The Performance Management Handbook outlined the approach to Performance Planning and Management process as:

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

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

Reporting approach

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

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

The report for Quarter 1 2022-23 was attached.

Key points to note:

- Staffing had remained problematic in season to date. Covid positive cases in front-line services had reduced Visitor Information Centre (VIC) staff on occasions and the casual list was not as extensive as previous years. However, a four-day seconded post would return to the VIC in July which should assist some pressures. Recruitment to fulfil the tourism marketing vacancy had been underway and Marketing aim to have the undergraduate student placement in post in September.
- An appetite for attendance at outdoor events was returning but weather had proved problematic early in the season. Visitor spend at events was reduced.
- One tourism grant recipient decided not to proceed with their letter of offer
- Lead times for bookings had shortened in the tourism sector.
- Local Information Office (Pier 36) was now a Tourist Information Point displaying literature on the region. This change was due to increased demands across their expanded business.

Key achievements:

- Completion of OCN Level 2 Event Management for event grant recipients
- Delivery of four tourism events – May Day, RSPBNI Pipe Bands, Sea Bangor/Platinum Jubilee, Comber Earlies Food Festival with overall customer satisfaction levels at 93.5% to date and good attendee numbers.

- Walks and tours programme ahead of target, delivering 10 to date, 70% ticket sales and 26% out of borough attendees.
- Bookable Experience programme ahead of target, nine experiences delivered to date with 82% ticket sales and 39% out of Borough attendees.
- Three funding programmes fully complete TNI, DAERA and KNIB in relation to experience/sustainable experience product development. Total of circa £150,000 grants levered supporting 13 local businesses.
- Two trade shows attended by TASTE AND to date, Balmoral Show and the Game Fair. At Balmoral, the Council had the largest Council food and drink footprint. Nine awards had been awarded to local food business in season to date.
- Ballywalter, Groomspoint, Cloughey and Millisle retained their Seaside Awards for quality managed beaches.
- Tourism Social media audience has grown by 18% in this quarter, and appealing marketing content continued to support this growth of visibility on digital channels.
- A fully integrated digital led marketing approach to campaigns was proving to be very successful. Evaluation of the spring 'Make it Yours' destination awareness campaign evaluation showed that it reached four million online impressions and covered 77 out of home advertising locations across NI.

Emerging issues:

- Staffing was a continuing issue and impacted VIC service opening/outreach.
- Securement of businesses in both experience and event programmes remained challenging and would likely continue.
- Cost of living impact on ticket sales and budget for programming

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 experiences/events.
- The Events service to include contingency plans regarding changeable weather patterns in events management plans.
- Ticket pricing to be kept under review

RECOMMENDED that Council note the report.

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

The proposer, Councillor McKimm expressed his thanks to officers and sought an update on Cockle Row Cottages and their use.

The Head of Tourism advised that there was a separate report later on the Agenda which provided an update on Cockle Row Cottages.

At this stage Councillor Adair congratulated the Tourism Team on the success of the recent Portavogie Seafood Festival which had seen some 7,000 people in

attendance and brought huge economic benefits to the Borough. Continuing he referred to the substantial coastline within the Borough some of the biggest in Northern Ireland and as such he suggested the Council should be building upon the Blue Flag beach scheme. He asked if consideration could be given to nominating both Portavogie and Knockinelder beaches.

The Head of Tourism confirmed that her team assisted with the Blue Flag beach awards and the submission of applications. She advised that designations took place every few years based upon usage between the months of June and September which was required to be evidenced.

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

9. VISIT BELFAST – 12 MONTH OVERVIEW 2021/22 (FILE 170871) (Appendix IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing that Ards and North Down Borough Council had an annual partnership Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place with Visit Belfast. The purpose of the partnership was twofold:

- To facilitate communication between the partnership Councils (Ards and North Down, Lisburn and Castlereagh, Belfast) with regards to tourism development.
- For Visit Belfast to create effective marketing communications and visitor servicing platforms that were efficient and represent value for money for each of the Council areas.

An annual review report was provided at the end of each financial year with detailed breakdown of activity. The attached Appendix1 was an overview of visual examples of the 2021/22 SLA.

Belfast Plus

Since 2015, Ards and North Down Borough Council and Lisburn City and Castlereagh Council had remained as local authority partners gaining year on year dedicated promotional focus under the banner Belfast Plus. The cost per annum for local authority membership had remained at £30,000 since 2015.

This regional partner promotion ensured a dedicated promotion off and online for Ards and North Down, promoting key campaigns, specific activities, trails, itineraries, and events etc. across digital and print platforms. A high level of coverage for Ards and North Down had been maintained throughout the 2021/22 SLA period, and a significant dial up of digital channels ensured that Ards and North Down remained at the forefront of people's minds during this initial Covid-19 recovery phase. This SLA showcased Ards and North Down campaigns and Borough tourism activity combined with strong visitor servicing support across tourist arrival points including the Visit Belfast Welcome Centre (VBWC) opposite City Hall and both main NI airports. Visit Belfast worked in collaboration with the Council's tourism team to amplify the

promotion of the Council as an appealing tourism destination through the strong reach of their robust trade network and large consumer databases.

Being promoted as part of the Belfast region under the Belfast Plus brand (along with Lisburn Castlereagh) was a key strength for the continued promotion of the Borough. During the Covid-19 pandemic and initial recovery, Visit Belfast had proactively driven SLA activity and adapted messaging in line with travel ramping back up to pre-Covid levels. With Tourism Ireland and Tourism Northern Ireland consumer sentiment surveys showing that visitors likely to travel, continue to seek open spaces and outdoor activities that were easily accessible from the city centre, this SLA with Visit Belfast remained critical to supporting and promoting AND's tourism and hospitality businesses as widely as possible to potential visitors.

Management and opportunities

Regular meetings, email correspondence and calls were in place between the Visit Belfast team and Ards and North Down tourism and marketing officers, to review and maximise all SLA promotional activity and new opportunities. As one of only two local authorities in this partnership, Ards and North Down was at a significant advantage in presenting the borough to international visitors. This strong partnership ensured that all Ards and North Down tourism campaigns, programmes and events were widely promoted throughout the year.

Summary of SLA 2021/22 activity

Digital - Web, Social, Email Marketing

Ards and North Down capitalised on a significant upscaling of presence across Visit Belfast's digital channels. Content was featured on belfastplus.com dedicated web pages including experiences and What's On information. [Visitbelfast.com](https://visitbelfast.com) included 21 Ards and North Down location listings and the Borough was prominently featured in 40 blogs (an increase of 17% on prior year) including staycation guides, day trips, virtual visits, family things to do, road trips, walks, and foodie inspiration. As events returned, the Visit Belfast SLA ensured that things to do in the borough gained strong promotional presence with 56 'What's On' listings during the period.

Ards and North Down was also strongly presented in Visit Belfast's 'What's On' e-zines with over 175k emails sent to 25,000 subscribers including 14 Ards and North Down features including key events in the Borough.

Ards and North Down content was promoted throughout the period to Visit Belfast's large social media audience (Facebook 120,000, Twitter 90,000 Instagram 55,000 followers) while also gaining exposure for Visit-Ards and North Down channels through links and shares.

Promotional Literature

Ards and North Down also gained promotional exposure with content featured in various print publications. This included content featuring in a Belfast Plus print booklet, Visit Belfast Welcome Centre map, and a Belfast and City Region guide including a four-page section in the body of content for

promotion of Ards and North Down Borough Council attractions, products and experiences. Visit Belfast's main digital Out-of-State Visitor Guide also includes city and region approach featuring Ards and North Down.

Prominence for Ards and North Down in Welcome Centre Locations

Belfast Plus videos and imagery were played on the 16-screen video wall and information desks, with 45 Ards and North Down products featuring prominently on self-serve screens. 25,800 pieces of literature featuring Ards and North Down Borough Council have been racked across Visit Belfast sites.

A Belfast Plus promotional campaign was developed at George Best Belfast City Airport with graphics featuring Ards and North Down displayed at the Arrivals visitor booth.

City centre prime promotional locations were maximised through the SLA period. The Council secured eight weeks of promotion for five campaigns in VBWC Event Island featured Visit-AND's 'We're Ready To Welcome You' Campaign (June '21), and Tide & Turf / Taste AND-Festival (Sept/Oct '21), Viking Festival, 'Make it Yours' Spring Destination awareness Campaign (March '22) and Experience AND throughout the year. These five campaigns were also featured on VBWC's Front Window Digital Screen over a three-month promotional period gaining exposure at a prime city centre advertising site.

Industry engagement programme

Ards and North Down tourism development team presented the Borough's tourism offering during four virtual / face-to-face industry engagement events in June, September, October, and March. Ards and North Down was also featured in 12 x weekly Concierge e-zines promoting what's on in the Borough.

Visit Belfast arranged 179 buyer engagements (combination of virtual and face-to-face events) with Ards and North Down featured in their travel trade presentation. Visit Belfast attended World Travel Market the leading global tourism trade event, which returned as a face-to-face event for the first time since the pandemic hit. Two representatives from Ards and North Down attended Visit Belfast's client reception promoting the borough's tourism offering to 13 tour operators.

Familiarisation Trips

Visit Belfast hosted seven FAM trips with industry editors and freelance writers and featured three press releases which promoted Ards and North Down locations during 21/22. In addition, Executive Global Tours visited Culloden Hotel and Royal Belfast Golf Club with Visit Belfast in July 2021. On 24 March 2022, 24 industry and Visitor Information Centre network representatives attended a familiarisation trip around the borough including a visit to Ballycopeland Windmill. Positive evaluation results showed that all attendees would be happy to recommend the sites visited.

Meetings and Conference Sector

The Borough was also included in Visit Belfast's promotion at six key meetings and conference tourism exhibitions during the SLA period.

942 buyer engagements were completed (face-to-face and via virtual meetings) including workshops, tradeshows, exhibition, and site visits promoting products and experiences to new and existing event organisers, agencies, and corporates, associations where relevant.

Visitor Servicing

Visit Belfast handled 16,686 enquiries about the Borough across welcome centres and visitor entry points during the SLA period. Imagery was updated to latest content to visually represent Ards and North Down on self-serve touch screens in the welcome centre ensuring that Ards and North Down was front of mind for visitors.

Value of membership and other contributions

Throughout 2021/22 Visit Belfast had proven to be a critical partner for Ards and North Down Borough Council, providing vital visitor servicing support and training, and year-round enhanced promotional exposure for the Borough's tourism offering.

In addition to the local authority membership, the Tourism service secured primary promotional space in the Belfast Welcome Centre and George Best Belfast City Airport at a cost of £6,000 and £5,000 respectively per annum. When those sums were combined with the annual membership, the Council was leveraging incremental promotional activity valued at £20,000 per annum.

Through the successful partnership, Ards and North Down Borough Council capitalised on a full range of benefits to a wider consumer and trade audience which the Council on its own could not achieve.

In November 2022, Council approved the renewal of the Visit Belfast Service Level Agreement for two years 2022/23 and 2023/24, at £30,000 per annum, subject to the Rates setting process. The strong partnership approach ensured that Ards and North Down destination campaigns and event programme promotion reached a large international visitor audience, which was critical to continue to keep Ards and North Down tourism front of mind as international competition for visitors increases post pandemic.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Cummings, seconded by Councillor Dunlop, that the report is noted.

10. ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF PIPE BAND CHAMPIONSHIP IN CASTLE PARK, BANGOR, MAY 2022 (FILE TO:EV64)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing that In October 2018, in response to a request from Council, the Council received a report providing an evaluation and costs for holding the 2019 County Down Pipe Band Championship at either Castle Park in Bangor, or a venue in Newtownards (the airfield at Newtownards Airport was the confirmed location on 18 May). Subsequently, Council agreed to bid to hold the

Championship at Newtownards and to rotate back to Bangor in 2020, with Economic Impact Assessments (EIAs) to be undertaken at each event.

The Newtownards EIA results were presented to Council in September 2019.

Unfortunately, due to government Covid restrictions the event was cancelled in 2020. Further to this, the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association NI (RSPBANI) was not able to run the event under its normal 'model' in 2021. In May 2021, Council agreed that the event should be held with limited spectators in the McKee Clock Arena on 4 September 2021 and that an EIA would not be undertaken until the event could revert to the 'original' Bangor event model at Castle Park.

The event was successfully delivered in 2022 in Castle Park, Bangor, and subsequently an EIA was undertaken by the appointed Tourism Events market research company.

It should be noted that the event was owned and organised by the RSPBANI. The Council bids for and pays RSPBANI to bring the event to the Borough. The fee to bring the event in both 2019 and 2022 was £14,000. The fee information for 2023 was not yet available.

In line with the Council's Integrated Tourism Economic Development Regeneration Strategy's (ITDRS) tourism targets, the focus for the Tourism service was to host events which had the capacity to increase visitor overnights and increase visitor spend. Therefore, both EIAs set out:

- The profile of survey respondents to both visitor and business surveys.
- The economic impact assessment of visitor spend.
- An overview of wider benefits for businesses within the town.
- Non-economic indicators such as event awareness, visitor satisfaction and suggested improvements.

May 2022 Event, Castle Park, Bangor

The event was held on Saturday 14 May with 32 bands participating. Spectators and competitors were estimated at circa 5,000, (similar to the 2019 event in Newtownards with 33 bands and circa 5000 attendees). In 2022, the event included Highland Dancers, Drum Majors and Pipe Bands alongside food and drink vendors all secured by the organisers.

Comparative Results

	2019 Newtownards Event	2022 Bangor Event
Attendee numbers	5,000	5,000
Visitors surveyed	325	128*
% from Borough	51%^	43%
% out of Borough	41%^^	52%
% out of NI	8%	5%
Day visitor	96%	97%
Overnight visitors	4%	3%
Total visitor spend	£119,000	£83,162
Spend per visitor	£22.92	£16.63

*The method of surveying visitors in 2022 with the continuing impact of Covid-19 restrictions meant that face to face interviews were limited. Therefore, the methodology agreed with the market research company was to survey a portion of visitors as they left the event and obtain email addresses and make contact in the days after their attendance to ensure a comprehensive spend profile was obtained.

^ Noted as Ards and the surrounding area

^^ Noted as other NI

The age of the visitors attending both the 2019 and 2022 events were similar, the majority (41% v 43%) aged 25-44. The majority of the spend at both locations was on food/drink including snacks and a sit-down meal.

As Council bid to host the event, marketing responsibility lies with RSPBANI. However, in 2019 to advertise the new venue, Council marketed the event using social media, billboards, newspaper adverts and leaflets, at an additional cost of £1,833.01. In 2022, the marketing plan consisted of social media only. Visitors to the event heard about it through social media/web (25% and 48%). 2% of respondents in 2019 were "just passing" whereas in 2022, 5% claimed the same. Other significant responses included word of mouth (51% and 28%).

Travel to the event in both locations was mostly by car (77% and 80%) with public transport in 2019 at 12% and 7% in 2022.

Suggested changes/comments on the delivery of the event were similar at both locations – more seats and improved toilet facilities. Improved parking came out at 31% in Bangor in 2022 but in 2019, only 1% commented on this (parking was available on site). Overall visitor satisfaction was very high at both locations (90% and 100%).

Overnight stays

Unfortunately, both research exercises undertaken in 2019 and 2022 returned very limited data on overnight stays, with low numbers of those surveyed indicating that they were staying overnight. Robust comparable data on the economic impact of overnight stays was therefore not available.

GVA and equivalent job years:

2019 Newtownards Event		2022 Bangor Event	
GVA	£88,000	GVA	£103,462.99
Job Year Equivalent	2.3 years	Job Year Equivalent	2.7 years

It should be noted that due to a change of methodology the GVA figure for both events is not comparable.

Note: The GVA figure quoted relates only to visitor expenditure and does not take into consideration the Council's costs or any impact of the event on suppliers.

Businesses

In 2019, 64 businesses were surveyed, with 52 businesses surveyed in 2022.

	2019 Newtownards Event	2022 Bangor Event
Retail	36%	71%
Café/restaurant	29%	17%
Bar	8%	10%
Commercial Accommodation	19%	2%
Other (beauty, visitor attractions)	8%	nil

In both locations, 83% of businesses surveyed took no additional measures to prepare for the event. Of the remaining 17%, the additional measures included additional staff and increased opening hours.

12% of businesses in Newtownards in 2019 reported reduced footfall in the town centre though the event was only a short distance away. There was some evidence that better advertising or awareness amongst local businesses may have helped address this. 18% of businesses reported an increase in spend resulting from event spectators.

In 2022 in Bangor, 33% of the businesses surveyed reported an increase in sales whilst almost three quarters of respondents saw similar or increased footfall during the event.

When the businesses were asked what provisions they would make for future Pipe Band Championships, most businesses in 2019 responded that they would make none, 8% would consider making further use of advertising and 12% would alter their capacity in terms of employment or stock. In 2022, the same questions were asked and while 73% stated they would do nothing different, 11% said they would change

the offer/include advertising and special offers, 4% would extend opening hours and 5% would employ more staff. Businesses at both locations commented that improved communication with event organisers/Council around the event would help them take advantage of the opportunities the event presents.

Council Budget

	2019 Newtownards Event	2022 Bangor Event
Event cost	£29,967	£15,363
Cost per visitor	£5.99	£3.07

The above event costs included the budget allocated to the 'bid' to RSPBNI which was £14,000 per annum.

The main factors for the increased budget in 2019 at Newtownards were:

1. Hire cost for the Airfield and toilets
2. Contracting a Traffic Management Company
3. Hire of use Shuttle bus from town centre
4. Additional entertainment on site.
5. Marketing

The event budget allocated in the 2022/23 Rates setting process was £21,500.

Due to additional programming and infrastructure requirements, it should be noted that a budget to deliver the event in Newtownards would be higher than a budget required to deliver the event in Bangor (assuming the same venues were used). The appropriate budget would be included in the relevant business case, determined by the Council decision on its location, and subject to the Rates Setting process.

Potential impacts on events due to current climate

Covid-19 restrictions had been lifted but many people still air on the side of caution and would not attend events. Latest consumer sentiment research conducted by Tourism NI (March 2021) suggests that consumers' confidence in attending outdoor events had been increasing slowly. The cost-of-living crisis and higher energy and fuel prices may have impacts on people travelling to events and for those that do attend events, may discourage interaction with retail and foodservice options on offer.

RECOMMENDED that Council considers the report and agrees to rotate the event in Newtownards Airfield (for 2023) subject to negotiations with the Ulster Flying Club, and Caste Park Bangor (2024) and undertakes a bid for the RSPBANI Pipe Band Annual Event, subject to the appropriate budget being allocated in the rates setting process.

Councillor McClean proposed, seconded by Councillor Gilmour, that Council invites a deputation from RSPBANI to speak to this Committee at the earliest opportunity to provide feedback to Members on their preferences and requirements for a venue and how the event could be enhanced for Borough residents as well as the success of the RSPBANI.

The proposer, Councillor McClean, expressed the view that the County Down Pipe Band Championship should be held at Castle Park, Bangor and not rotated to take place in Newtownards. He referred to the report before Members and the information it contained adding that he was at a loss as to why the recommendation had been put forward. He added that while economics was not everything, he would be interested to learn how officers had reached the conclusion contained within the report. Subsequently he felt it would be useful to obtain feedback from the RSPBANI on this adding that it would also give them an opportunity to provide some further feedback on their ideas on how they could expand the event to make it an even greater success. In summing up he encouraged Members to let events such as this continue in their original towns and seek feedback from the RSPBANI.

Concurring with those comments the seconder, Councillor Gilmour, agreed that it would be useful to obtain feedback from the RSPBANI on their experiences of both venues. She added that she would be happy for it to take place in both towns as suggested in the report but stated that it was important to hear that from the RSPBANI. Councillor Gilmour emphasised the importance of Members having that information before being asked to make a decision on the matter.

At this stage Councillor McKimm commented that he had read the report which he felt was very logical and laid out all of the information for Members to consider. The question for him was the concept of alternating with perhaps more of a focus upon providing a good quality event at an equally good cost.

Councillor Adair indicated that he would not be supporting the proposal, adding that he was not into debating Ards versus Bangor as at this stage he felt Members needed to move on from that. What was most important instead he said was the promotion of the Borough in its entirety. He agreed that the event should be alternated between two of the biggest settlements in the Borough, Bangor and Newtownards. Continuing Councillor Adair suggested that Ards at times did get a raw deal as many events currently were held in Bangor and that sent a very negative message out to the residents of Newtownards.

Alderman Girvan commented that regardless of where the event was held it was imperative to ensure there were incentives in place to encourage people into the towns. She suggested that in future the Council should consider working more closely with the Chambers of Trade to ensure to maximise the success of this event.

Councillor Cummings expressed the view that both venues were like for like and noted the comment in the report which stated that "It should be noted that due to a change of methodology the GVA figure for both events is not comparable". He sought elaboration on that from officers.

The Director confirmed that the methodology for carrying out those calculations had changed, however she stated that the figures referred to on page two of the report provided a better comparison.

Councillor Cummings noted the strong Ulster Scots ethos in Newtownards.

At this stage Alderman Armstrong-Cotter stated that the people in Newtownards felt downtrodden given that the majority of Council events took place in the city of Bangor, including Sea Bangor, Open House Festival and Ward Park Concerts. She added that she along with her party colleague Alderman McIlveen had been instrumental in bringing the Pipe Band Championships to Newtownards and found the proposal before them insulting and one which any fair minded person would not support.

Councillor Kennedy welcomed the apparent new wave of enthusiasm for the Ulster Scots heritage and asked where those Members had been hiding. He took the opportunity to inform Members of the many Ulster Scots links throughout the entire Borough. He expressed mild amusement with the proposal put forward and the concerns raised in respect of the economic impacts and thanked his party colleagues for their diplomatic comments. Councillor Kennedy agreed that it was very disappointing to see the proposal put forward describing it as petty, pitiful, and selfish. As such he stated that he would not be supporting it.

Alderman Wilson sympathised with the Ards elected Members and suggested that perhaps an alternative event could be found for Newtownards. He added that the Pipe Band Championship was a magical event for all. Continuing he stated that he was mindful of previous contentious debates on the matter and suggested that a compelling reason would need to be given to justify the rotation of the event between Bangor and Newtownards. He expressed the view that the recommendation in the report was confusing and as such agreed that it would be useful to seek the views of the RSPBANI to enable a fully informed decision to be made by elected Members.

Expressing his support for the proposal, Councillor Blaney recognised that it was merely to seek feedback from the RSPBANI in order to see how the event could be improved in the future. He added that they may bring forward some new ideas of their own and as such he fully supported the proposal.

At this stage Councillor Adair called for a recorded vote to be taken.

By way of summing up Councillor McClean agreed that Newtownards should have more events but was very much of the opinion that changes were not made to those well-established events in the Borough. He stated that his proposal was simply asking that a delegation from the RSPBANI was invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee to put forward its views on the event going forward. He added that feedback was essential to ensure elected Members could make an informed decision on the matter. He added that perhaps those who were not supportive of it were scared of the feedback which could be received.

Councillor Adair requested a recorded vote. The proposal was put to the meeting and declared CARRIED with 7 voting FOR, 6 AGAINST, 1 ABSTENTION and 2 ABSENT.

FOR (7)
Alderman
Wilson
Councillor

AGAINST (6)
Aldermen
Armstrong-Cotter
Girvan

ABSTAINED (1)
Councillor
Walker

ABSENT (2)
Alderman
M Smith
Councillor

Blaney
Brooks
Dunlop
Gilmour
McClellan
McKimm

McDowell
Councillor
Adair
Cummings
Kennedy

Irvine

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor McClellan, seconded by Councillor Gilmour, that Council invites a deputation from RSPBANI to speak to this Committee at the earliest opportunity to provide feedback to Members on their preferences and requirements for a venue and how the event can be enhanced for Borough residents as well as the success of the RSPBANI.

11. COCKLE ROW COTTAGES UPDATE REPORT SEASON 2023 (FILE TO/VIC4)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing that In April 2022, Council approved a small programme of animation at Cockle Row Cottages June – October 2022, and that officers continued discussions with the Ulster Scots Agency and relevant interested parties regarding the longer-term operation/use of the Cottages. Since then, the Cottages had hosted two events attracting 406 attendees. Unfortunately, rain caused 'at event set up' cancellation in July and the event in September was cancelled to observe the national mourning period of Her Majesty The Queen. An event was scheduled for Hallowe'en.

Update

Further to the above on-site activity, the following had occurred:

- A site visit to the Cottages by community representatives accommodated by a Council Tourism Officer.
- A series of local community meetings which had been attended by Council Community Development staff and/or Ulster Scots Agency officers, as relevant, regarding broader issues for the group and the Cottages potential.
- Ongoing support and advice provided by Community Development Officers to assist the community group become constituted.
- A local exhibition and public meeting, hosted by community representatives in early September, for those interested in preserving Groomsport heritage and becoming involved in the fabric of the village.
- A meeting on 6 September in Groomsport with a number of representatives of the 'to be formed' 'Discover Groomsport' and the Head of Tourism and Tourism Manager
- A scheduled public meeting to launch 'Discover Groomsport' and elect trustees for its board on 9 September. This was postponed due to the passing of Her Majesty The Queen. At the time of writing the report Council officers had not been advised of a new date for the Discover Groomsport public meeting.

At the meeting on 6 September, the Head of Tourism and the Tourism Manager advised representatives of the intended 'Discover Groomsport' that due to the uncertainty of the timeline of their forthcoming proposal, that officers would progress with its 'normal' recruitment schedule and budget preparation. This would ensure the Cottages were resourced, subject to Rates setting, enabling them to reopen in the summer of 2023. The representatives were advised that officers would support the group, in bringing forward a proposal (with all relevant partners) when it became constituted and was in the position to do so. The representatives were advised that there could be opportunities for the group to test/animate the Cottages should their resource be adequate this season; an opportunity which would help structure a formal proposal. It was acknowledged that this would be a 'fledgling group' and a proposal would be dependent on time and the successful constitution of the group. Any forthcoming future proposal would be brought back to Council for consideration.

The Tourism Manager had reviewed previous opening times and visitor numbers for pre Covid seasons at the Cottages. Considering the Council approved Transformation of Visitor Servicing plan to extend outreach within existing staffing/operational budgets, the following was considered appropriate opening times for the Cottages during the 2023 season. This would be monitored in season.

Cockle Row Cottages Seasonal Visitor Information Centre, April - September 2023

April – Sunday 9 April (Easter) – Cottages open and small-scale entertainment
 May – Sunday 7 May – Cottages open and small scale entertainment
 June, July and August – Cottages open Thursday to Sunday weekly 10am to 4pm with small scale entertainment each Sunday
 September – Sunday EHOD

*subject to Risk Assessment and normal Rates setting process

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the above opening times for Cockle Row Cottages, subject to the normal rates setting process.

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

The proposer, Councillor McKimm, noted the use of the cottages as a venue to promote the history of the Ulster Scots Heritage and sought an update on that.

In response the Head of Tourism guided Members through the report highlighting the salient points within in it. She added that pre-Covid the site had worked well for the Ulster Scots Agency and now that restrictions had been lifted a number of sessions had recently taken place successfully.

Councillor McKimm welcomed the update from the officer.

The seconder, Councillor Gilmour, welcomed the report particularly the element around the Ulster Scots aspect. Referring back to legacy North Down Borough

Council, she recalled how there had been equipment housed in the cottages to watch nesting birds on Cockle Island and asked if that was still in place.

In response the Head of Tourism confirmed the technology was still there and the Group responsible for it continued to set up the cameras but she was unsure how fit for purpose it actually was.

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

12. AND EVENTS AND FESTIVALS FUND 2023/24 (COMMUNITY AND TOURISM)(FILE TO/EV105)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing that Council approved the Borough Events Strategic Direction 2021-2026 (BESD) in November 2020. Within the BESD, it acknowledged that local festivals and events played a key part in delivering social, cultural, and economic outcomes. Various Council services provided grants to support festivals and events, including Community Development, Tourism and Arts.

A recommendation of the BESD was that Council should continue to support the development of the local events sector through strategic funding, training and development and advice. This support was essential to the health and vibrancy of the sector. The Strategy recommended that this support should be better structured for event organisers and progression routes were made available for event organisers to help run their events safely or for those who wanted their events to grow.

One of the BESD recommended actions was to 'create a new Events and Festivals Grant Scheme and to develop a resourcing plan for its delivery'. This had been named the "AND Events and Festivals Fund".

Ideally, this fund should incorporate all events/festivals funded by the Council, which would require all budgets across all Council services supporting such events to be pooled. However, to test this concept initially on a smaller scale, it was proposed that the Events and Festivals Fund be limited to Community Development's (CD) Community Festivals Fund (circa £80,000) and the Tourism Event Grant Scheme (circa £80,000), providing a total combined budget of £160,000. The annual CD Community Festivals Fund was normally £65,000 but using savings in other CD budget headings, this budget could be increased to £80,000.

Members should note that the agreed Christmas Switch on Fund (£24,000) was not included in the Local Events and Festivals fund as this was a ring-fenced budget solely for the agreed towns and villages where the Council provided Christmas Trees.

In 2019/20 the total combined budget was £152,762 and supported 44 events/festivals applications (32 CD awards and 12 Tourism awards). In 2018/19

the total combined budget was £158,384 and supported 46 events/festivals (34 CD awards and 12 Tourism awards).

Based on the current Community Festival Fund model, the BESD recommended a three-tier approach to support Local, Neighbourhood and Large festivals. Officers had developed a slightly modified four-tier approach, which better reflected the monetary value of individual applications received in 2018/19 and 2019/20.

The proposed scheme would be structured as follows:

Table 1 Four-Tier Model

Festival/Event	Total Budget available	Min-Max Grant
Local	£20,000	Up to £1,000
Neighbourhood	£15,000	£1001 - £4000
Medium	£35,000	£4001 - £10,000
Large	£90,000	£10,001 - £20,000

The four-tier model did not fundamentally change the recommended in the BESD, but rather by splitting the recommended "Large" budget into "Medium" and "Large" bands, it facilitated those requesting smaller grants up to £10,000 rather than those up to £20,000.

Table 2 below set out the high-level criteria, type and duration of the events/festivals, attendance figures and the level of support available from Council.

Table 2 Events and Festivals Fund

AND Events and Festivals Fund
<p>Local Priority will be given to events and festivals led by a community or groups of communities Must be able to demonstrate social/cultural impact Up to £1,000 for a local one-day community festival that attracts up to 500 attending or taking part. Supported by the Council's Event Management Tool Kit* and dedicated CD case officer</p>
<p>Neighbourhood Priority will be given to events and festivals led by a community or groups of communities Must be able to demonstrate social /cultural impact Up to a maximum of £4,000 for a one-day festival attracting between 501 - 1,000 attending or taking part. Should demonstrate engagement from neighbouring areas/towns/villages.</p>

Supported by the Council's Event Management Tool Kit and dedicated CD case officer
<p>Medium</p> <p>Can be led by a community or group of communities, charities or Limited Companies</p> <p>Must be able to demonstrate social, cultural and economic impact. From £4001 and £10,000 and attracting a minimum of 1,001 people attending or taking part, for a one day or series of events within a defined period, at least some of which must be from out-of-the Borough. Supported by the Council's Event Management tool kit, optional training and dedicated case officer.</p>
<p>Large</p> <p>Can be led by a community or group of communities, charities or Limited Companies</p> <p>Must be able to demonstrate social, cultural and economic impact (including additional event investment) and the ability to create bed nights. From £10,001 and £20,000 and attracting a minimum of 2000 people attending or taking part, some of which must be from out-of-the Borough. Supported by the Council's Event Management Tool Kit, optional training and dedicated Tourism case officer.</p>

Currently the Council's Tourism Event Grant Scheme was advertised annually in October/November, to allow groups sufficient lead time to organise their events/festivals the following year. The formal awards were made once the budget was confirmed after the Rates setting process. The Community Development Festivals Grants were advertised in February and awards were made once the Council received its formal Letter of Offer from the Department of Communities, which co-funded the scheme. Now that the grants schemes were being pooled, it was proposed that the Large and Medium Events and Festivals Grants (Tranche 1) be advertised in November and the small and neighbourhood grants (Tranche 2) advertised in February.

All applications received under the two Tranches would be scored by a panel of officers from both the Community Development and Tourism services. As agreed in the BESD, applications would be scored against an Impact Radar Model, which would identify if the Event or Festival had either a stronger social/cultural or economic impact. If the Event or Festival had a high social/cultural impact it would be supported and administered by the community team and if it had a higher economic impact, it would be supported and administered by the Tourism team. It was acknowledged and accepted some may need a joint approach.

Table 3 detailed the festivals in 2022-23 which applied to both the Community Development Fund and Tourism Event Grants Scheme.

Table 3 Applicants who apply to both CD and Tourism Grants

Festival	Organizer	CD Grant	Tourism Grant
Portaferry Gala Fest	Portaferry Gala	15,000	10,000
Sails and Sounds	Portaferry Sails and Sounds	8,800	10,000

Ards Peninsula Kite Festival	Ards Peninsula Village Partnership	4,000	4,590
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The current process enabled some groups to maximize funding for their event, by making applications to two or more different Council event Funds/Schemes. They could do this currently as the application could meet the different criteria set out in the Fund/Scheme. As the Council's event Funds/Schemes were open and competitive, applicants therefore risk being unsuccessful in one application, which could result in their event being unviable. By introducing the recommended four tier system, applicants would only make one application to the scheme under the tier which best suits their event, and overall budget requirements, thus reducing bureaucracy and administration for both the applicant and the Council. Support would be available from officers to assist groups who wished to apply to external funding streams

In August 2022, officers arranged a consultation session with those who had been recipients of previous grants (including those specifically who had applied to both Funds/Scheme). In attendance were representatives from; Portaferry Gala Festival, Portaferry Sails and Sounds, Comber Regeneration Community Partnership, Portico and Donaghadee Community Development Association to discuss the structure and process for the proposed new Fund. No significant issues had been raised by the groups. For note Ards Peninsula Kite Festival were invited and had indicated attendance but unfortunately were not at the meeting.

Support Services

Critical to the success of the single "AND Events and Festivals Fund" was the provision of the necessary support, in order to ensure all event organisers were equipped with skills/knowledge to run the event safely. To assist this the Council had established an on line toolkit, which was a valuable resource for all event organisers, irrespective of the size of their event. * [How To Manage Your Event toolkit](#)

In 2021, Council in partnership with South-Eastern Regional College developed a bespoke OCN Level 2 in Event Management course for 12 participants. The first programme was piloted by Council staff who were responsible for organising/running Council events and feedback from staff was used to improve the content of the course. The second cohort completing the Event Management Course was made up of event organisers in receipt of a Tourism grant. The course was reduced to eight-weeks and included the following modules; marketing, risk and health and safety, licencing, event management, environmental health and food safety.

Although the feedback from those community and voluntary volunteers who attended the second cohort was very positive, only a limited number of volunteers were prepared to commit to the training. Those that attended felt that they benefitted most from the networking experience, learning more about other community festivals, lessons learned, problem solving and ideas generation.

Following discussions with a number of festival organisers, officers would now establish an AND Events and Festivals Forum specifically for Council's Grant aided events. It would meet up to four times annually, featuring guest speakers, case

studies, training and practical advice. A Terms of Reference, including membership attendance requirements would be developed in due course.

Each successful grant applicant would also have a single point of contact (SPOC) within the Council. The SPOC would assist the organisers to complete their risk assessments, apply for use of Council land (if applicable), licencing and provide the necessary advice on how to run and market their event (see Table 4 below).

Table 4 Events and Festivals Support

Festival	Criteria	Support
Local	Attracts up to 500 people	Toolkit & CD Team
Neighbourhood	Attracts up to 1000	Toolkit & CD Team
Medium	Attracts a minimum of 1,001 people	Toolkit, offered Training, CD & Tourism Team
Large	Attracts a minimum of 2,000 people	Toolkit, Training, Tourism Team

By developing this 'support model' Council would be able to ensure support was better structured and allocated for event organisers. Assistance would be available for event organisers to help run their events safely and for those who ran events that had the capacity to grow, in line with the recommendations of the BESD.

It was acknowledged that the Council's Events and Festivals Fund would be a new approach for applicants and Council officers. The first year of implementation would be monitored by both managing services and the Fund would be subject to review.

On-Line Grants System

Further to the recommended action to develop a new Events and Festivals Grant Scheme the BESD also recommended that Council 'investigate options for the introduction of an online grant system and the administration of grants centrally'.

Through the estimates process a budget had been secured in 2022/23 to introduce an on-line grants system and once support was available through the Strategic Transformation and Efficiency Programme, this system could be procured. It was likely that this would be a central resource where all grants were processed with dedicated support for successful applicants provided by the relevant service.

RECOMMENDED that that Council notes the above and, in accordance, its previous decision to progress with a single Events and Festivals Grants Scheme as part of the approved BESD, agrees to test this concept initially as detailed in this report, subject to rate setting process.

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

The proposer, Councillor Adair, referred to a number of events which had taken place recently including Portaferry Sails and Sounds and the Kite Festival at Ballywalter. Both events had been very successful and he praised all of those involved with their organisation.

The seconder concurred with those comments.

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

(Alderman Girvan having declared an interest in the next item was put on hold at this stage – 8.44pm)

13. SHARED ISLAND LOCAL AUTHORITY DEVELOPMENT FUNDING UPDATE (FILE TO/TD/66)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing that as reported to Council, June 2022, two applications were made to the Shared Island Local Authority Development Funding for two separate tourism projects. The programme required the lead applicant to be a County Council in the Republic of Ireland. The Scheme was in place to support the progressing of new joint investment projects by cross-border Local Authority partnerships that could link funding streams from North and South and better deliver shared regional development goals.

The two applications were:

1. A Feasibility Study for the 'Four Points of the Island'. Partner Councils included Kerry County Council (lead council), Cork and Donegal County Councils.
2. A Feasibility Study for the development of an All-Island Columban Way walking route. Partner Councils included County Carlow (lead council), Laois, Cavan, Monaghan, Meath, Kildare and Wexford County Councils, Fermanagh and Omagh, Newry, Mourne and Down District Councils and Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council.

In early September the Tourism service received correspondence from the ROI lead Councils to confirm both applications had been successful.

Feasibility Study for the 'Four Points of the Island'

The feasibility study aimed to:

- Scope how the four points of the island could be developed and promoted by a linked series of tourism projects including, but not limited to:
 - Outdoor recreation

- Community and culture activity which have the ability to increase visitors and economic return to each area.
- Determine any infrastructure needs and associated costs to facilitate visitor traffic (where applicable).
- Identify shared links and how best to market and promote the unique offering across the island.
- Identify the key offerings to the visitor which currently existed within the vicinity of the four “points”, and subsequently determine which offerings provide could be cross promoted or be developed as new projects.
- Identify, where available, “best practice” products / schemes elsewhere, which could be adapted by the partner authorities.
- Deliver dual branding solutions, best practice marketing and promotion to for the overall product.
- A detailed cost benefit analysis from an economic and cultural viewpoint.
- Identify and develop a clear communication and consultation plan to build the capacity and engagement of the community to ensure the project is “visitor equipped”.

This application had received €100,000 of funding on the basis of a financial contribution of €5000 from each council (from existing 21/22 budget, previously advised to Council in June 2022) and resource in kind support from each partner Council to deliver a €120,000 project.

Feasibility Study for the development of an All-Island Columban Way

The application was for a Feasibility Study to scope the development and economic return of a fully connected Columban Way walking route, traversing North and South. The concept route was based upon a spiritual pilgrim route from Mount Leinster, the birthplace of Columbanus, via County Fermanagh to Bangor, County Down where Columbanus later set sail for Europe.

The feasibility study aimed to deliver on the following outcomes:

Development of business case for a combined route both sides of the border covering:

- Identification of market demand and projected footfall (years 1, 5, 10).
- Identify existing routes and potential route development options for linkage.
- Potential economic return, employment opportunity and social and cultural metrics.
- Identification of consumer needs and expectations.
- Research of best practice on already existing trails across Europe.
- Assessment of existing experiential offerings along any proposed route to determine linkages to the new trail.
- Cost benefit analysis.
- Technical assessment and infrastructure needs of route including where necessary pre-planning aspects.
- Dual / co-branding of any route.
- Development of community involvement.

The application had received €250,000. All partners had indicated resource in kind support, but no additional financial contribution.

Expenditure was to be fully programmed within 12 months and determined by timelines set out in the applications. This was a challenging timeframe where dates had been committed, due to the delay of the funding announcement. The Council awaited further guidance from lead partners on confirmation from the Funder.

RECOMMENDED that Council welcomes the award of funding from the Shared Island Fund for the two tourism projects.

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

Councillor Adair welcomed the collaboration with the Republic of Ireland on this matter adding that he wished to raise one query in respect of branding. He asked if this would incorporate separate branding entities for both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

In response the Head of Tourism confirmed that issue would be considered.

Welcoming those comments Councillor Adair reiterated his desire to ensure two separate entities were retained for both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

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

(Alderman Girvan rejoined the meeting at this stage – 8.47pm)

14. ED PERFORMANCE REPORT Q1 APRIL-JUNE 2022 (FILE 160167)(Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing 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 four years (Corporate Plan Towards 2024 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually (for publication 30 September 2022)
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2022)

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

Reporting approach

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

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

The report for Quarter 1 2022-23 was attached.

Key points to note:

- Performance in certain areas of service delivery had been affected as difficulties in recruiting staff to fill posts had continued into this year, as have some instances of staff illness. Work streams had to be prioritised in line with the resources available and therefore some targets in this quarter had been not met and budgets underspent.
- Following a joint meeting with DfE and the NI Audit Office (NIAO) it had been agreed that Councils should reference both the statutory targets and the *Go for It* programme targets. Officers were therefore reporting on the two sets of targets for Business Start-up activity: the original target set as part of transferring functions under RPA (referred to as NIBSUP2) and the revised target issued last year by DfE for *Go For It*. The new target would not be formally agreed to replace the original until the Executive was in place.

Key achievements:

- Pickie Fun Park and Exploris were continuing to perform well and were attracting increasing number of visitors.
- Business start activity figures are on track which had contributed to the job creation targets being met.
- Posts for the Labour Market Partnership had now been successfully filled, although one through agency. This meant that work could progress to prepare rollout of the action plan.

Emerging issues:

- The funding for Business Start programme would end on 31 March 2023. There was still no clarity on replacement funding streams for ERDF however, officers continue to work with all other Councils, through the established working group, to seek funding and to prepare plans to provide continuity of support for business start-up and to prepare for a new programme.

- Despite filling the LMP posts, there remain several vacancies within the ED team. While the replacement of required posts took place, there would be challenges for current team members and workloads would need to be carefully monitored and managed.
- The LMP Action Plan had been approved and submitted to the Department of Communities however, DfC was still not in a position to confirm the budget for 2022-23. Until Council received confirmation, implementation of planned activity would be restricted and would impact delivery targets for the year.

Action to be taken:

- Officers had taken action to fill posts and recruitment was progressing with some of the posts being filled, when necessary, through agency which would help address service delivery in the next quarter. Work would continue with HR to address staffing issues.
- Officers would continue to work with government departments to try to progress funding confirmations for the required work streams.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor Gilmour, that the report is noted.

15. ARDS AND NORTH DOWN INTERIM LABOUR MARKET PARTNERSHIP UPDATE (FILE RDP47)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing that Members would recall that the Department for Communities (DfC) made funding available for each of the 11 Councils to develop its own Interim Labour Market Partnership (ILMP) with funding being available until the end of March 2022. Additional funding for an Interim Action Plan for 2022-23, and a further 3-year Action Plan for 2023-2026 were planned subject to the Executive's approved funding.

The DfC Letter of Offer for the period 2022-23 was received on 10 June 2022.

Due to DfC receiving less funding than anticipated and a slight increase to Administration costs, the Operational Budget had seen a reduction from what was originally offered.

Therefore, the indicative offer of funding by DfC was split as follows:

- Administration Costs: £101,999.21
- Operational Costs: £300,741.59

A Letter of Offer Acceptance Form for the Operational Budget was signed by the Council's Chief Executive and was returned following the R&D Committee approval on 30 June 2022.

It must be noted that a Letter of Offer in relation to the Administration Costs (staff and administration resources) was received to allow for the set-up and running of the LMP on 15 April 2022. This funding was guaranteed by the DfC.

However, the Letter of Offer relating to the Operational Costs was indicative and subject to an internal business case being agreed by DfC. Although it was stated in that Letter of Offer that the business case would be agreed by the end of June 2022, this had not happened, and it was now likely that it would not be agreed until at least September 2022. This effectively meant that the LMP and the Council would be operating at risk as there was no guarantee at this stage that the funding would be paid.

It was felt that smaller projects could proceed, as they were aligned with the Economic Development Section's objectives and could therefore complement its work. However, larger projects such as the employer academies which needed to go through a tendering process were judged to be too great a financial risk to proceed.

The LMP staff was therefore preparing the tenders, in the hope that they could be issued as soon as the DfC internal business case was agreed but, would not proceed until confirmation that the funding would be formally allocated.

On a more positive note, members may recall that the Department for the Economy (DfE) also issued a Letter of Offer for the amount of £50,000 to each of the 11 Councils to progress the work of the LMP. This was used to immediately procure a delivery agent for the HGV training and employment Academy. DfE allowed this funding to roll over into the 2022-23 financial year, with the project to complete in March 2023.

HGV Training Academy

An e-tender was prepared and advertised with a closing date of 23 March 2022. Tenders were assessed on 25 March 2022 in line with Council procurement processes and DFPP (People 1st and Henderson Wholesale Ltd) were appointed as the delivery agents.

The Academy was promoted via an e-flyer across Council Social Media channels and via ANDBusiness e-zine and was also featured on ANDBusiness as a News Story.

Outcomes of the recruitment efforts were as follows:

- 300+ candidate enquiries in seven days.
- 147 applications.
- 15 not eligible/withdrawn due to criteria.
- 123 invited for interview/assessment over two days.
- 97/123 completed secondary assessment form (2) ahead of interview.
- 70/123 attended and completed face to face interview.
- 30 funded candidates chosen from all four elements of application

- Candidates have been chosen regarding 20 & 10 split in employment status (20 people for the entry level and 10 people for the upskilling opportunity).
- Mixture of postal codes throughout the Borough ensuring all areas benefit.
- Combination of ability and employment history regarding driving.
- Age range from 25-55 years.
- Both male and female represented with females being 13% of selected candidates.

A waiting list of those candidates who would benefit from the programme but were not selected in the initial 30 was established. They will be contacted regarding any drop off from the programme.

A joint LMP/HGV Academy launch took place on Thursday 28 July 2022. The launch consisted of a photo call with the Mayor. The Launch was attended by The Mayor, LMP Manager, Chair of LMP, representatives of DfC, Henderson Wholesale Ltd and People 1st.

Update on the work of the LMP

Structure:

LMP Members and Sub-committees

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

In April 2022, three subcommittees were established with members opting to join a group in order to develop projects to the point where they were ready for the LMP staff to develop into Terms of Reference for tenders or quotes.

The three subcommittees relate to the themes within the 2022-23 Action Plan. The three themes are as follows:

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

The subcommittees report back to the full LMP.

Action Plan:

Action Plan - Year 1

The LMP worked within tight delivery timescales to deliver as much from the 2021-22 Action Plan as possible.

To that end, the following procurement exercises were undertaken to deliver on four projects from the 21-22 Action Plan:

- (i) Two scoping exercises to gather information in respect of existing job portals and support and training programmes.
Procurement of a delivery agent for this project, has to date, been unsuccessful. DfC have agreed to extend the deadline for delivery of this project to March 2023.

- (ii) The creation and training of a pool of mentors to assist people to get into employment or upskill. Part A of this project was completed in year 1 and saw the recruitment of 5 mentors. Work for Part B of this programme was currently on-going.
- (iii) Creation of videos highlighting the skills within two employment sectors (Engineering and Food Processing) for use in post primary schools as part of the careers programme. Those videos had been pitched at post primary level and had been disseminated to all 13 post primary schools. The feedback had been extremely positive in terms of video quality and content.
- (iv) The development and delivery of an HGV drivers training academy as mentioned in the first part of this report.

Action Plan – Year 2

The following procurement exercises (pending full approval of the internal DfC Business Case) would be undertaken to deliver on nine projects from the Action Plan.

Thematic Group 1 - Supporting people into employment and employment enhancement

1. Upskill unemployed people with disabilities and help them gain employment through Job Focused Academies.
2. Upskill unemployed people and help them gain employment through Job Focused Academies.
3. Job Fairs.
4. Third level education student enterprise academy focusing on business start.

Thematic Group 2 - Young People with Employment Challenges

5. 11 School Videos produced.
6. Provision of work opportunities – work experience and placements for 16-18 year olds in full time education.
7. Enterprise Skills Programme for 16-24-year olds through Regional Colleges to support self-employment.

Thematic Group 3 - Covid 19-related Labour Market Disruption

8. Reskilling for Job Vacancies – Health and Social Care Academy.
9. Reskilling for Job Vacancies – HGV Training and Employment Academy.

Recruitment for LMP Administration

The LMP was now fully staffed with the LMP Manager post filled on 1 June 2022 and the Administration Officer post filled on 13 June 2022.

RECOMMENDED that Council:

1. Notes the contents of the report; and

2. Approves the course of action as proposed, in relation to procurement, until DfC approves its internal business case and confirms that the funding can be fully allocated to the LMP for the realisation of its Year 2 Action Plan.

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

16. 4C UR FUTURE EVENT (FILE ED125)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing that as agreed by Council, Ards and North Down Borough Council hosted a pilot careers inspiration event for over 700 Year 9 pupils called 4C UR Future LIVE on 7 June 2022 at the Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex in Newtownards.

Designed and delivered by local social enterprise, 4C UR Future, an industry-led Community Interest Company, which worked collaboratively with a wide range of employers from the key sectors in Northern Ireland, the events aimed to empower young people to make more informed education and career choices.

4C UR Future LIVE was a fun, fast-paced, and action-packed day of interactive skills games and work-based challenges, with each game co-created and delivered by local employers, giving Year 9 students an insight into the future world of work, as well as their own strengths and talents. 4C UR Future worked with numerous local employers creating an action-packed day that enabled students to identify their own strengths and interests relative to those that were in demand by different sectors.

The world of work was changing rapidly with new jobs, and even entirely new sectors, emerging. This had resulted in a complex careers landscape that could make choosing GCSE subjects, further education pathways, and future career options overwhelming, confusing, and stressful for young people.

This initiative was in line with the work currently carried out by the Economic Development Section as part of the Council's Enterprise Awareness efforts. The Section was leading and facilitating other similar initiatives such as the GCSE Support and Revision Programme, the YENI Enterprise Awareness Programme, the NI Apprenticeship Week with school children to allow them to assess the career opportunities that are available to them and to encourage them to consider options such as self-employment, apprenticeships, or more academic routes if this was what they felt was right for them as an individual.

4C UR Future LIVE events and its first-generation *Careers Portal* (which would be operational in September) aimed to inform young people of the wide range of opportunities available to them, help them navigate the complex careers landscape, and inspire them to achieve their ambitions and become the best version of themselves.

Event details

The event consisted of 10 work-based games and skills challenges, which were co-designed with employers, and intended to identify and draw out 43 “future of work” employability criteria. The games included: Business on the Move (logistics, coordination, and planning focus), Chop Chop (manual dexterity, meeting customer spec, and reducing waste focus), Code Home (digital skills and problem solving), Escape Room (logical thinking, problem solving, mathematics focus), Eventful Events (planning and creativity focus), Like A Boss (commercial and entrepreneurial focus), Positive Pieces (communication and empathy focus), Race To Net Zero (environmental awareness, team work, and competitive focus), Test Lab (science and team work focus), and The Sky’s The Limit (design focus).

Throughout the event, pupil performance and witnessed attributes were recorded by 4C UR Future volunteers (called ‘Career Heroes’) via a bespoke data collection app. This information, combined with a pupil ‘Getting To Know You’ survey (completed by pupils via the Careers Portal), was analysed at scale by population to provide each pupil with a Positive Feedback Profile based on their strengths. This would be accessible via the Careers Portal in September, along with a wealth of additional information, activities, and signposting.

The total outcomes from the 2022 campaign were currently being integrated with the Careers Portal. Full and more detailed feedback (for example from teachers and pupils) was not available at this time, as there were a number of survey completions outstanding which were not completed until school term time commenced in September. It was expected that the final outcome would be reported to the Council by October 2022.

Marketing and participant outputs

Following the event, a local press release was issued in the Newtownards Chronicle in June. Images from the event were also shared on LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.

The event was attended by Education Minister Michelle McIlveen and joined by the Mayor, Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning, Susie McCullough.

4C UR Future LIVE 2022 Roadshow participant figures for the Ards and North Down event were as follows:

Total Pupils – 711

Total Teachers & School Staff – 60

Total Volunteers – 95

Movilla High School – 102

Priory Integrated College – 110

Regent House Grammar School – 243

St Columbanus College – 125

Strangford Integrated College – 131

From the 11 4C UR Future LIVE 2022 Roadshows carried out through the 11 council boroughs, over 52 schools and 6,357 pupils with 523 teachers and school staff, as well as up to 551 volunteers attended.

A survey was currently being circulated to all schools in Northern Ireland which took part in the live events.

So far, 300 volunteer survey responses and over 100 teacher survey responses had been received and were being evaluated. Pupils were also completing their survey responses.

High level evaluation so far from volunteers included:

- 95% of volunteers enjoyed their experience volunteering for the LIVE events, with 23% saying they "loved it!".
- 33% of volunteers felt participating increased their confidence, 39% felt they developed their communication skills, and 62% felt they benefitted from networking with the other businesses and volunteers.
- 90% of volunteers felt the event played a positive role in bringing individuals from different backgrounds and cultures together.
- 86% of volunteers would like to participate in a future LIVE event.
- 58% of volunteers felt participation increased their engagement with their employer, 72% felt it helped businesses support and give back to the local community, 66% felt the events raised awareness of their business with local young people as a future employer, and 63% felt it raised awareness of their sector with young people.

High level evaluation so far from teachers/school staff included:

- 98% of staff said their pupils enjoyed the LIVE event, with 17% saying they "loved it!".
- 53% described LIVE as "interesting and useful", 54% as "innovative and different", 42% as "engaging and relevant", and 23% as "exciting and fun".
- 59% of staff felt pupils improved their communication skills as a result of the event, 52% of staff felt pupils improved their teamwork skills as a result of the event, 47% felt pupils had increased awareness of different types of jobs and employers as a result of the event, and 24% felt pupils were more confident in their own skills and capabilities as a result of the event.
- 79% of staff felt the event played a positive role in bringing individuals from different backgrounds and cultures together.
- 72% of staff engaged with employers at the event they had not heard of or engaged with before.
- 88% of schools would be interested in attending a future LIVE event.

Please note: the above percentage figures were subject to change due to the Council receiving late survey submissions.

When all the responses were received, analysis would be carried out at Council level. However, from the surveys already received, the following statistics and comments had been compiled for the Ards and North Down Borough Council area:

- 16 school staff responded for AND.
- 88% of staff felt the event played a positive role in bringing individuals from different backgrounds and cultures together.
- 100% of schools would be interested in attending a future LIVE event.

Comments from AND school staff:

- The interactive element was fantastic.
- It was just great to see the students enjoying a different and new experience.
- Range of activities.
- Kids engaged well.
- Bring more employers.
- Schools coming together.
- The opportunity to engage with local employers and get students to have an interactive experience applying the skills that we have spoken about in the classroom.
- Some individual stations were great - the NI electricity and catering dough activity. Pupils really enjoyed the chance to engage in hands on activities particularly after all the covid restrictions.
- Awareness pupils gained of job skills.
- Inviting, various businesses took part, engaging for students, good space, very accommodating, lunch was nice for staff.
- Well organised event that gave pupils the opportunity to develop skills and attributes. The event at the Blair Mayne Centre in Newtownards was excellent.
- It brought a lot of children together and helped them build relationships with people in their own school.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report.

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

Councillor Gilmour noted the success of the event which had received a lot of positive feedback. Concurring with those comments the Chair added that the format of the event had proven to be more useful to young people.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor Gilmour, that the report is noted.

17. BANGOR BUSINESS AWARDS (FILE 160094)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing that due to COVID-19 no business awards had been able to take place since 2019. 2022 would now see the marking of 20 years since the Bangor Business Awards were launched, with a celebration event planned to take place on 3 November 2022 which unfortunately coincided with the date of the November Regeneration and Development Committee.

The past few years had proved very challenging for businesses, who would continue to face difficulties in the current climate. However, local businesses had proved their resilience, ability to innovate and sustainability and the awards would offer an opportunity to recognise their hard work and achievements.

Members would be aware that Council officers had been working closely with the Chambers of Commerce in each of the towns, to engage, develop the business capacity of the chambers and to support their efforts.

Each Chamber developed a business plan outlining actions to support the traders in each town. Updates had been regularly reported to Committee.

Included within the action plan for Bangor Chamber of Commerce was a Business Awards event to celebrate the work and successes of local businesses in the area. Ards and North Down Borough Council would be a key sponsor for the event which would take place on the evening of Thursday 3 November 2022 at the Clandeboye Lodge.

Due to rising costs ticket allocations had been reduced. As part of Council sponsorship, 10 complimentary tickets per were being made available to Council. It was suggested that the tickets were allocated for the attendance of: one senior officer; four key partner stakeholders; four Elected Members, plus the Mayor.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees to the allocations of tickets as set out in this report and nominates four Members to attend the Bangor Business Awards on 3 November 2022.

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

The proposer, Councillor Adair, stated that this was a fantastic event and one which he had been fortunate enough to attend in his capacity as Mayor. He noted the very positive relationship which the Council enjoyed with the Bangor Chamber and as such he was only too happy to support the recommendation.

The following nominations were made:-

Councillor Walker (proposed by Councillor Adair)
Councillor Cathcart (proposed by Councillor Gilmour)
Councillor Blaney (proposed by Councillor McClean)
Councillor Gilmour (proposed by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter)
Councillor Greer (proposed by Alderman Girvan)

Councillor Adair commented that it would be ideal if a broad spectrum of elected representatives could attend the Awards and as such, he would nominate Councillor McKimm.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor Gilmour, that that Council agrees to allocate the 10 tickets to; one senior officer, two key partner stakeholders, six Elected Members and the

Mayor and agreed the Elected Members nominations as; Councillors Walker, Cathcart, Blaney, Gilmour, Greer and McKimm.

18. RENEWED AMBITION (FILE RDP196)

(Appendix VI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing that Council agreed to be a member of the Renewed Ambition Programme (RAP) in January 2022. RAP was a joint public and private sector-led initiative and aimed to work collaboratively to showcase investment and development opportunities across the Belfast City Region as the Council sought to deliver on its shared ambitions for the region as an exciting place to work, live, visit and invest. It was a five pillared programme focused on activities to ensure that Belfast and the wider city region was well positioned to continue to attract investment and to deliver on inclusive growth.

The 5 pillars were:

- 1) Programme of Content aimed at the local and international real estate audience which aimed to showcase the Belfast City Region for future real estate investment through participation at virtual and in-person conferences and showcase events.
- 2) Programme of Engagement and Advocacy to facilitate two-way conversations with policy makers and to showcase real estate opportunities to the investor community. This aimed to position the Belfast City Region positively and seeks to identify and try to address barriers that investors, developers, and occupiers may face when they consider Belfast as a destination.
- 3) Media and Stakeholder Engagement, reinforcing positive messaging around Belfast's investment proposition through international marketing and communication campaigns, targeting the national and international real estate investment and development community.
- 4) A shared access Repository on the investinbelfast.com website which facilitated sharing of data, marketing collateral and intel to help ensure consistent messaging and shared narrative was used by all partners when promoting the city region.
- 5) Research aligned to the impact of real estate investment to inform the city proposition and narrative.

Programme Update

RAP was attending two national/international investor events; those being; UKREiif, Leeds, May 2022 and MIPIM, Cannes, March 2023. As well as planning an investor showcase event in Dublin and London.

Council previously agreed to send officers to UKREiif, with the Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning attending, as part of the 25 strong RAP contingent, to raise the profile of the Borough as a great place to invest.

RAP activity at UKREiif including a networking reception with the Department for International Trade, and a workshop on the transformative £1bn Belfast Region City Deal, including a presentation by Wayne Hemmingway on the vision for Bangor

Waterfront, which was very positively received. Officers had a number of one-to-one meetings at the event and AND investment sites were uploaded onto the UKREiif investment portal, which was accessible to all 4,000 delegates. 175 delegates also visited the RAP stand.

UKREiif was attended by investors, policy decision makers and end users, a number of which could prove beneficial to the Borough, for example, a large number of hotel operators attended. Therefore consideration should be given to attending the event again in 2023 and a separate report would be brought to Council closer to the time in this regard.

RAP was currently planning the Belfast Region Stand and attendance at MIPIM, Cannes scheduled for 14-17 March 2023. This was the leading global property market event, with international real estate industry attending from around the world. The main focus of the event tended to be from investors and financial institutions and real estate business services who were interested in large scale commercial property opportunities.

The Mayor, Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning previously attended MIPIM to showcase the Borough for inward investors. Although it provided a unique platform and the costs for flights and accommodation (in Nice) were minimal, c£400 per person, which could be accommodated within the current ED budget. It was recommended that, in light of the global economic situation attendance, that officers and/or members did not attend MIPIM in 2023. This would be reviewed again for the 2024 event. It should be noted that the Borough would still be represented through RAP Marketing materials on the stand.

Marketing Materials

All six Council RAP partners were collectively updating the joint marketing and sales collateral previously developed. This would outline the vision and proposition of why investors and property developers should consider the region, as well as providing information on individual potential sites.

Research

RAP had recently launched a 'Building Impact' report, (enclosed). The aim of this research was to identify and demonstrate the positive social, economic and environmental impact that real estate and built environment projects could deliver when done well and provide recommendations to help deliver wider benefits from future real estate development in the Belfast region, based on international best practice.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report and that officers nor members attend MIPIM, Cannes in March 2023.

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

Councillor Cummings expressed his support for the recommendation particularly in the current economic climate.

While acknowledging the logic behind the recommendation Alderman Wilson expressed concern that the Council may not be achieving value for money.

The Director commented that this was a difficult situation particularly as Council representatives had previously attended the UKREiif event and it had provided excellent opportunities for the Council and Borough. As such she indicated that it would be her intention to bring back a report in due course for attending in 2023 UKREiif event. In respect of the MIPIM event she informed Members that while officers would not be in attendance in March 2023 the Council would have a presence on the stand, via literature and marketing materials. She added that it was felt in the current economic climate it would not be appropriate to attend the event which was to take place in Cannes.

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

RECESS

The meeting went into recess at 9.00pm and resumed at 9.10pm.

NOTED.

19. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

a) FERRY CANCELLATION - 24 SEPTEMBER

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Regeneration, Development and Planning detailing that a letter dated 30 September 2022, regarding the above Ferry cancellation had been received by the Chief Executive (Appendix 1). The Strangford Lough Tourism Cluster represented 29 tourism businesses in and around the Strangford Lough area. The letter advised that the Ferry cancellation had detrimental impacts on tourism businesses in the locality. Four specific examples of financial loss experienced by businesses across both Council areas are cited within the letter. Commentary was also provided on the longer-term impact regarding visitor confidence in access to the area.

It further stated that the reason provided by the Department for the cancellation was due to 'circumstances beyond our control' and that a letter had been sent to the Minister for Infrastructure and the Chief Executive in Newry and Mourne District Council.

Since this letter had been written a further Ferry cancellation happened on 2 October 2022.

RECOMMENDED that Council writes to the Minister of Infrastructure highlighting the Ferry cancellations' impact to the local tourism businesses, and further asks for the

cancellation reasons, and reassurance on the service to maintain a robust, reliable and safe Ferry schedule in the future.

The Director provided Members with an overview of the report highlighting the salient points within it.

Councillor Adair proposed, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the recommendation be adopted and furthermore requests a meeting with elected Members and stakeholders to discuss general operational improvements to the Strangford Ferry Service.

The proposer, Councillor Adair, acknowledged the problems there had been with the Strangford Ferry which had subsequently been referred to the Minister at the time. It was noted the Minister was asked for a meeting which was declined and as such in order to progress the matter and move forwards he felt the best solution was to encourage regular meetings with all relevant stakeholders.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Adair, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the recommendation be adopted and furthermore requests a meeting with elected Members and stakeholders to discuss general operational improvements to the Strangford Ferry Service.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

20. PICKIE Q1 – 1 APRIL-30 JUNE 2022 (FILE 171006)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

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

21. EXPLORIS Q1 – 1 APRIL-30 JUNE 2022 (FILE DEVP3c)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

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

(At this stage Councillor McKimm asked to be excluded from the meeting as he had an interest in the matter about to be discussed – 9.28pm)

(Councillor McKimm rejoined the meeting at this stage – 9.29pm)

22. BANGOR MARINA Q1 - APRIL TO JUNE 2022 (FILE 141671)

(Appendix VII)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

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

23. BUSINESS START UPDATE (FILE ED43)

(Appendix VIII)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

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

24. PROJECT 24 UPDATE (FILE 141842)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

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

25. UPDATE REPORT EXPERIENCE FUNDING PROGRAMMES – DAERA AND TNI (FILE TO/EG/56 & TD/181)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

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

**26. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING – NATIONAL TRUST,
EAST DOWN PROPERTY PORTFOLIO (FILE TO/TD67)**

(Appendix IX)

*****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. BRCD UPDATE (FILE RDP22)

(Appendix X)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

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

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 9.39pm.

ITEM 7.4

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ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A virtual meeting of the Corporate Services Committee was held via Zoom on Tuesday 11 October 2022 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor P Smith

Aldermen: Gibson McIlveen
Girvan Keery
Irvine

Councillors: Blaney Gilmour
Chambers Irwin
Cooper McKimm
Dunlop T Smith
Douglas
Greer

Officers: Director of Organisational Development & Administration (S Swanston), Director of Finance & Performance (S Christie), Head of Administration (A Curtis), and Democratic Services Officer (R King)

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies from Members of the Committee, but an apology was received from Councillor Cathcart who was due to propose the Notice of Motion listed at Item 14(f).

NOTED.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations of Interest were notified by the following Members:

Alderman McIlveen and Alderman Irvine – Item 11 - Request from Bangor District LOL 18 to use Ward Park as a demonstration field on 12th July 2023

NOTED.

**3. DEPUTATION - DEPARTMENT FOR INFRASTRUCTURE, ROADS SOUTHERN DIVISION, ROADS REPORT 2022/23
(Appendix I)**

Mark McPeak and Colin Pentland, DFI Roads, joined the meeting – 7.04 pm

The Chair welcomed both representatives from DfI Roads.

Mr McPeak outlined the attached report to Members.

This report dealt with works completed across the Council area during the year 2021/22 and set out initial proposals for schemes to be undertaken in the year 2022/23.

DfI Roads contractors developed new working practices to manage the impact of Covid-19 restrictions during 2021/22 which enabled much needed road maintenance and improvement work to proceed. More recently Covid-19 restrictions had eased allowing working practices to begin to return to normal for 2022/23.

In the absence of an Executive, the Department of Finance (DoF) had provided the Department with contingency planning envelopes, for both Resource and Capital, to assist with making decisions on the allocation of resources until a budget was established. The planning envelope provided an allocation for capital structural maintenance activities in 2022/23, which included resurfacing.

This year's opening Capital Funding Allocation for structural maintenance was similar to last year of around £80M. That level of investment was welcomed and helped towards the £143M required annually to maintain the road network to a reasonable condition.

The Department's ability to spend its contingent allocation was dependent on having sufficient contracting resource to hand to deliver the work. Following the legal challenges to the award of asphalt resurfacing contracts in 2021 regrettably Ards and North Down had been without a replacement contract since November 2021.

However, the Department had developed a new interim procurement strategy for resurfacing contracts and it was planned that a new contract for the Council area would be awarded in early 2023. As a consequence there would be a delay in starting the 2022/23 resurfacing programmes in the area. That was disappointing for the Department and for all road users given that badly needed capital investment would be delayed.

Since 2013 the Department's Resource funding had been insufficient to meet its needs and DfI Roads had relied on in-year allocations to deliver core services including winter gritting. That continued to be the case for the 2022/23 year. As such, at present the Department was continuing with a Limited Service policy for routine maintenance activities such as defect repair and gully emptying.

The Limited Service policy allowed the Department to repair defects greater than 50mm on all roads including low trafficked rural roads and on high trafficked roads, defects greater than 20mm would also be repaired. The Department would aim to cut all roadside verges and sightline grass at least twice between April and October with sightline at bends and junctions being cut more frequently as required to ensure public safety was not compromised.

At present a full street lighting repair service continued during 2022/23.

However, with the uncertainty around budgets it was important for DfI Roads to monitor all activities within the constrained funding available going forward and difficult decisions would need to be made to realign activities within funding levels as the year progressed.

Mr McPeak would encourage Councillors to avail of the online fault reporting system on NI Direct. Operational staff were of course also available to assist with queries. He concluded by guiding Members through each section of the report and hoped that it had provided Members with a useful insight.

The Chair thanked Mr McPeak for his presentation. He asked when the new resurfacing contract would commence and Mr McPeak advised that a new interim contract would start in early 2023, possibly in January.

The Chair queried the 20 resurfacing projects that had been deemed a priority and if the loss of the contract meant that those projects would be lost or if they would be rolled into the new financial year.

Mr McPeak explained there was no certainty yet on what the budget would be but priority schemes would be taken to the next year and reviewed, however they would not be lost but only delayed as a result of the contract situation. He added that due to that situation there had not been a programme of works for the existing year.

Responding to a further query, he confirmed that treatment projects were part of a different contract.

Given that there had not been a resurfacing contract in place for over a year now, Councillor Greer asked what mitigations would be put in place to ensure there was no repeat of the situation.

Mr McPeak advised that the interim procurement strategy had been put in place for three years and the Procurement team was planning a more streamlined process for new projects and a consultant was assisting in that process.

Councillor Greer noted that response times to queries were 15 working days. She asked if there were any plans to shorten that timeframe and provide Members with a named contact to help speed up the process.

Mr McPeak advised that the section dealt with around 23,000 queries per year and there was not the staff capacity to deal with those straight away. It was engineers that answered all queries rather than administration staff, so time spent responding took time away from their work on the roads.

A new Deputy Secretary was reviewing staff resources and that included increasing staff numbers but that would rely on funding. The section was doing its best with the limited resources it had.

Councillor Greer welcomed the 20mph speed limit rolled out at schools and pointed to a tragic incident in Holywood where someone on a mobility scooter had to pass a car parked on the pavement and ultimately fell from his scooter, breaking his hip and

then sadly passed away. This type of parking was a common problem and she asked if the Department could do anything to stop that.

Mr McPeak explained that his team had looked at the incident and worked with the Police on the matter. Police did issue fixed penalty notices where appropriate and some roads were applicable for parking restrictions. His team would continue to work with police on the matter and that also included contact with the organisers of events that led to those types of parking issues on the public footways and for organisers to encourage people to use car parking facilities.

Councillor Irwin pointed to Bangor's Belfast Road and explained there had been two fatalities on that road since August 2021. She asked for an update on plans to locate a pedestrian crossing there or traffic calming measures.

Mr McPeak explained that work had been undertaken to identify a suitable location for a pedestrian crossing but unfortunately due to design standards for visibility it had not been possible to site one. Factors such as junctions and a petrol station there had prevented that. Other traffic calming options had been looked at but there was no solution at this stage. A further review and update would be provided.

Alderman Irvine welcomed the pedestrian crossings planned for Bangor's Bloomfield Road and East Circular Road – he had been contacted regarding a number of near misses at the latter site. Untreated weeds on footpaths was another matter raised in the Breezemount and Bloomfield areas on footpaths which presented challenges for residents with mobility issues in particular. Another matter he highlighted was the directional signage on Hamilton Road, Bangor, that was in need of repair.

A contractor was to be appointed for the installation of the pedestrian crossings and that work would commence either in the existing financial year or 2022/23. A weed treatment would take place once per year with follow-up targeted treatment later in the year. He would look at the signage issue.

Mr Pentland added that there was a late start to weed treatment this year due to contractual issues. He would look at the two locations.

Alderman Girvan appreciated the constrictions that officers were working under. She raised concerns around the current infrastructure in Comber and the level of development planned for the area which would mean implementing a one way system or delivering on the third stage of the Comber bypass. One of the issues that was raised with her was dirt on the roundabout on signs, she asked if there were plans for getting them cleaned.

Mr McPeak noted the traffic congestion concerns for Comber and would ask his traffic team to look into that. He was aware of plans for a bypass as part of a housing development and hoped that would be developed. Mr Pentland advised that staffing resources prevented cleaning of signs but he was aware of the matter right across the Council area. Mr McPeak stressed the financial pressures and that limited service was continuing and unfortunately that did not include the cleaning of signs.

Councillor McKimm had attended a recent meeting with Council officers and residents regarding rewilding in Bangor and beyond, which he had felt had been productive. Some of those plans were limited however as identified areas came under the scope of DfI Roads. He asked if Mr McPeak would be prepared to meet with those residents to look at creating biodiversity in those areas.

Mr McPeak advised that DfI Roads was on the same page in terms of rewilding and engagement with Council officers around DfI Roads schemes such 'Don't Mow, Let it Grow' and Rewilding had been on the agenda of DfI Roads for the last two to three years. He was happy to engage further on that with those residents Councillor McKimm was referring to.

The Chair thanked the deputation for attending.

Mr McPeak and Mr Pentland left the meeting – 7.32pm.

4. ITEM WITHDRAWN

It was noted that the above Item had been withdrawn.

5. PERFORMANCE REPORTS Q1 2022-23

A) COMMUNITY PLANNING (Appendix III)

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

Context

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

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

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

Reporting approach

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

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

The report for Quarter 1 2022-23 was attached.

Key points to note:

- The Performance Scorecards and Performance Update Report was not required until Quarter 3.
- A scorecard for the Strategic Community Planning Partnership would be produced in Quarter 4.
- The Assessment of Wellbeing had been written and will be published on the Council's website using a PowerBI dashboard interface.

Key achievements:

- First in-person Strategic Community Planning Partnership meeting since March 2020 took place on 22 June in Bangor Carnegie Library.
- Our Big Priorities, a follow up to the Big Plan for Ards and North Down, was published in April 2022. This contains more specific information on the priority issues to be addressed using a Community Planning Approach. An easy read version was in development.
 - Priority 8 Economic Inequalities; workstream 8.1 Social Supermarket (led jointly by ANDBC Community & Culture and Community Planning with funding from DfC). Co-design process to open a Social Supermarket surviving the whole borough is underway. Operator has been appointed and a partnership made up of council staff, statutory community planning partners and the Community & voluntary sector have been developing the operating model, identifying wrap around services and agreeing referral pathways and exit strategies.
 - Priority 7 Better Jobs and Skills; workstream 7.1 Labour Market Partnership (led by ANDBC Economic Development with funding from DfC)). Year 1 action plan has been agreed and programmes have been developed and implemented via three sub-groups.
 - Priority 9 Sustainability; workstream 9.2 Sustainable Food (led by ANDBC Sustainable Development Officer). Membership of Sustainable Food Places confirmed. Links made between members of Sustainable Food group and the Social Supermarket operators.
 - Priority 5 Welcoming to everyone; workstream 5.1 Age Friendly (led by ANDBC Health and Wellbeing with funding from PHA). Content of Big Guide to Age Friendly finalised with input from Elected Members and Age Friendly Alliance Members. Plans initiated for an age friendly walking audit of Ward Park.

- Priority 2 Infrastructure; workstream 2.1 Public Estate and Land (led by ANDBC Chief Executive. Revised Terms of Reference agreed to include new processes for information sharing on capital projects of interest within Ards and North Down.
- Invitation to join the Integrated Care Partnerships scoping group as part of the health care reforms that would replace the existing Integrated Care Partnerships.

Emerging issues:

- No emerging issues

Action to be taken:

- Get web permissions to enable publication of the Assessment of Wellbeing on Council's website.

RECOMMENDED that the report is noted.

B) CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS (FILE CMR Q12223) (Appendix IV)

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

Context

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

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

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

Reporting approach

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

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

The report for Quarter 1 2022-23 was attached.

Context

Members will 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 in October 2015. The Performance Management Handbook outlines the approach to Performance Planning and Management process as:

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

The Council's 17 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 will be reported to relevant Committees on a quarterly basis as undernoted:

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

The report for Quarter 1 2022-23 is attached.

Key points to note:

- A significant focus during this period was Communication and Marketing activity in support of significant events including the Platinum Jubilee/ Royal Visit and the Freedom of the Borough for the Irish Guards.
- Following the integration of Borough/ Tourism Marketing into the wider Communications and Marketing Team, all staff participated in 'Post Covid

Recovery Teambuilding' sessions to help identify positives, challenges and opportunities arising out of the news ways of working cross-Council.

- The budget figure reported for this quarter is subject to review as a number of items have not been profiled correctly due to resource issues within Finance.

Key achievements:

- During the period, Council secured City Status for Bangor as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. This resulted in significant positive PR and social media coverage at local, regional and national levels. Opportunities to build on this, including supporting local businesses to use the 'City' name, are being explored.
- Marketing and Communications support for the Council's Platinum Jubilee Programme was extensive including the collation of promotional packs for local businesses/ identification of local 'the day I met the Queen' stories and videos/ and a 5-week programme of PR and social media activity.
- PR activity during the period included the promotions of several grants schemes/ launch and ongoing promotion in support of the Experiences Programme/ TASTE AND Awards/ Opening of Donaghadee Motte/ In Bloom competitions/ Portaferry Heritage Trail/ Soft Plastics recycling provision across the Borough/ Labour Market Partnership and HGV Academy.
- Council's social media channels continue to perform strongly with growth across all platforms. Visitardsandnorthdown tourism social media audience has grown by 18% in this quarter, linked in particular to the very successful 'Make it Yours' destination campaign supported by Tourism NI. The Ards and North Down investor video was featured as part of a LinkedIn-led digital campaign run by NI Connections targeting the NI diaspora.
- Forum event organised for Service Unit Managers with a focus on our capital investment programmes and workforce planning initiatives.
- Comms/ Marketing/ Technical support provided for several events including Sea Bangor/ Platinum Jubilee/ International Guitar Festival/ Council attendance at the Balmoral Show/ PEACE IV Celebration event/ Comber Earlies Food Festival.

Emerging issues:

- Event support continued to require significant resource over the next quarter with a number of high-profile events in the Borough – Let's Rock/ Freedom of the Borough for Gary Lightbody/ Taste Autumn.
- Focused support would be provided to support communication around the publication of the Environmental Statement and further consultation regarding the Kinnegar to Donaghadee Greenway.
- Work was ongoing to develop a framework for more innovative and effective methods of consultation and engagement with residents that would be used, in particular, to support Council's regeneration work.

Action to be taken:

- Work with Organisational Development to support the Council's IIP Accreditation process.
- Procurement of company to support the redevelopment of the new .gov.uk website.

RECOMMENDED that the report is noted.

C) FINANCE (FILE FIN76)
(Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Report from the Director of Finance and Performance detailing the undernoted:

Context

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

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- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually (for publication 30 September 2022)
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2022)

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

Reporting approach

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

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

The report for Quarter 1 2022-23 was attached.

Key points to note:

- Attendance for quarter 1 was substantially below the target of 95% due to a number of long-term absences. In addition, in the early part of the year there were 4 vacancies, which resulted in only two thirds of staffing compliment being in attendance. This has had an adverse effect on performance in most other areas.

Key achievements:

- Core transactional targets continued to be met.
- Draft financial statements were submitted to the Department for Communities on time despite resource constraints.

Action to be taken:

- Fill remaining vacant assistant accountant post.
- Plan for second half of the year to allow large leave balances to be worked down and to improve performance.

RECOMMENDED that the report is noted.

D) STRATEGIC CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT (Appendix VI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Report from the Director of Finance and Performance detailing the undernoted:

Context

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

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

Reporting approach

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

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

The report for Quarter 1 2022-23 was attached.

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 was also continuing as the unit continued to deliver a capital portfolio in excess of £170m over the next 10 years.
- There continued to be a good level of consultation with other Councils and Government departments through BRCD, Community Estates, the Greenways projects, and individual meetings

Key achievements:

- Continued to share capital knowledge and allowed a holistic approach to all large, small and maintenance capital projects undertaken by a wide range of directorates through CPAG
- Working with CPD to produce tender documents which take account of social value
- Advising potential LUF2 applicants on requirements as gleaned from previous successful LUF application.

Emerging issues:

- 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.
- Address budget overspend

RECOMMENDED that the report is noted.

E) STRATEGIC TRANSFORMATION AND PERFORMANCE (Appendix VII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Report from the Director of Finance and Performance detailing the undernoted:

Context

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

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- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2022)

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

Reporting approach

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

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

The report for Quarter 1 2022-23 was attached.

Key points to note:

- This reported on progress against the Service Plan KPIs. It should be noted that some KPIs were reported on a half-yearly or annual basis and may therefore not be reported against in every quarter. All KPIs would be reported against during the course of the reporting year.
- The Head of Strategic Transformation and Performance post was filled at the end of April 2022.
- The Procurement Manager post had been filled on a temporary basis; the Procurement Assistant post has been permanently filled; and a recruitment exercise to fill the Procurement Officer on a temporary basis was unsuccessful. Potential options for filling the Procurement Officer post were currently being discussed with Human Resources.
- Percentage time invested in staff development was lower than expected owing to resourcing issues.

Key achievements:

- On track for spend against budget.
- Attendance at 96.64% is lower than the Council average with 24 days lost which was due mainly to Covid related absence.
- £ procurement savings achieved 25% over target for Q1.
- The Head of Service had progressed the Strategic Transformation and Efficiency Programme since coming into post in April 2022.

RECOMMENDED that the report is noted.

F) ADMINISTRATION (FILE ADM19)
(Appendix VIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Report from the Director of Organisational Development and Administration detailing the undernoted:

Context

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

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

Reporting approach

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

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

The report for Quarter 1 2022-23 was attached.

Key points to note:

The majority of targets in the Administration Service Plan were measured annually.

Table 1: Q1 performance update - Business as Usual activities

Business as Usual activities we will deliver in 2022/2023 (actions)	Q1 update
Monitor the implementation of the action plan in the Roadmap to Sustainability	Meeting target. 6 monthly updates are provided to Council.
Catalogue and digitise all PROWs (alleged and asserted) and investigate any encroachments where required	Meeting target. Almost all of the PROW files have now been catalogued and digitised and will assist in easier access to historical information in the future. New Officer commencing in September 2022.
EMS – Retain accreditation and use framework in all Council buildings to ensure best practice	Meeting target – The Council have retained accreditation. The Council had surveillance audits in May and all grand. We have not extended to other council buildings as the accreditation applies whether we have 15 or 50 sites within our scope. Extra sites is an extra cost due to increased audit days. It would also be increased workload internally which isn't possible. It has been agreed that the same standard of good practice is met across all sites hence we have officers from all service areas on the EMS team to ensure this is rolled out in practice.
Monitor and Deliver 5-year Equality Action Plan	<p>Meeting target</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All Council information and services will be available and accessible to everyone. Interpreter arranged for registration • Establish an appropriate system to enable equality of opportunity to be mainstreamed throughout the Council when issues are identified – Introduction of Screening app and quarterly meetings, EQIA on Flags, 100% of policies screened • Re-establish Consultative panel - ongoing • Maintain accessible beach facility at Groomspoint – Ongoing throughout bathing Season 2022 • Ongoing work with AccessAble – Meeting with Disability forum to discuss changes • Ongoing promotion of Buddy card systems • 100% compliance with AA standard annually on survey of website accessibility • BSL sign language through Sign Video in all main Council building fully operational • All Equality and Disability Complaints received are resolved.
Confer 2 Freedom of the Boroughs	Meeting target – Conferred the Freedom of the Borough on the Irish Guards in June 2022. The conferment of Freedom of the Borough on Gary Lightbody is scheduled in August.

Business as Usual activities we will deliver in 2022/2023 (actions)	Q1 update																		
All agendas circulated within 5-day notice period	Meeting target - 100% of Agendas went out 5 days in advance of all Committee and Council meetings.																		
FOI/EIR Information response times in compliance with legislation	<p>Missed Target – 96% This is an improvement from 95% for same period last year and given the increased number and complex nature of many FOI requests this is an excellent compliance rate.</p> <p>A summary of this quarter compared with the same quarter last year is as follows:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>1 April 2022 – 30 June 2022</th> <th>1 April 2021 – 30 June 2021</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Number received</td> <td>177</td> <td>170</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Number responded to within 20 working days</td> <td>170</td> <td>162</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Responses issued within 20 working days – compliance rate (%)</td> <td>96%</td> <td>95%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Average time for a response to be issued</td> <td>8 working days</td> <td>11 working days</td> </tr> <tr> <td>% change in number of requests received from Q1 2021/22</td> <td>+4%</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		1 April 2022 – 30 June 2022	1 April 2021 – 30 June 2021	Number received	177	170	Number responded to within 20 working days	170	162	Responses issued within 20 working days – compliance rate (%)	96%	95%	Average time for a response to be issued	8 working days	11 working days	% change in number of requests received from Q1 2021/22	+4%	
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Average time for a response to be issued	8 working days	11 working days																	
% change in number of requests received from Q1 2021/22	+4%																		
Hold 4 Corporate Health and Safety meetings – with input from directorate Health and Safety meetings	Meeting target. Group met on the 6 th May and meeting now scheduled on a quarterly basis.																		
Deliver 'It Takes Allsorts' programme to address current identified issues of minority populations annually	Meeting target, programme in development for later in the year.																		
Train all CLT/HOST in emergency planning response protocol	Meeting target, new members of HOST to be trained in Autumn.																		
Have 2 emergency planning test activations	Meeting target, scheduled.																		
Hold 2 Emergency Planning Implementation Group meetings	Meeting target to be scheduled.																		
Continue review of the use of resources (paper, postage, stationary) to ensure sustainability is paramount.	Meeting target. Review underway. Customer Services Manager reviewing use of paper, postage and stationery and working with services to reduce use where appropriate.																		
DSAR response times in compliance with legislation	16 DSARs were processed in this period and all in compliance with legislative timeframes.																		

Table 2: Q1 performance update - Service development/improvement activities

What service development/improvement will we undertake in 2021/2022?	Q1 update
Pilot paperless filing for new files in 1 Directorate or Service Unit	Scoping work being undertaken at present with two internal service areas being considered. This is now included in the larger digital transformation project.
Monitor complaints consistently via Tascomi across Council	Meeting target – Tascomi roll-out to all services still ongoing. In the meantime, the Customer Services Manager now has oversight of other databases for customer complaints.
75% rate for resolution of issues or enquiries at first point of contact in Customer Service. Trend analysis to be carried out as part of this.	Of the management information that we hold on Te-care (Tascomi) and Enquiries database, the resolution of issues at first point of contact is 97%.
E Learning module to be created for complaint handling/customer service and will form part of induction process for all new starts and mandatory training for all staff who deal with the public.	Three Complaints training sessions have been delivered through the development programme. The Complaints team meet regularly and are currently developing the Train the Trainor sessions. The E-learning module is being developed when resources allow.
Implement Screening App	Meeting target. Initial testing phase complete and being launched in near future.
Screening 100% of all new and revised policies to ensure compliance with disability duties and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1988, Rural and Sustainability.	Complete. All existing policies were checked to ensure that they were screened and if not, screening was completed. All new policies are screened as they are being developed.
Review participation and recruit members in/to the Consultancy panel	On target, this is being carried out in near future.
Develop Claims Management Policy	On target, development underway.
Increase Participation and recruit members in the Council Disability Forum by 50%	On target, this is being carried out in near future. The group will meet in person in Q2, and this is an agenda item for discussion.

What service development/improvement will we undertake in 2021/2022?	Q1 update
Complete Climate Adaptation and Action Plans	<p>On target.</p> <p>Climate Adaptation – This is progressing – continuing with one-to-one meetings with service areas discuss actions based on Risk Register. Aim to get remaining Service Areas completed by end of August. Once data obtained a council wide action plan will be developed.</p> <p>Climate Action – A few projects have been identified from the Roadmap to Sustainability. Funding/budget is currently being scoped for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon monitoring platform – to contract a 3rd party to compile all council environmental data, energy (fleet & sites), waste, water etc into a user-friendly dashboard for monitoring, target setting, recommendation of efficiencies etc. This will also support any EMS • Calculation of the council carbon footprint through identifying scope 1, 2 & 3 emissions, set targets, timescales and a clear map of how this could be achieved. Climate mitigation methods included and link in adaptation plan. • Partner with other NI councils on the development of a Carbon Offsetting fund

Table 3: Q1 performance update – Corporate wide improvement activities

Performance Measures	Q1 update
% Staff Attendance (95%)	Missed target – 94.61%
% Spend against budget (+/- 5% of budget)	Missed target – 101.3%
% Staff reporting regular receipt of team briefings	100% - Teams meet at least once a month
Pride in Performance Conversations	On target – PIPs will be carried out in accordance with Council deadlines.

Key achievements:

The Conferment of the Freedom of the Borough on the Irish Guards was a highlight in the civic calendar. The events were very well received, and thanks is extended to officers for all the hard work that went into this.

Freedom of Information requests had continued to be increase in number and complexity. To see that the response rate had increased and the days for response turnaround decreased is a great achievement.

The Roadmap to Sustainability was continuing to serve as a great document to ensure that actions were continuing and constantly improving. The Council-wide awareness of their service's impact on all elements of sustainability had dramatically

increased and projects now considered sustainability as a matter of course as opposed to an afterthought.

Public Rights of Way Files and Title Deeds had now been digitised and catalogued, therefore making them more accessible by all that required them to carry out their roles. This was a positive step in both efficiency, sustainability and for future working in the Council.

Emerging issues:

The effect of the pandemic remained evident in the workload of this service. There were many issues that had been noted due to the fact that this/other service(s) had historically been 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 has agreed.

Action to be taken:

We continued to work towards all of the KPIs.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

G) HUMAN RESOURCES (Appendix IX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED- Report from the Director of Organisational Development and Administration detailing the undernoted:

Context

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

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

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

Reporting approach

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

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

The report for Quarter 1 2022-23 was attached.

Key points to note:

- This reports on progress against the 20 Service Plan KPIs. Good progress was being made against the PIs with 16 currently being on target.
- 4 targets had not been achieved

HR successes

HR and OD had been successful in ensuring that there had been excellent communication with trade unions with regard to all HR issues. Resourcing was extremely efficient in informing candidates for employment of the outcome of recruitment exercises and 100% of candidates had been informed of the outcome within 2 weeks of a shortlisting meeting or attending interview. Good progress had been made on the People Plan with 25% of the actions having been completed in the first quarter. The HR and OD service was also within budget for the 1st quarter of the year.

Ongoing targets

- The service was on target for the end of the year to have the following in place
 - Formal Hybrid Working Policy
 - Training on Whistle blowing
 - Review of Flexible Working Policy
 - Development of a Workforce Strategy
 - Corporate Induction Programme

Targets not achieved

- Council wide absence remains challenging with a YTD figure of 6.93% against a target of 5.00% Detailed information on absence to be reported to committee on 13 September 2022.
- Visits to other work locations to discuss HR issues with managers had not taken place due to covid restrictions but it was anticipated that this would commence in the next quarter

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report.

Proposed by Councillor McKimm, seconded by Alderman Gibson, that Items 5(a) to 5(g) be noted.

In relation to Item 5(f), Councillor McKimm noted the target that BSL sign language through Sign Video would be fully operational in all Council buildings. The Member

had gained an understanding of the need to develop signing in Council buildings having recently engaged with the son of a Council employee who was deaf. Councillor McKimm asked if there were statistics available on how often the sign language through Sign Video facility had been used. He had obtained feedback from customer service staff indicating a lack of understanding on how to use the equipment. He also queried if there could be some staff training so they could deliver basic sign language.

The Head of Administration confirmed that statistics were reported on an annual basis from the supplier of the equipment through its billing process which was based on usage. Statistics showed that usage in the last year had exceeded the number of minutes allocated as part of the tariff. The details would be provided to Councillor McKimm.

The officer pointed to a high staff turnover at receptions and many new employees were still undergoing an extensive training programme which included use of the equipment, however staff training in terms of communicating through sign language was only offered on a voluntary basis due to the intensive course.

Councillor McKimm emphasised that he was only referring to basic signing, to greet the customer for example, a gesture that he felt would be greatly appreciated by anyone who depended on that form of communication.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor McKimm, seconded by Alderman Gibson, that Items 5(a) to 5(g) be noted.

6. 2021/22 ANNUAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT (FIN150)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Finance and Performance detailing the following:

Introduction

The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011, and the supporting Prudential and Treasury Codes, issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), required the Council to approve financial policies and strategies for its capital financing and treasury management activities. As a minimum, the Council is required to receive and approve an annual strategy at the commencement of the year, a mid-year review and an annual report after the close of each financial year.

This report met the last requirement of an annual report for the 2021/22 financial year. The purpose of this report was to highlight performance against the Prudential Indicators which were set for capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activities set out in the Council's annual strategy, which was approved in February 2021.

Note that the annual strategy for 2022/23 was approved in February 2022. Members would receive the mid-year review for this strategy during the winter months of 2022 and the annual report in the summer of 2023.

Report

1 Capital Expenditure & Financing

The Act and CIPFA's Prudential Code required the Council to set and monitor a series of Prudential Indicators (PIs) for capital expenditure and financing which ensured that, within a clear framework, the capital investment plans of the Council were affordable, prudent and sustainable.

1.1 Capital Expenditure

The following table summarised the total amount of capital expenditure incurred during 2021/22 compared to the original estimate approved by Council.

	Estimate	Actual	Variance
Indicator	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Expenditure 2021/22	8,230	4,873	(3,357)

The variance showed that actual expenditure for the year was below the estimate by approx. £3.36m, which was due to delays in progressing work planned for 2021/22. These budgets have now been re-profiled in line with revised plans.

1.2 Capital Resourcing

The table below summarised how the capital expenditure for 2021/22 of £4.873m had been financed:

	£
Capital Expenditure 2021/22	4,872,518
Financed by:	
Capital Receipts Reserve	(142,621)
Grants	(2,162,042)
Revenue	(168,839)
Balance to be met from borrowings	2,399,016

The unfinanced balance of £2.399m was required to be met from borrowings. This formed part of the Capital Financing Requirement (see 1.3 below) and was financed through an annual charge for minimum revenue provision (MRP).

1.3 Capital Financing Requirement

The Council's underlying need to borrow to finance capital expenditure was termed the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The CFR was simply the total cumulative

historic capital expenditure which had not yet been met from either revenue or capital resources.

The actual positions on the CFR and Gross Borrowing at 31/03/22 compared to the estimates were as follows:

	Estimate 31/03/22	Actual 31/03/22
Indicator	£'000	£'000
Capital Financing Requirement ¹	82,594	79,504
Gross Borrowing ¹	76,040	66,860
Under/(Over) Borrowing Requirement	6,554	12,644

¹these figures have been revised to remove the impact of the proposed change in accounting treatment for leases, which has now been postponed to later years

The difference between the CFR and the Gross Borrowing figures represented the Council's underlying need to borrow (£12.6m at 31st March 2022) and indicated that historic capital expenditure had been temporarily financed from internal revenue resources. This had been made possible due to an increase in the Council's cash reserves in year. The position had been similar for several years now with the Council last taking out long-term borrowings in November 2018 and it was not expected that any further borrowings would be required to be taken out during 2022/23.

In order to ensure that borrowing levels were prudent over the medium term, the Council's gross external borrowing should not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for the current and following two financial years. The forecast CFR for 31/03/25 (based on the Council's latest approved capital investment plan) was approx. £101m. In this regard, it was considered that the Council's borrowing level at 31 March 2022 of £67m was prudent.

When making borrowing decisions, management would continue to work with its treasury advisors, Arlingclose, to develop the most appropriate borrowing strategy. This was expected to consider the benefits, risks, and impacts of both short-term and long-term loans, with the aim of minimising long-term interest costs.

1.4 External Borrowings

Long-Term Loans

During 2021/22, no new long-term loans were taken out and loan principal repayments of £3,170,266 were made against existing loans.

This resulted in a level of long-term borrowings at 31 March 2022 of £66,859,975.

Short-Term Loans

During 2021/22, short-term borrowings of £3,000,000 were repaid.

There was no requirement to take out any further short-term borrowings during the year, resulting in a level of short-term borrowings at 31 March 2022 of £nil.

Maximum Gross Borrowings

The maximum gross borrowings at any point during the year was £73,030,241. This meant that Council maintained its borrowings within its authorised limit during the year, as could be seen from the table below.

	2021/22
Indicator	£'000
Operational Boundary for External Borrowing *	82,594
Authorised Borrowing Limit ^	87,594
Maximum Gross Borrowing (within Authorised Limit)	73,030

* **The operational boundary** – the operational boundary was the expected borrowing position of the Council during the year and was based on expenditure and cash flow modelling. Periods where the actual position was either below or over the operational boundary were acceptable subject to the authorised limit not being breached.

^ **The authorised limit** - Section 13 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 required the Council to set an authorised limit for borrowing at the beginning of each financial year. During the year, the Council did not have the power to borrow above this level.

1.5 Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

This indicator measures the proportion of the revenue budget that was allocated to finance capital expenditure and the table below showed that the actual for the year was comparable to the estimate. (The term 'financing costs' included both minimum revenue provision and interest payments.)

Indicator	2021/22
Financing costs as a % of net revenue – Actual	14.2%
Financing costs as a % of net revenue – Estimate	15.4%

1.6 Debt Rescheduling and Average Interest Rates

Officers were not able to avail of any debt rescheduling opportunities during the year as the combination of relatively low interest rates and the differential of 1% between new borrowing rates and premature repayment rates on government loans did not create any viable options. At 31 March 2022, the average interest rate for the Council's total debt portfolio was 3.90%.

2 Treasury Management

The Councils Treasury Management Policy and Strategy adopt the key principles of CIPFAs Code of Practice and had been set in accordance with the guidance issued by the Department of the Environment (now the Department for Communities).

2.1 Investment Strategy 2021-22

The objectives of the Council's investment strategy were safeguarding the repayment of the principal and interest on its deposits, with return being a secondary objective. As with previous years, the climate for 2021/22 was one of overriding risk consideration, particularly that of counterparty risk. As a result, implementation of the operational strategy during the year required that funds, when available, were placed on a short-term basis with the Council's approved high-quality counterparties.

For the year to 31 March 2022, Council earned interest of £8,132 on deposits with the approved financial institutions summarised below.

	Average Deposit Size	Deposit Type	Average Interest Rate	Interest Earned £
Other Local Authorities	£3.0m	Fixed Term	0.78%	385
CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund	£3.0m	Call A/c	0.11%	3,177
Santander	£3.0m	Call A/c	0.14%	4,114
Lloyds	£2.7m	Call A/c	0.01%	262
Bank of Scotland	£2.3m	Call A/c	0.01%	194
Total				£ 8,132

The Council's limit for total principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days is £500k. During 2021/22, the Council did not enter into any investments which were for periods longer than 364 days.

Currently the Council placed surplus funds in call accounts with a limited number of 'credit quality' approved counterparties. A number of institutions now offered 'green' investment options; however, these were generally for longer fixed term investments. Management would consult with its treasury advisors regarding availability of call accounts of this nature. Nonetheless, it should be noted that Council's primary responsibility in respect of this strategy was that of security.

2.2 Debt Related Treasury Activity Limits

There were three debt related treasury activity limits. The purpose of these were to restrain the activity of the treasury function within certain limits, thereby managing risk and reducing the impact of any adverse movement in interest rates. However, if these were set to be too restrictive, they would impair the opportunities to reduce costs / improve performance. The indicators were:

- Upper limits on variable interest rate exposure. This identifies a maximum limit for variable interest rates based upon the debt position net of investments;

- Upper limits on fixed interest rate exposure. This was similar to the previous indicator and covered a maximum limit on fixed interest rates;
- Maturity structure of borrowing. These gross limits were set to reduce the Council's exposure to large, fixed rate sums falling due for refinancing and were required for upper and lower limits.

The table below shows the position at 31 March 2022 against the limits set for the year for each these indicators. The Council remained within the limits set for all indicators.

Interest rate exposures	Limit set for 2021/22	Actual at 31/03/22
Quantity of debt held at variable interest rates - upper limit	30%	3%
Quantity of debt held at fixed interest rates - upper limit	100%	97%

Maturity structure of fixed interest rate borrowing	Lower Limit set for 2021/22	Upper Limit set for 2021/22	Actual at 31/03/22
Under 12 months	0%	15%	4.7%
12 months to 2 years	0%	15%	6.1%
2 years to 5 years	0%	20%	14.1%
5 years to 10 years	0%	30%	22.9%
10 years and above	30%	80%	52.2%

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the 2021/22 Annual Report on the Prudential Indicators for capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activities.

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

7. BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT – JULY 2022 (FIN45)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Finance and Performance detailing the following:

This Budgetary Control Report covered the 4-month period 1 April 2022 to 31 July 2022.

The Revenue Budgetary Control Report by Directorate was set out in Report 1 on page 3 and showed an overall breakeven position.

Explanation of Variance

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

Report	Type	Variance	Page
Report 2	Payroll Expenditure	£96k adverse	4
Report 3	Goods & Services Expenditure	£452k adverse	5
Report 4	Income	£549k favourable	6

Explanation of Variance

The Council's overall variance could be summarised by the following table (variances over £100k):

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Payroll Expenditure	96	Environment - Covid related - £159k. Waste & Cleansing - £157k Vacancies – (£220k)
Goods & Services Expenditure		
Leisure	258	Tariff risk
Assets & Property	243	Electricity - £160k Gas - £15k Vehicle fuel - £70k
Income		
Services Income	(343)	
Non-Service Income	(206)	LPS are indicating a positive 22/23 District Rates finalisation based on Q1 data.

Report 1					
BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT					
Period 4 - July 2022					
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	77,039	66,400	10,639	204,300	16.0
110 Environmental Health	613,418	679,600	(66,182)	2,025,000	9.7
120 Community and Culture	587,089	699,800	(112,711)	2,259,900	16.1
140 Parks and Cemeteries	1,182,679	1,184,700	(2,021)	3,660,900	0.2
150 Leisure	878,848	734,000	144,848	2,661,000	19.7
Totals	3,339,073	3,364,500	(25,427)	10,811,100	0.8
Environment					
200 Environment HQ	244,044	62,000	182,044	188,500	293.6
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	5,358,906	5,265,200	93,706	15,532,800	1.8
220 Assets and Property Services	2,676,661	2,561,700	114,961	7,177,100	4.5
230 Regulatory Services	147,958	175,300	(27,342)	454,900	15.6
Totals	8,427,569	8,064,200	363,369	23,353,300	4.5
Regen, Development & Planning					
300 Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	80,705	71,400	9,305	292,500	13.0
310 Regeneration	212,153	286,200	(74,047)	1,276,200	25.9
320 Economic Development	295,795	349,300	(53,506)	1,313,800	15.3
330 Planning	393,202	402,400	(9,198)	1,473,400	2.3
340 Tourism	476,160	451,500	24,660	1,591,100	5.5
Totals	1,458,014	1,560,800	(102,786)	5,947,000	6.6
Finance & Performance					
400 Finance & Performance HQ	57,844	41,200	16,644	125,400	40.4
410 Internal Audit	11,100	18,800	(7,700)	57,000	41.0
420 Finance	255,416	287,600	(32,184)	947,700	11.2
430 Strategic Transformation and Performance	928,421	970,100	(41,679)	2,013,000	4.3
440 Strategic Capital Development	93,697	110,400	(16,703)	336,400	15.1
Totals	1,346,478	1,428,100	(81,622)	3,479,500	5.7
Org Development & Administration					
500 OD & Admin HQ	59,111	50,000	9,111	151,500	18.2
510 HR & OD	350,215	348,600	1,615	1,083,100	0.5
520 Administration	1,145,991	1,220,600	(74,609)	3,796,900	6.1
Totals	1,555,317	1,619,200	(63,883)	5,031,500	3.9
Chief Executive					
600 Chief Executive	93,838	94,900	(1,062)	456,400	1.1
610 Community Planning	52,704	60,000	(7,296)	185,600	12.2
630 Communications and Marketing	198,648	223,800	(25,152)	869,400	11.2
Totals	345,190	378,700	(33,510)	1,511,400	8.8
Payroll Savings Budget					
700 Payroll Savings Budget	-	(133,200)	133,200	(400,000)	-
Total	-	(133,200)	133,200	(400,000)	-
NET COST OF SERVICES	16,471,641	16,282,300	189,341	49,733,800	1.2
Non Service Income and Expenditure					
Non Service Income and Expenditure	(16,471,876)	(16,282,300)	(189,576)	(49,319,100)	(1.2)
Grand Totals	(234)	-	(234)	414,700	

Report 2					
PAYROLL REPORT					
Period 4 - July 2022					
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	52,743	52,000	743	156,800	1.4
110 Environmental Health	699,357	772,900	(73,543)	2,330,500	9.5
120 Community and Culture	459,438	502,300	(42,862)	1,558,900	8.5
140 Parks and Cemeteries	1,033,453	1,060,800	(27,347)	3,192,500	2.6
150 Leisure	1,295,281	1,344,400	(49,119)	4,103,300	3.7
Totals	3,540,273	3,732,400	(192,127)	11,342,000	5.1
Environment					
200 Environment HQ	211,380	52,000	159,380	156,800	306.5
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	2,612,944	2,455,400	157,544	7,306,000	6.4
220 Assets and Property Services	623,663	669,200	(45,537)	2,019,900	6.8
230 Regulatory Services	621,660	660,000	(38,340)	1,990,400	5.8
Totals	4,069,647	3,836,600	233,047	11,473,100	6.1
Regen, Development & Planning					
300 Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	53,392	51,600	1,792	155,400	3.5
310 Regeneration	172,200	192,000	(19,800)	581,100	10.3
320 Economic Development	202,153	226,400	(24,247)	683,300	10.7
330 Planning	706,674	704,400	2,274	2,114,000	0.3
340 Tourism	308,118	282,000	26,118	860,400	9.3
Totals	1,442,537	1,456,400	(13,863)	4,394,200	1.0
Finance & Performance					
400 Finance & Performance HQ	40,171	40,000	171	120,400	0.4
410 Internal Audit	-	-	-	-	-
420 Finance	284,308	287,600	(3,292)	866,600	1.1
430 Strategic Transformation and Performance	219,738	248,000	(28,262)	746,300	11.4
440 Strategic Capital Development	93,564	108,000	(14,436)	324,400	13.4
Totals	637,782	683,600	(45,818)	2,057,700	6.7
Org Development & Administration					
500 OD & Admin HQ	58,634	46,400	12,234	139,500	26.4
510 HR & OD	238,352	248,400	(10,048)	748,500	4.0
520 Administration	568,334	580,400	(12,066)	1,759,400	2.1
Totals	865,320	875,200	(9,880)	2,647,400	1.1
Chief Executive					
600 Chief Executive	79,534	85,200	(5,666)	298,600	6.7
610 Community Planning	55,491	54,800	691	164,900	1.3
630 Communications and Marketing	170,112	173,200	(3,088)	523,300	-
Totals	305,137	313,200	(8,063)	986,800	2.6
Payroll Savings Budget					
700 Payroll Savings Budget	-	(133,200)	133,200	(400,000)	-
Total	-	(133,200)	133,200	(400,000)	-
NET COST OF SERVICES	10,860,695	10,764,200	96,495	32,501,200	0.9
Non Service Income and Expenditure					
Non Service Income and Expenditure	-	-	0	-	-
Grand Totals	10,860,695	10,764,200	96,495	32,501,200	0.9

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Report 3					
GOODS AND SERVICES REPORT					
Period 4 - July 2022					
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	24,296	14,800	9,496	49,000	64.2
110 Environmental Health	97,703	91,100	6,603	295,200	7.2
120 Community and Culture	412,111	468,900	(56,789)	1,693,300	12.1
140 Parks and Cemeteries	292,057	241,100	50,957	856,700	21.1
150 Leisure	532,336	274,000	258,336	1,254,500	94.3
Totals	1,358,502	1,089,900	268,602	4,148,700	24.6
Environment					
200 Environment HQ	32,664	10,000	22,664	31,700	226.6
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	3,187,870	3,252,000	(64,130)	9,220,000	2.0
220 Assets and Property Services	2,386,959	2,144,200	242,759	5,527,100	11.3
230 Regulatory Services	230,849	264,500	(33,651)	725,900	12.7
Totals	5,838,341	5,670,700	167,641	15,504,700	3.0
Regen, Development & Planning					
300 Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	27,313	19,800	7,513	137,100	37.9
310 Regeneration	60,849	95,800	(34,951)	699,900	36.5
320 Economic Development	294,904	291,500	3,404	1,093,800	1.2
330 Planning	82,487	88,000	(5,513)	386,900	6.3
340 Tourism	361,411	320,700	40,711	906,700	12.7
Totals	826,965	815,800	11,165	3,224,400	1.4
Finance & Performance					
400 Finance & Performance HQ	17,693	1,200	16,493	5,000	1374.4
410 Internal Audit	11,100	18,800	(7,700)	57,000	41.0
420 Finance	14,793	14,800	(7)	126,400	0.0
430 Strategic Transformation and Performance	708,683	722,100	(13,417)	1,266,700	1.9
440 Strategic Capital Development	133	2,400	(2,267)	12,000	94.5
Totals	752,402	759,300	(6,898)	1,467,100	0.9
Org Development & Administration					
500 OD & Admin HQ	477	3,600	(3,123)	12,000	86.7
510 HR & OD	114,863	101,800	13,063	339,600	12.8
520 Administration	793,694	804,400	(10,706)	2,434,600	1.3
Totals	909,034	909,800	(766)	2,786,200	0.1
Chief Executive					
600 Chief Executive	14,304	9,700	4,604	157,800	47.5
610 Community Planning	(2,787)	5,200	(7,987)	20,700	153.6
630 Communications and Marketing	50,278	50,600	(322)	346,100	5.7
Totals	61,796	65,500	(3,704)	524,600	5.7
Payroll Savings Budget					
700 Payroll Savings Budget	-	-	-	-	100.0
Total	-	-	-	-	
NET COST OF SERVICES	9,747,039	9,311,000	436,039	27,655,700	4.7
Non Service Income and Expenditure					
Non Service Income and Expenditure	2,771,580	2,755,600	15,980	7,599,700	0.6
Grand Totals	12,518,619	12,066,600	452,019	35,255,400	3.7

Report 4					
INCOME REPORT					
Period 4 - July 2022					
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	-	(400)	400	(1,500)	-
110 Environmental Health	(183,642)	(184,400)	758	(600,700)	(0.4)
120 Community and Culture	(284,460)	(271,400)	(13,060)	(992,300)	(4.8)
140 Parks and Cemeteries	(142,830)	(117,200)	(25,630)	(388,300)	(21.9)
150 Leisure	(948,769)	(884,400)	(64,369)	(2,696,800)	(7.3)
Totals	(1,559,702)	(1,457,800)	(101,902)	(4,679,600)	(7.0)
Environment					
200 Environment HQ	-	-	-	-	100.0
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	(441,908)	(442,200)	292	(993,200)	(0.1)
220 Assets and Property Services	(333,960)	(251,700)	(82,260)	(369,900)	(32.7)
230 Regulatory Services	(704,551)	(749,200)	44,649	(2,261,400)	(6.0)
Totals	(1,480,419)	(1,443,100)	(37,319)	(3,624,500)	(2.6)
Regen, Development & Planning					
300 Regen, Dev & Planning HQ	-	-	-	-	100.0
310 Regeneration	(20,895)	(1,600)	(19,295)	(4,800)	(1206.0)
320 Economic Development	(201,263)	(168,600)	(32,663)	(463,300)	(19.4)
330 Planning	(395,959)	(390,000)	(5,959)	(1,027,500)	(1.5)
340 Tourism	(193,370)	(151,200)	(42,170)	(176,000)	(27.9)
Totals	(811,487)	(711,400)	(100,087)	(1,671,600)	(14.1)
Finance & Performance					
400 Finance & Performance HQ	(20)	-	(20)	-	100.0
410 Internal Audit	-	-	-	-	100.0
420 Finance	(43,685)	(14,800)	(28,885)	(45,300)	(195.2)
430 Strategic Transformation and Performance	-	-	-	-	100.0
440 Strategic Capital Development	-	-	-	-	100.0
Totals	(43,705)	(14,800)	(28,905)	(45,300)	(195.3)
Org Development & Administration					
500 OD & Admin HQ	-	-	-	-	100.0
510 HR & OD	(3,000)	(1,600)	(1,400)	(5,000)	(87.5)
520 Administration	(216,037)	(164,200)	(51,837)	(397,100)	(31.6)
Totals	(219,037)	(165,800)	(53,237)	(402,100)	(32.1)
Chief Executive					
600 Chief Executive	-	-	-	-	100.0
610 Community Planning	-	-	-	-	100.0
630 Communications and Marketing	(21,743)	-	(21,743)	-	-
Totals	(21,743)	-	(21,743)	-	100.0
Payroll Savings Budget					
700 Payroll Savings Budget	-	-	-	-	100.0
Total	-	-	-	-	-
NET COST OF SERVICES	(4,136,093)	(3,792,900)	(343,193)	(10,423,100)	(9.0)
Non Service Income and Expenditure					
Non Service Income and Expenditure	(19,243,456)	(19,037,900)	(205,556)	(56,918,800)	(1.1)
Grand Totals	(23,379,549)	(22,830,800)	(548,749)	(67,341,900)	(2.4)

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

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

Alderman Irvine referred to the tariff risk in the Leisure budget, noting a £258,000 variant had been reported. He asked how much of a burden the rising fuel costs was placing on Council budgets.

The Director of Finance and Performance explained that there was significant pressure across all Council budgets particularly in relation to gas and electricity. The figure reflected the pressure that was anticipated. There was a degree of financial cushioning to help support the rising costs but officers would be managing it as best they could.

In response to a query from the Chair in relation to an estimated £206,000 LPS payment, the Director confirmed that this was in relation to a process where officers estimated an income that would come from the rates as part of the rate setting process and the Council would receive an actual figure through LPS. There was always a variance, sometimes favourable and sometimes adverse.

The Chair assumed that the figures would get tighter as the financial year progressed. The Director commented that the first four months had seen a good performance given that the Council had been breaking even, however that would be expected to change throughout the winter months due to the pressures of gas and electricity costs. It was important to keep a strong grasp of financial discipline to reach a good position.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Irvine, seconded by Alderman Gibson, that the recommendation be adopted.

8. REPORT ON EQUALITY AND GOOD RELATIONS (SECTION 75 OF THE N.I. ACT 1998) 1 APRIL 2022- 31 JULY 2022 (FILE EQ33)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Organisational Development and Administration detailing that in accordance with the Council's Equality Scheme, a progress report was required to be submitted on a quarterly basis to the Council's Corporate Services Committee. This ensured the Council complied with its obligations to meet its equality and good relations duties and responsibilities, as identified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

This report listed the actions of Council officers to meet the statutory duties since 1 April 2022.

EQIA

Ards and North Down Borough Council was carrying out a 12-week consultation on the Proposed Revisions to the Council's Policy on the Flying of the Union Flag. The Consultation opened on Thursday 9th June 2022 and was due to run until Thursday 1st September at 4.00pm. It was anticipated that after an analysis of the responses had been carried out, a report will be brought to Committee in October/November 2022.

Screening of Council policies

The Screening Panel met in April 2022. Officers from across the Council directorates screened 14 Council policies. This enabled comments to be received, considered, and addressed. All officers agreed with the outcome of all screening documents on 25th April 2022.

Quarterly Consultations

The Council had a requirement within the Equality Scheme to publish the outcome of screened policies quarterly. A quarterly report was uploaded onto the Council's website on 1st April 2022. The next agreed table and forms would be uploaded to the Council's website and circulated to all consultees on 31st August. At the time of writing this report there would be 16 completed screening forms to be made available on the Council website.

Equality Action Plan

The Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding) continued to review and ensure that items outlined in the plan were in place and actions were being progressed, and Officers are reminded of their responsibilities during the quarterly Screening Panel meetings.

ECNI annual report 2020 – 2021

The ECNI report was ratified at Council on 14th June 2022 and was sent to the Equality Commission on 25th June 2022. The Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding) would meet with the Equality Commission to discuss this report.

Disability Forum

The Disability Forum had not met within this period, but it was agreed to hold a meeting on 16 August 2022 as the group felt it was safe to return to face to face meetings. Throughout the reporting period members had been kept informed and had also agreed to 'walkability audits' to enable Council to meet statutory requirements. Minutes for the previous meetings were available from the Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding)

AccessAble

The Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding Officer) continued to work with AccessAble, The Annual Review was conducted by their Surveying Team in June 2022 and Council are awaiting the report.

2021-22 Statistics between April 2021 and March 2022 show that Ards and North Down Accessibility Guide had 8,144 Users and 11,903 Page Views. This broke down to a monthly average of 679 Users and 992 Page Views. This was an increase on last year's figures.

Accessable had appointed a new partnership manager who will manage many of AccessAble's Education partners as well as the other Northern Ireland Local Authorities.

Disability Action Plan

The Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding) continued to work to deliver the Disability Action Plan. This was reported through the Internal Screening Group and the Disability Forum. At these meetings, any identified concerns might be added to the Plan to ensure appropriate actions are identified and undertaken in a timely manner to enable the Council to remain compliant with the relevant legislation.

Complaints

During this period no Section 75 complaints had been received.

Safeguarding

The eLearning training for Council employees regarding Safeguarding was rolled out to all staff in February 2022. The Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding) held a face-to-face training session in June for all Summer Scheme Staff.

Council Officers continued to provide a range of support and any queries were being signposted directly as appropriate to each need to ensure these are met as promptly as possible.

It Takes Allsorts 2022

The It Takes All Sorts group met on 4th of May 2022 to agree the events for this year. Following the success of the It Takes Allsorts programme on Microsoft Teams in 2020/2021 it had been determined that this would be the preferable method for this year to engage with staff and outside bodies. It was agreed to hold the online sessions between 12 and 1pm to allow staff to attend in their lunch break. An update on the events would be provided in the next quarterly report.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this update report.

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

Councillor McKimm felt that the Walkability Audit he had attended in Ward Park had been useful. He asked for an update on future audits, pointing to issues around accessing public transport, most notably around Bangor station area as he was aware of reports of trips and falls and a difficulty on pavements for people using wheelchairs and crutches.

The Head of Administration advised that the Community Planning team organised the audits and she would contact them for further information and pass this on to Councillor McKimm.

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

9. CIVIC RECEPTION NHS (FILE CEV)

(Appendix X)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Organisational Development and Administration detailing the following:

Background

A letter had been received from Alderman Marion Smith, Councillor Gilmour, Councillor Cathcart and Councillor Craig Blaney (Deputy Mayor) requesting that the National Health Service (NHS) be considered for a civic reception and dinner to Honour the Conferment of the George Cross presented by Her Majesty the Queen.

The letter detailed that the dinner would acknowledge the care and humility given by so many in Northern Ireland from all levels within our Health Service.

This was only the third time ever that the George Cross had been awarded to an organisation rather than an individual. As Members would recall, this Council awarded its first Freedom of the Borough to the Health and Social care staff.

Council Policy on Civic Receptions

The Council's Policy for Civic Receptions required requests to be submitted in writing to the Chief Executive and signed by at least three Elected Members. The request, once received, was assessed against set criteria and an officer's report, with an appropriate recommendation, was prepared for consideration by the Corporate Services Committee.

Assessment Criteria

The subject of requests needed one of the two criteria outlined below: -

1. Demonstrate exceptional service to the Borough/Local Community and have a significant anniversary (The exceptional service should be in the areas of voluntary or charitable work. The Anniversary should be a milestone of 25, 50 or 100 years.)

OR

2. Mark a very significant or unique achievement. (Defined as an achievement which would be recognised throughout Northern Ireland and beyond and the recipient has a strong association within the Borough).

This request had been submitted in line with agreed procedures and was deemed to meet the criteria for a civic reception as stated in point 2 above. The cost could be met from the 2022/23 civic budget.

RECOMMENDED that the Council proceeds to offer the National Health Service (NHS) a Civic Reception to recognise the Honour of the Conferment of the George Cross presented by Her Majesty the Queen in 2022 and should the offer be accepted, proceeds to arrange same on a date to be agreed by relevant parties.

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

Councillor Blaney recognised Alderman M Smith had brought this forward having worked on it for a long time. He was happy to propose on her behalf and hoped all Councillors would get behind and support.

Councillor Gilmour felt that the George Cross was a fitting award for the NHS and recognised that it was only the third occasion this had been awarded to a group rather than an individual and it was right to have a reception. The Health and Social Care staff were also the first recipients of the Council's Freedom of the Borough honour.

Councillor Dunlop supported the sentiment and asked who would be invited to the civic dinner and if it would be senior management or workers on the ground.

The Director of Organisational Development and Administration advised that it would be a cross section of staff at all levels across the service.

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

10. NILGA BUSINESS PLAN CONSULTATION

(Appendix XI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Organisational Development and Administration detailing that the NILGA Annual Business Plan 2022/23 was attached. It was based around 8 workstreams

- Governance
- Improvement and Planning for the Future
- Elected Member Development
- Policy Priorities
- International Affairs and Collaboration with other LGAs
- Sectoral Communications
- Contract Delivery
- HR & Organisational Sustainability

RECOMMENDED that the NILGA Annual Business Plan 2022/23 is noted.

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

Councillor T Smith felt the £50,000 cost of NILGA to the Council could be spent more effectively elsewhere. He believed that the Council was never consulted over the national pay deal and it would cost the ratepayer millions of pounds. On that basis he asked to be recorded against the recommendation to note.

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

(Alderman Irvine and Alderman McIlveen were excluded from the meeting having declared an interest in Item 11 – 7.50pm)

11. REQUEST FROM BANGOR DISTRICT LOL 18 TO USE WARD PARK AS A DEMONSTRATION FIELD ON 12TH JULY 2023

(Appendix XII – XIV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Organisational Development and Administration detailing that the Council had received a request from Mr. Craig Phair of Bangor District LOL 18 to use Ward Park as a demonstration field for the annual 12th July parade which would be held in Bangor on 12th July 2023. They required use of the entire all weather and grass playing fields and Gransha Road Car park at Ward Park for the 11th and 12th July 2023 – see Appendix 1.

- They expected 2,000 to 3,000 people approximately to attend.
- They would have vendors on site arriving early morning 12th July and leaving by approximately 4pm that day - Hot food vans, ice cream vans and traders selling merchandise.
- Inflatables / fairground equipment to be set up.
- They would have 20 portaloos set up including accessible toilets situated at the rear of the playing fields.
- Gravel pitch would be used as car parking, with marshals in attendance permanently to direct traffic and spectators.
- Feeder parades and main parades would leave via Gransha Road – provisional route maps were attached at Appendices 2 & 3.
- Cars and minibuses used in the parade would be parked at the Gransha Road car park beside the Pavilion.
- Bangor District LOL 18 would be providing extra bins on the day, but a third party would be employed to clean up on the evening of 12th July and early morning 13th July.
- Main procession would be led by a historic group on horseback.
- Historic camp to be set up – see map, to allow the public to see how King William's Army lived. This area would be marshalled to avoid overcrowding.
- The playing field would be the main demonstration field with a stage set up to conduct the platform services before hosting bands and dancers in the afternoon.

Council officers had been consulted and had advised that all documents relating to the event should be submitted no later than 6 weeks in advance to allow time for review and comment. Also, a site visit needed to be carried out in advance with the event organisers and relevant Council officers to agree the final details.

Permission would therefore be subject to the following:

1. The organisers meeting with Council officers at least 3 weeks before the event to discuss arrangements and finalise the designated areas of use, and
2. Agreeing to the following conditions:
 - I. Paying the relevant fee for traders as per the Council's current policy. (£30 for up to 3 traders, and £10 per trader after this)
 - II. A bond of £500.00 must be paid prior to the event, which will be refunded following a satisfactory inspection of the area by a Council officer after the event has left the site.
 - III. Provide a risk assessment and event management plan.
 - IV. Display public notices for at least two weeks before the event to notify the public that said event is due to take place in the area. Signage to be agreed in advance with appropriate Council officer.
 - V. Public notices must be removed after the event within seven days.
 - VI. Provide appropriate welfare facilities at own cost. Number to be agreed with appropriate Council officer in advance.
 - VII. Provide evidence of relevant insurances and fully indemnifying Council against all risks associated with the use of land or property.
 - VIII. Make good any damage caused during the to the satisfaction of Council officers. Should the Council have to undertake remedial works the costs will be recovered from the organiser.
 - IX. Put in place protective measures for areas where important natural heritage is present.
 - X. Arrange for the collection and subsequent removal of all litter and other debris from the main event and adjacent areas during the event, as well as once the event had concluded, however, should the Council have to do any additional cleaning the costs will be recovered from the organiser.
 - XI. Organiser to put in place arrangements for recycling waste from the event.
 - XII. Arrange for the prompt removal of any items used in connection with the event.
 - XIII. Put in place plans to limit any negative impact on the public using the land at the same time as the event.
 - XIV. Obtain and provide evidence of permits/licences/registrations and approvals.
 - XV. Indemnify the Council against all claims which may result from the event or use of the area, and to provide the Council with a copy of the relevant insurance policy.
 - XVI. Ensure that only the designated area, or areas specified by Council officers are used for the event.
 - XVII. Ensure that adequate marshals are placed throughout the designated area to ensure that members of the public are not endangered by the event.
 - XVIII. Where electrical supplies are being used, this must be agreed in advance with Council officers. Additional costs may apply depending on the services required.
 - XIX. No petrol generators are to be used.

- XX. Provide the Council with a list of any suppliers/food providers for the event at least six weeks in advance of the event taking place.

RECOMMENDED that the Council accedes to the request subject to the organisers agreeing to the conditions detailed above.

Proposed by Councillor T Smith, seconded by Councillor Gilmour, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Girvan queried whether residents in the area would be consulted, believing it would be appropriate given their previous concerns in relation to other events held at Ward Park. The Director of Organisational Development and Administration advised that resident consultation would normally only take place for larger scale events such as the Snow Patrol and Let's Rock concerts.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor T Smith, seconded by Councillor Gilmour, that the recommendation be adopted.

(Alderman Irvine and Alderman McIlveen re-joined the meeting – 7.52pm)

12. EXTENSION TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT REMOTE MEETING LEGISLATION UPDATE (Appendix XV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Organisational Development and Administration detailing that the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 empowered Councils to meet remotely. This was subordinate legislation made under section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020. Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act was scheduled to expire on 24 September 2022, which would mean so too would the power to hold remote meetings in line with the 2020 Regulations. However, the Department for Communities (DfC) had written to the Chief Executive to advise that they had extended the expiry date by six months to 24 March 2023. Thus, for the time being Councils could continue to meet remotely in accordance with the 2020 Regulations.

It was agreed in September 2022 to award the tender for relevant equipment to ACK Productions for the running of hybrid meetings in Bangor Town Hall Chamber and in Ards Chamber. It was anticipated that hybrid meetings may commence in November 2022.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the attached letter relating to the extension of the remote meeting legislation.

Proposed by Councillor Dunlop, seconded by Alderman Girvan, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor T Smith referred to the following statement within the attached letter which stated that the Order was subject to the confirmatory procedure in the Assembly which meant that whilst it came into operation once made, it would cease to have

effect 40 days from the date of making unless it had been approved by resolution of the Assembly (the 40 day period did not include any time in which the Assembly was dissolved, in recess for more than 4 days or adjourned for more than 6 days). Councillor T Smith asked what would happen in terms of continuing to hold remote meetings if the Assembly was not in a position to approve.

The Director of Organisational Development and Administration advised that from November or December 2022, Committee and Council and Committee meetings were due take place on a hybrid basis which would essentially mean that meetings were taking place in buildings again with additional capacity for Members to attend remotely if necessary. She would however raise the question with the Department for Communities.

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

13. RESPONSE TO NOTICES OF MOTION:

- (a) **NOM 161 - Resurface Bridge Road South (File NOM161)**
(Appendix XVI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Organisational Development and Administration detailing that a Notice of Motion debated at Corporate Committee in April 2022 and subsequently ratified by Council stated:

"That Council wrote 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. Council asked for further clarification and a second letter was sent from the Chief Executive on 14 July 2022 and a reply was received on 11 August 2022.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the responses to the Notice of Motion.

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

Councillor Greer recognised that this matter had been discussed in further detail earlier in the meeting but wanted to welcome that DfI had agreed that Bridge Road South needed resurfacing and looked forward to the progress on that.

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

14. NOTICES OF MOTION

a) **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.

(Councillor MacArthur and Councillor Brooks were admitted to the meeting to propose the above Notice of Motion – 7.56pm)

Proposing the Motion, Councillor MacArthur stated that community groups and volunteers were the lifeblood of the community. As fewer events were now organised by the Council, more groups had to step into the gap, many of them receiving funding through the Christmas Festival Fund, community festival funding or other external funding programmes.

She referred Members to a summer festival in Donaghadee where 32 organisations delivered over 50 events which attracted more than 1,000 visitors to the larger scale events. Those were delivered by hard working volunteers who had been balancing work commitments to ultimately bring much needed revenue to the town. Donaghadee was not alone and many other community groups were doing the same across the Borough.

Planning for such events was crucial and it was therefore essential that risks were identified and mitigated against. Council was already providing various support to groups that were just starting up including a useful tool kit that provided advice, but there was a complex process around health and safety issues and the Motion was not about watering down a planning process but about streamlining for groups and Council staff.

Councillor MacArthur referred to the Lands Policy dated April 2016 which included a section called use of Council Land and property and within the policy was a list that organisers were required to do in terms of identifying numbers involved, risk assessments and risk management plans and have insurance which indemnified the Council against all risks. However, she felt that it would be useful if links to that were

placed in the tool kit if the policy was revisited. It also prohibited car boot sales on Council owned land which she did not understand.

The Councillor called for risk assessment plans at well used locations to be provided to community groups to ease their burden in terms of volume of paperwork.

Having worked with children day to day, producing risk assessments was a significant part of Councillor MacArthur's role and she had found that the creation of templates which could be adapted easily for events was particularly useful and less time consuming.

The Member highlighted the frustrations of the current process, pointing to the experience of the community association in her own DEA that had been liaising with the Council risks team from the 1st of April until the beginning of May around the location of Lemon's Wharf for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations. The long process had resulted in only a one-month window for the organiser to advertise the event.

The process had taken place through emails and the group had not had sight of the scoring matrix. Had the group been able to fill out a pre-populated assessment of a well used area that had been applied for in the past, it could have sped up the whole process. She called for a review to include the use of all Council owned land and felt that it cut across all departments of the Council and it would be beneficial to both Council staff and community event organisers.

Seconding the Notice of Motion, Councillor Brooks acknowledged the hard and expert work done by community groups across the Borough. They looked after Christmas, shopping, music festivals and much more. He referred to the local community and development groups which did the hard work on behalf of the Council which was greatly appreciated. Councillor MacArthur had spoken about a template and he added that there were very little changes in terms of locations and that a template would help rather than hinder or even deter groups from planning events.

Councillor T Smith welcomed the motion. Community groups were the lifeblood and Council should be facilitators in assisting where it could. Council owned land and facilities were important to these groups to hold events but groups were at their wits end with rules, regulations and paperwork and he felt that there was a need to have a review to make the process easier. He hoped that this could be implemented as soon as possible as groups would now be planning for next Spring and Summer and he feared that if it wasn't addressed soon then groups would walk away and find it too much hassle.

Alderman Girvan had experience of filling out what she described as tedious forms through her own community work and said it was off putting for people running events. She did recognise that a lot of this information was included in the Council's toolkit that the proposer had referred to and there were training sessions put on for organisers but many people could not attend due to work commitments. She supported the Motion and felt it was right to consult with the community groups.

Alderman Irvine added his support to the motion and warned of the impacts on the ability of volunteers and it was something the Council needed to address. Risk management plans were onerous for volunteers and he looked forward to the consultation. He was also aware that a date for the King's Coronation had been confirmed so it was important to make progress in time for groups to organise festivals to celebrate that.

Recalling a previous commitment made by the Council to support community groups, Councillor McKimm queried if the Council was on track in that process and if there were any legal issues to take into consideration in terms of the Motion being proposed.

Summing up Councillor MacArthur said that enabling and supporting was what this Motion was about and it was to review the process. Risk management was essential, and it was important to mitigate and make the process more transparent and easier to navigate. The existing process could be off-putting as referred to by Alderman Girvan but the toolkit was light on details and there needed to be input from across all directorates to make it a more meaningful document.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor MacArthur, seconded by Councillor Brooks, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

(Councillor MacArthur and Councillor Brooks left the meeting – 8.12pm)

b) 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.

(Councillor McKee was admitted to the meeting – 8.12pm)

Councillor Greer proposed, seconded by Councillor McKee, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Councillor Greer recognised that the Council had many HR policies which supported staff in the workplace and most recently it introduced a menopause policy. Given the progressive nature of many of those policies she felt it was important that Council also had a policy to support anyone undergoing IVF.

Fertility treatment was an issue which was still not talked about in society in general; however, it could have a significant impact on an individual at work, and support was essential to help people to perform at work, and ultimately to be able to balance work demand with the requirements of fertility treatment.

Over the past few years Council had faced issues attracting talent to the organisation and she believed that if it didn't build support and awareness for employees in this situation, there was a risk it could lose valuable skills and talent.

Often people were dealing with those issues in silence and the personal nature of fertility treatment meant employees chose not to ask for support; however, that didn't mean Council should sit on its hands.

Having a clear policy in place which told employees about the support that Council could offer, could go some way to counter the barriers. In addition, a compassionate and supportive culture could make people more comfortable to ask for help.

Councillor McKee added his support as seconder of the Notice of Motion.

Referring Members to NHS statistics, he noted that around one in seven couples experienced difficulties conceiving a child. For couples who made the decision to undergo IVF treatment, it could be emotional and stressful especially when trying to navigate a difficult process while in employment.

In the UK, employees had a right to absences for pre-natal and post-natal care and the right to request flexible working, but pre-conception care was not a statutory right.

Most people who experienced fertility problems were reluctant to speak to their employer about it because they feared it might affect their career and so they might end up reducing their hours or leaving employment entirely as a result.

That was not a good outcome for the Council or the worker. It should be a priority for this Council to ensure that staff felt supported when facing fertility challenges. Offering improved support was likely to bring good outcomes for both the Council and for workers and that was why this Motion was being brought forward.

In a Council that wanted to be a great place to work, one that wanted to retain and attract people to work for it, increasing the support for staff in this circumstance made great sense. With rates of sickness and absence continually under scrutiny, this was precisely the sort of initiative that could have a positive effect on those figures. In closing, he hoped that members would be able show their support for this Motion.

Alderman McIlveen referred to the statistics highlighted in relation to couples having fertility issues and felt that the number of couples actually going through IVF would be much smaller than one in seven and felt it should be important to keep that in mind if Members were basing a decision on that.

The Chair queried the current policy and management view on the implementation of this. The Director of Organisational Development and Administration noted that it was a rare occurrence for staff to ask for leave for IVF treatment and there was no specific policy in place at the moment although any staff asking for leave under those circumstances would be given time off and treated with dignity and respect.

Summing up, Councillor Greer reminded Members that she was not asking them to agree on a policy tonight but for officers to bring a report back for further scrutiny. In response to Alderman McIlveen, she recognised it was small numbers of people that would be affected but that didn't mean it wasn't necessary to have a policy. She suggested that someone going through IVF may have had no option but to take sick leave which would bring additional anxieties around the implications that could have on their sick record.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Greer, seconded by Councillor McKee, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

(Councillor McKee left the meeting – 8.21pm)

c) **NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY ALDERMEN KEERY AND ALDERMAN IRVINE**

That this Council writes and calls on the Minister for Infrastructure to reduce the speed limit down to 30mph at the A48 Cotton Road after the latest road accident and fatality.

Proposed by Alderman Irvine, seconded by Alderman Keery, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Alderman Irvine requested the support of Council to lobby the DFI for the Cotton Road to be reduced from 60mph to 40mph. It was a main thoroughfare for Bangor, Donaghadee and Newtownards and extremely busy. There were a number of farms and businesses along with a housing development at the village itself. The population around that road was 334. It was a rural community and there had been numerous accidents over the years with a young girl getting knocked down after school and a fatality within the last couple of months near the nursery. There had been a petition that went to the NI Assembly led by Alex Easton MLA, unfortunately no action had been taken to date. If there was no reduction in the speed limit then there would be more fatalities on the road. There were a number of dips and bends that made the road difficult to access. He asked the committee for its support to put more pressure on.

Alderman Keery added that Alex Easton, Councillor MacArthur and himself had done an extensive survey of the area and every household had raised safety concerns over the speed of passing traffic. It was a narrow road and a main bus route. There were no laybys for buses to stop and it made it difficult for passengers to cross the road. There were a number of hamlets along the road and he asked the Members for their support in taking serious action.

The Chair pointed out that the Notice of Motion referred to 30mph but Alderman Irvine had referred to 40mph. Alderman Keery said 30mph would be preferable but the request was for the speed limit to be reduced.

Councillor T Smith spoke to support the Motion and was aware it was a long running issue that had plagued the area for many years, sadly to the detriment of people's lives. The bus stop was dangerous and even if the speed limit was reduced in the

residential areas that would help. He felt further fatalities would happen if no action was taken. If it was reduced to 40mph or 30mph it would help to save lives.

Councillor Chambers added his support noting that drivers drove at excessive speed for years. He explained that his own party had raised that too and supported the Motion and hoped something positive would come from it. Any reduction would be a success.

Alderman Irvine thanked Members for their comments and support and hoped that there would be some progress.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Irvine, seconded by Alderman Keery, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

d) **NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR COOPER,
COUNCILLOR T SMITH AND COUNCILLOR S IRVINE**

That this Council withdraws all funding to any sporting organisations with any political objectives or named references to terrorism in their constitution, club names, stadiums or competitions, and tasks officers to bring back a report outlining the specific relevant council policy.

(Councillor S Irvine was admitted to the meeting – 8.33pm)

Councillor Cooper proposed, seconded by Councillor T Smith, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Councillor Cooper outlined his Notice of Motion and stated that it was unacceptable for funding to go to sports organisations with political objectives or named references to terrorism in their constitutions and called for it to be eradicated from society.

As the seconder, Councillor T Smith reserved his right to speak at this stage.

Alderman McIlveen proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Gilmour, that Council officers bring back a report on relevant Council policies with a view to withdrawing funding to any sporting organisations with any political objectives or named references to terrorism in their constitution, club names, stadiums, or competitions and such a report would be appropriately guided by legal advice in relation to that course of action.

Outlining his amendment, Alderman McIlveen felt the original proposal needed to be more informed in terms of legal considerations behind such a decision. He was concerned that in cases where the Council was merely the conduit or administrator of the funding it may be acting illegally when applying the policy. He appreciated the principles behind the Motion but found that the amendment tightened it up.

The seconder, Councillor Gilmour, reserved her right to speak at this stage.

Councillor Chambers noted that the Motion referred to sporting organisations and he queried if that was individual clubs or a wider organisation, such as a governing

body. He felt the amendment sought the same outcome as the original Motion but was taking a safer route to get there. He felt there would be more protection through obtaining legal advice and following due process. On that basis he felt more comfortable supporting the amendment.

Councillor Irwin was disappointed with both the Motion and amendment. She stated that the Alliance Party was opposed to terrorism in any form and committed to a shared society. There was however a risk that this Motion could be perceived to target one particular organisation in the community that contributed to society in great ways. It was for those reasons her party would not be supporting either the original Motion or the amendment.

Alderman Irvine was happy to go with the amendment and seek legal advice. He was disappointed with the comments from Councillor Irwin and found it unacceptable for any sports clubs to have any reference to terrorism. He hoped that the legal advice would strengthen the Council's position to withdraw funding to such groups. He referred to an example of where this affected other leisure facilities, pointing out that a play park elsewhere had been named after a terrorist and that sort of glorifying of terrorism had no place in society.

Councillor T Smith supported both the Motion and the amendment, although he thought that the Council would have taken legal advice on the original Motion anyway. He accused the Alliance Party of foaming at the mouth about a purple and orange football kit and he questioned that if the Alliance Party was getting so upset about the colour of a football kit why it wasn't getting upset about any sporting organisation that may have references to terrorism in its constitution or shrines to terrorism in their grounds. He added that the Council should have no part in supporting terrorist scum.

Councillor Greer asked the proposer in his summing up to provide the names of sporting organisations that did support terrorism. Councillor McKimm raised a similar point, he wondered if the proposer had a list compiled of those organisations that had made such references to terrorism or if there would be some form of audit to identify any that did, if the proposed Motion or amendment was agreed.

Seeking further clarity, Councillor McKimm queried the differences between the Motion and the amendment and the Chair, with indication from Alderman McIlveen, explained that the amendment was a timing issue which allowed the Council to take legal advice, seek a report and then make a decision whereas the original Motion was asking Members to agree on a decision straight away.

The seconder, Councillor Gilmour, added that she supported Alderman McIlveen's amendment as she felt the information and legal advice requested would help the Council to make an informed decision. She was disappointed by the comments of Alliance Party Members and whatever view they wished to take on this, a terrorist was a still a terrorist and should not be glorified in any way, shape or form. She did not need to hear a list of organisations this would apply to because she believed that whichever organisation from whichever sport it referred to, was wrong. She described it ridiculous that the North Down MP could get worked up about colours of a football strip but his party were happy for terrorists to be glorified in sport.

Councillor Cooper, in summing up, said he was happy with the amendment and felt that it tightened up the Council's position. He spoke of his disappointment in the Alliance Party, if it was against any sort of terrorism then it should be against all terrorism. He did not want this to affect the next generation and the Council should not persist in its support of this glorification of terrorism which included some of the most horrific human rights abuses carried out in a futile, pointless so-called campaign. It was not about Unionists or Nationalists but about anti-terrorism. He called on Members to support this and move forward towards a shared future and build for the next generation. He requested a recorded vote.

On being put to the meeting with 10 voting FOR, 6 voting AGAINST, 0 ABSTAINING and 0 ABSENT, the amendment was declared CARRIED.

The voting was as follows:

FOR (10)	AGAINST (6)	ABSTAINED (0)	ABSENT (0)
Aldermen:	Alderman:		
Gibson	Girvan		
Keery	Councillors:		
Irvine	Douglas		
Mcllveen	Dunlop		
Councillors:	Greer		
Blaney	Irwin		
Chambers	McKimm		
Cooper			
Gilmour			
Smith, P			
Smith, T			

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Mcllveen, seconded by Councillor Gilmour, that Council officers bring back a report on relevant Council policies with a view to withdrawing funding to any sporting organisations with any political objectives or named references to terrorism in their constitution, club names, stadiums, or competitions and such a report will be appropriately guided by legal advice in relation to this course of action.

(Councillor S Irvine and Councillor Cooper left the meeting – 8.55 pm)

(The meeting went into recess at 8.55 pm and resumed at 9.10 pm)

e) **NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY ALDERMAN WILSON AND COUNCILLOR DOUGLAS**

That this Council notes the widespread move to low traffic neighbourhoods in city centres across the UK and Europe and tasks officers with producing a report detailing the steps involved in progressing a project for Bangor City Centre. The report should highlight the benefits that a low traffic neighbourhood can bring, including how it could support the Council's ambitions to revive local retail and hospitality, encourage active travel, support families, and play a positive role in

tackling climate change. A preliminary consultation should also take place to obtain views and ideas directly from City Centre businesses, residents, and other relevant stakeholders.

(Alderman Wilson was admitted to the meeting – 9.10pm)

Alderman Wilson outlined his proposal, explaining that a low traffic neighbourhood was a group of residential streets, bordered by main roads, where deliberate attempts were made to discourage car use. This could be done in a number of ways, and it didn't have to be too difficult, or too expensive. For example, simply placing bollards or planters on one side of the road could help restrict the traffic, and instantly make a street a less desirable "rat run".

Low traffic neighbourhoods were becoming popular all over the world, and there were many reasons why the Council would support introducing those schemes. Besides the obvious health benefits of encouraging active transport; reducing traffic made roads much safer, lowered carbon footprint, reduced air pollution, and allowed for the installation of street furniture.

Where those schemes had already been introduced, it had created networks of quieter streets that allowed children to play outside, provide spaces for neighbours to catch up and lower air pollution. Perhaps the most significant difference that had been observed was an uptake in walking and cycling, meaning that active transport had become the natural choice for everyday journeys. All those benefits could be achieved without restricting access to residents, while still facilitating those with limited mobility and while ensuring that businesses could still receive deliveries. In the coming years there would be many challenges when it came to transport, and one of the biggest was how to move people in and out of the City Centre. It was vital that sustainable and active transport was at the heart of that solution, and that people were not simply provided with more places to park.

There were already plans afoot for greater pedestrianisation and active travel in the City Centre, including the planned Greenway, and the removal of the car park at Queen's Parade. He stated that whilst that was extremely encouraging that this Council and its partners were being forward thinking in this regard, he felt that there needed to be a shift in habits and attitudes also. It was not unusual for people to expect to be able to drive to the shop they wanted to visit, park outside, visit the shop, then drive home.

If done right, low traffic neighbourhoods could possibly play an important role in regeneration, while also helping to create a vibrant and thriving city centre, to the benefit of residents, businesses and visitors.

If this Motion was to pass, he hoped it would help get more people talking about the possibilities that reducing traffic could bring, and how everyone could benefit. That was why the consultation aspect of this Motion was so important. He sometimes felt that when it came to consultation, that the Council asked the Chambers of Trade, and maybe put up a few information boards, and that was the box ticked. In that case, he hoped the Council would go further than that, and that was why he had asked that the Council consult directly with residents and city centre businesses. He hoped that not only would that help obtain their views, but hopefully it could help

ignite the debate, get the conversation going, and feed into the vision that the Council had for the city centre.

Alderman Wilson hoped that Members agreed that this report would be useful; that those were options worth exploring; and they could give support to the Motion.

As seconder, the Mayor, Councillor Douglas, explained the overall aim of low traffic neighbourhoods was to reduce motor traffic, that in turn contributed to the reduction in air pollution, noise pollution and road traffic accidents. Additionally, low traffic neighbourhoods aimed to make the character of residential streets more pleasant, inclusive and safer for people to walk, play and cycle.

There were a number of key benefits which had been highlighted from other urban centres where Low Traffic neighbourhoods had been created which she felt were particularly applicable for Bangor City:

She highlighted economic regeneration, adding that induced demand referred to "Build for the traffic you want, not the traffic you have." So if you wanted more people walking past small businesses spending money, public areas should be made more attractive, accessible and safe for pedestrians.

There were many examples which showed the importance of pedestrians to retail: A study of Berlin found that only 7% of customers came by car, whereas the remaining 93% came by public transport, walked, or cycled; with the 93% accounting for 91% of spending: In 2011, a London study found that customers who walked, cycled, or took a bus were far more frequent visitors to shopping centres than those who drove and tended to spend more where walkers spent £373 per month compared with £226 spent by drivers; A survey of Bristol retailers highlighted walking was the most frequent mode of arrival for their customers, 42% of whom resided within a half-mile radius, with business owners estimating it was 12%. Business owners estimated 41% of their customers arrived by car, the actual figure was 22%; Surveys across the UK had found that most people said it was the blend of shops and general atmosphere that was more important than parking and accessibility in drawing them to a particular shopping area. Some of the road space freed up could be turned into shared green space and/or developed into outdoor cafe culture/ outdoor dining for restaurants/or outdoor markets.

Another benefit was road safety. While that seemed an obvious one, it was nonetheless worth noting that where the number of cars on residential roads were reduced that in turn made them safer for pedestrians and cyclists. The number of road injuries were reported to have halved in numbers in areas where Low Traffic Neighbourhoods were installed in 2020.

Continuing, she highlighted an array of health benefits which arose from Low Traffic Neighbourhoods such as:

improving air quality - a 2018 study found that as a result of the Low Traffic Neighbourhood in North-East London, 51,000 households were no longer living in areas with dangerously high levels of air pollution. That reduction in pollution was reported to have led to an increase in life expectancy throughout the neighbourhood; reduced noise pollution; could contribute to the slowing down of global warming;

more green spaces could be created; more children could play outdoors and parents / care-givers could feel safer in that knowledge; it would encourage even more people to engage in active travel i.e. walking and cycling; which in turn may help people become healthier and fitter; people would likely spend more quality time together.

The proposal sat well alongside the Council's other sustainable policies. But as with other proposed changes, it required reaching the hearts and minds of various stakeholders hence the request for community engagement at this initial stage. In closing, she hoped that fellow Members could get behind the Motion and offer their support and would look forward to receiving an Officer's report.

Councillor T Smith found the proposal conflicting in that he understood why there would be a desire to reduce traffic through neighbourhoods but felt it was not a good idea to reduce car access to the city centre. He was a big advocate of using the car, and what it enabled families to do given the cost of public transport. Given that view, he felt that blocking access to the city centre for cars would be disastrous. Bangor would be in trouble if it wasn't for the Flagship Centre replacing the car park at Queen's Parade. He felt that the report being requested should be balanced and should also take in to account the benefits of having cars in the city centre. It was important to attract as many people as possible to the centre and if putting up a barrier for cars was going to stop that then he could not support a report that highlighted only the benefits of low traffic.

Alderman Irvine felt that the Motion appeared aspirational and sounded good in theory and brought environmental benefits. In Northern Ireland though and across the Borough there was still a huge reliance on the car. He felt there needed to be a joined-up transport strategy that included better public transport options for those leaving the car at home. The Glider had played a big role in Belfast and the introduction of park and ride facilities had supported that. Having that speed of travel with bus lanes also helped.

Councillor Gilmour had difficulties with the proposal and felt that the report needed to be balanced and consider the use of cars in the centre. Realistically Bangor as a city was on a hill and pushing a pram up the hill was not easy for many. Existing bus routes were not great to get in to or around the city. The car was a huge benefit for herself in being able to store her shopping in the car and then visit more shops. Residents were struggling to park but that was a different issue. The Member had spoken to a former business owner and his problem was the lack of parking where he was located as nearby parking was used for other activities. She emphasised that the report needed to be balanced and highlight potential pitfalls of a Low Traffic Neighbourhood.

Alderman McIlveen agreed with the requirement for a transport strategy and the joined-up approach. Berlin, Manchester, Amsterdam, and Copenhagen in comparison to Bangor had the intensity of population whereas Bangor was spread out. There would need to be a sustainable public transport network and those were not necessarily sustainable given the lack of population density in Bangor and the surrounding area. There needed to be joined up thinking but ultimately Bangor did not have the density of population to sustain that type of system.

Councillor McKimm welcomed what he thought was a progressive Motion. The world was moving away from the car and he had seen first-hand from his time working in Europe how this sort of scheme benefited a city centre, not just in major cities but also in smaller suburban areas and referred to the wider benefits to the environment, road safety, the economy, and opportunities for green scaping.

He reminded Members that they were not being asked to make a decision tonight but to allow for a report to be brought back and he believed that they would be surprised by its findings. The Member recognised that there would need to be wider investment in public transport infrastructure but encouraged Members to request the information that could see some very innovative programmes that could move the Council in the right direction.

The Chair asked the proposer for clarity on whether the focus was on neighbourhoods or the city centre. He was aware of other schemes in places across England and knew that some people were very much in favour or very much against them. They were implemented in areas of high pollution and where there had been problems with rat running, though in some areas it had only moved the traffic problem elsewhere. He did recognise there had been positive benefits too.

In summing up Alderman Wilson clarified that the Motion related the neighbourhoods in the city centre, such as those streets around Main Street and High Street. It was not about stopping people driving the car but encouraging people to park outside the centre and walk in or use public transport. There were many economic advantages of people walking past places where they would normally have driven past. The purpose of that was for the Council to arm itself with the facts and look to the future. He was under no illusion with regards to the level of investment required in public transport and he had included relevant stakeholders within the Notice of Motion including Transport NI and Translink. In closing, he acknowledged that it might be the case that Bangor was not suitable as a Low Traffic Neighbourhood but at this stage he felt it was right to see a report and get all the information.

On being put to the meeting with 9 voting FOR, 6 voting AGAINST, 0 ABSTAINING and 1 ABSENT, the Notice of Motion was declared CARRIED.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Wilson, seconded by Councillor Douglas, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

f) NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR CATHCART AND COUNCILLOR CUMMINGS

That this Council recognises the amazing work undertaken by care workers in caring for vulnerable people in our Borough, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is deeply regrettable that care workers have received penalty charge notices (PCN) for parking on double yellow lines whilst performing their caring duties.

The Council therefore, agrees to write to the Infrastructure Minister to urge that the Department amends the Parking Enforcement Protocol to add that care workers, whilst on duty are added to the list of exemptions to restrictions to allow parking

outside an address of who they are caring for, to ensure that they can provide essential care in a timely manner.

It was noted that the proposer of the above Notice of Motion, Councillor Cathcart, was unable to attend the meeting due to illness and had requested that it be deferred to the November meeting of the Corporate Services Committee.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Gilmour, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that the Notice of Motion be deferred to the November meeting of the Corporate Services Committee.

15. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

There were no items of any other notified business.

NOTED.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

AGREED, that the public/press be excluded during the discussion of the undernoted items of confidential business.

16. PARENTAL BEREAVEMENT LEAVE AND PAY POLICY (Appendix XVII)

*****IN COMMITTEE*****

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

17. ABSENCE REPORT - Q1 2022/23 (Appendix XVIII)

*****IN COMMITTEE*****

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

18. CCTV AND SURVEILLANCE POLICY (Appendix XIX)

*****IN COMMITTEE*****

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

19. RENEWAL OF LEASE - COUNCIL OFFICES AT CONWAY BUILDING (FILE LP)

(Appendix XX)

*****IN COMMITTEE*****

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

20. RENEWAL OF THE LICENCE TO PORTAVOGIE COASTAL ROWING CLUB FOR STORAGE CONTAINER AT ANCHOR CARPARK, PORTAVOGIE

(Appendix XXI)

*****IN COMMITTEE*****

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

21. RENT REVIEW - THE CROWN ESTATE LEASE OF THE SEABED AT COOK STREET JETTY, PORTAFERRY

(Appendix XII)

*****IN COMMITTEE*****

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

22. REQUEST FOR A LEASE RENEWAL FROM BANGOR AMATEURS FOOTBALL CLUB (FILE LP)

*****IN COMMITTEE*****

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

23. LAND AT UPPER CRESCENT COMBER – NI WATER (FILE LP)

(Appendix XII – XXV)

*****IN COMMITTEE*****

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

24. ENCROACHMENT AT 95 BANGOR ROAD, NEWTOWNARDS (FILE LP)

(Appendix XVI)

*****IN COMMITTEE*****

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

25. REQUEST FROM PHOENIX GAS TO CARRY OUT WORKS ON COUNCIL LAND AT CASTLE PARK, BANGOR

(Appendix XVII – XXX)

*****IN COMMITTEE*****

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

26. REQUEST FROM RNLI TO RENEW THE LEASE OF THE LIFEBOAT MOORING AT DONAGHADEE HARBOUR (FILE LP99)

(Appendix XXXI)

*****IN COMMITTEE*****

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

27. REQUEST FROM OPEN MARKETS NI FOR A CHRISTMAS MARKET AT WARD PARK

(Appendix XXXII)

*****IN COMMITTEE*****

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

28. **REQUEST TO USE COUNCIL LAND AT THE MCKEE CLOCK BY THE PANORAMIC WHEEL COMPANY LIMITED - VIEWING WHEEL**
(Appendix XXXIII)

*****IN COMMITTEE*****

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

29. **REQUEST FROM MAXOL TO INSTALL AN EV HUB AT THEIR SITE AT KINNEGAR**
(Appendix XXXIV – XXXIX)

*****IN COMMITTEE*****

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

30. **REQUEST FROM DONAGHADEE HERITAGE PRESERVATION COMPANY LTD FOR PERMISSION FOR A VENDOR TO PROVIDE REFRESHMENTS AT THE SIR SAMUEL KELLY SITE**
(Appendix XXXX – XXXXI)

*****IN COMMITTEE*****

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

31. **BALLYHASKIN PROW UPDATE**
(Appendix XXXXII – XXXXIII)

*****IN COMMITTEE*****

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

32. **PURCHASE OF LAND ADJACENT TO 9 HARBOUR ROAD GROOMSPORT**
(Appendix XXXXIV – XXXXIX)

*****IN COMMITTEE*****

CS.11.10.22PM

180

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

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 10.32pm.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A virtual meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee was held via Zoom on Wednesday 12th October 2022 at 19:02 hours.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor Edmund

Aldermen: Carson
Irvine
Wilson

Councillors:	Adair	McRandal
	Boyle	MacArthur
	Chambers	Smart
	Douglas	T Smith
	Irvine	Thompson
	Johnson	Woods

Officers: Director of Community and Wellbeing (G Bannister), Head of Community & Culture (J Nixey), Head of Leisure Services (I O'Neill), Head of Parks & Cemeteries (S Daye), Head of Environmental Health, Protection & Development (A Faulkner) and Democratic Services Officer (S McCrea)

1. APOLOGIES

The Chairman sought apologies and had been informed that Councillor S Irvine and Councillor Chambers were unable to attend. In addition, Councillor Cathcart who had been due to speak on a Notice of Motion was also unable to attend.

NOTED.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman asked for any Declarations of Interest at this stage and the following declarations were made:

Alderman Irvine

Item 8: Leisure Pricing Policy

Item 34: Northern Community Leisure Trust Quarter 4 2021/22 and Quarter 1

Councillor McRandal

Item 4: Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants

Item 37: Portavogie 3G Pitch & Pavilion Project Cost and Programme Update

Councillor Moore

Item 37: Portavogie 3G Pitch & Pavilion Project Cost and Programme Update

NOTED.

3. ITEM WITHDRAWN

4. ARDS AND NORTH DOWN SPORTS FORUM GRANTS (FILE SD109)

(Appendix I to VI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing as undernoted.

Members would have been aware that on the 26 August 2015 the Council had 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 that purpose.

The Council further authorised the Forum under delegated powers to award grants of up to £250. Grants above £250 still required Council approval. In addition, the Council requested that regular updates were reported to Members.

During August 2022, the Forum received a total of 27 grant applications: 1 Coaching, 2 Equipment, 1 Goldcard, 21 Individual Travel/Accommodation and 2 Club Travel/Accommodation. A summary of the 26 successful applications have been detailed in the attached Successful Coaching, Equipment, Goldcard, Individual Travel & Accommodation and Club Travel & Accommodation Appendices. Detail on the one unsuccessful application has been included in appendix 6.

For information, the annual budget and spend to date on grant categories was as follows:

	Annual Budget	Funding Awarded August 2022	Remaining Budget
Anniversary	£1,000	£0	£250
Coaching	£3,000	*£495	£1,533.75
Equipment	£11,000	*£1,900	£3,396.70
Events	£6,000	£0	£1,700
Seeding	£500	£0	£250
Travel and Accommodation	£14,500	*£3,250	£3,409.95

Discretionary	£1,000	£0	£1,000
New category under development	£3,000	£0	£3,000
Goldcards proposed during the period August 2022 is 1.			

* The proposed remaining budget for Coaching of **£1,533.75** was based on a proposed award of **£495** for Approval. The proposed remaining budget for Equipment of **£3,396.70** was based on a proposed award of **£1,900** for Approval. The proposed remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of **£3,409.95** was based on a proposed award of **£2,750** – for Noting and **£500** – for Approval, and withdrawn costs of £0.43.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the attached applications for financial assistance for sporting purposes valued at above £250, and that the applications approved by the Forum (valued at below £250) are noted.

(Councillor McRandal was removed from the meeting due to having declared an interest at 19:08 hours)

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

Councillor Thompson welcomed the report and congratulated Officers for their preparation and efforts as well as those Members of the working group.

Councillor MacArthur congratulated all those mentioned in the report, and Amy Trainor from her own DEA that had been selected for the under-seventeens squad for European Netball championships.

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

5. LEISURE SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORTING Q1 (FILE CW22)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing as undernoted.

Context

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 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 2022)
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2022)

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

Reporting approach

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

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

The report for Quarter 1 2022-23 is attached.

Key points to note:

This was the first report of the new service which, as of the time of writing, only included leisure and community centre provision. This had been a difficult period as we transitioned from Covid to normal business. However, as the figures showed, this had been an extremely successful period for the team delivering the service on behalf of the Council and continued on the achievements during the Covid era. The Aurora footfall figures continued to be significantly below target due to the leisure waters remaining closed until the roof repairs were completed. The pool floor issues were also contributing to limited programming which affected numbers. The sports forum was, at the time of writing, returning to pre covid levels in terms of membership with 92 clubs affiliated and over double the number of sport grants awarded as was anticipated.

Key achievements:

The Ards leisure team had managed to operate with a significant 10% net saving on budget year to date.

There had been significantly more customers attracted to the majority of facilities than was anticipated. ABMWLC, for example had over twelve thousand more visitors

than predicted. Visitors to Queens and Sportsplex were also significantly above projections from Serco.

The success of the Council's fitness class programme had led to a further 70+ classes being delivered per week across the portfolio. That resulted in a choice of almost 200 exercise classes per week for the constituents.

Emerging issues:

Integration of Serco/NCLT managed facilities

Recruitment

Utility costs

Disposable income

Action to be taken:

Council was to continue seeking resolutions to the issues with the Aurora roof, sports hall floor, tiles around pools and the pool floor system.

Merger of Serco managed facilities with direct operations needed significant focus over the 12 to 18 months that followed.

Recruitment of quality staff was required if the service as going to continue to operate at the stated high levels of quality service delivery.

It was recommended that the Council note the report.

Councillor Boyle proposed, seconded by Alderman Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Boyle believed it important to note key achievements of the report such as the 10% net saving on the budget. There had been great difficulty in leisure over the past few years which further amplified those successes.

Alderman Irvine agreed that the figures within the report were positive. He asked about how much recruitment may be required. The Head of Leisure Services explained that significant pressures were upon those in the sector as a whole, not just in Council. A merger between the NCLT operated services and Council was due to occur at which time, an opportunity for a better than traditional budget target may be obtained. However, if an attractive rate was not paid, staff would go to other Councils. He advised the rate of pay needed to be competitive to attract the best talent.

Councillor Woods thanked teams for their efforts in opening all sectors. She asked for more information on the 10% figure quoted in the report, citing it was unusual for Leisure. The Head of Leisure appreciated that the department was reported as not hitting targets in the past, but over the past 18 months, significant successes had

been achieved. They were better than target budget by almost £900k as reported at the Corporate Committee, of which he believed staff and elected members should be proud. For the 1st quarter of 2022, they were so far 10% below budget, even though challenges existed with staff for insourcing which was a primary focus at the time of writing. He directed Members to view the later report he spoke of for a better insight.

Councillor Woods referred to recruitment and Aurora having emerging issues listed and asked what the specifics of those were and whether the Council paid for utility costs or if it had been SERCO. The Head of Leisure advised of the increasing costs of utilities which had been difficult to budget for given that it had been unforeseen. In addition, disposable income was lower. The utility figures were double or triple which were significant aspects to be aware of. He advised with disposable income being less, people were making decisions between heating their homes and leisure.

Furthermore, he explained that SECRO was responsible for making increases due to consumption levels however the tariff risk sat with Council, so it was bearing the brunt of the recent increases. He referenced the Corporate Services minute again for Members to view.

(McRandal was returned to the meeting at 19:24 hours)

Councillor Thompson asked of what actions were to be taken regarding the Aurora roof and sports hall. The Director of Community and Wellbeing explained that it had been an 'in confidence' report and so could not be discussed in great detail, however, the Head of Leisure was able to advise that no update was available at this moment in time. There was a commitment to bring back a report looking at the combined issues of the roof and floor, but that was all he could speak of at the moment.

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

6. ITEM WITHDRAWN

7. COMBER LEISURE CENTRE SPORTS HALL REPLACEMENT FLOOR (FILELS/LA16)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing as undernoted.

Comber Leisure Centre (CLC) Sports Hall floor was in a less than ideal state of repair with issues having first become apparent in 2019. The floor was wooden sprung and the Council's Assets and Properties Services team had carried out essential maintenance over the past 3 years which permitted the hall to remain open.

The floor condition had deteriorated to the point that it was anticipated bookings would have been cancelled if not resolved on a permanent basis within a relatively short time, which would have had a negative impact on the Council. Assets and Properties Services had concluded that the floor was beyond repair and needed to be replaced. That was not as a result of faults but rather age and continued regular use.

It should also be noted that clubs and customers had been consulted regarding the ongoing condition of the Sports Hall floor through Leisure's most recent Customer Survey held in February 2022, which detailed feedback relating to the Sports Hall floors condition.

As Elected Members may have recalled, Leisure previously had a 10-year capital replacement programme approved and that proposed work was part of that plan. Leisure had included in the 10-year capital programme the replacement of the Sports Hall floor with an estimate budget of £100,000 which had already been agreed by the Council. The indicative cost as detailed by Asset and Property Services was less than this figure therefore the work could be carried out within budget. Assets and Property Services would also be able to appoint the designated floor contractor from their approved list of suppliers to complete the installation as opposed to a new single tender process in accordance with Council's procurement departments requirements, which was also more cost and time effective.

The new floor surface was a Pulastic product which was a multi-functional, seamless, polyurethane resin. The surface had used extensively across leisure operators. That type of floor was more suited to recreational activity and sports which were delivered in the three-court hall in Comber.

The works were due to take place from 21 November to 19 December 2022 with the Sports Hall closed for bookings. The anticipated reopening date for the Sports Hall was to be 2 January 2023, which would permit any overflow of contracted works, and also considered the Christmas and New Year holiday period. The contractors had committed to working 7 days each week for the duration of the work programme to permit the new surface to be completed ensuring leisure could reopen in January which was traditionally the busiest month with December usually being the quietest.

Leisure would offer clubs and users alternatives at Comber Leisure Centre, Portaferry Sport Centre and Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex (ABMWLC) and Aurora Bangor. Cancellations of bookings would also be considered in conjunction with users.

It should be noted that this necessary closure would have an impact on income. However, that was considered and planned for during budget setting. Mitigations such as offering alternative venues for users had been factored in.

The Fitness class programme would also be impacted from the schedule of works. Leisure would limit the impact on Members and customers by offering smaller classes in the studio at Comber Leisure Centre while also offering access to all users, including Comber centre only members, to fitness classes at ABMWLC.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the planned closure, schedule of works, indicative costs, impacts and planned reopening date.

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

Councillor Boyle was sorry to see that the facility had to close for the duration but understood the necessity.

Councillor Thompson agreed with the sentiments of Councillor Boyle and was happy to see the contractor would be working seven days a week to try and bring the project to a close as quickly as possible.

Councillor Smart agreed with his colleagues on having the floor replaced. He queried classes continuing and referenced the relocation of classes to Ards Blair Mayne. He asked if it would have had much effect on functions and classes. The Head of Leisure explained that those classes already on would be taken care of. The classes that could not be catered for in Comber but had the ability to in Portaferry/Ards would do so as well

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

(Alderman Irvine was placed on hold at 19:30 hours having declared an Interest in Item 8)

8. LEISURE PRICING POLICY (FILE CW51 AND LS/LA18) (APPENDIX VII TO VIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing as undernoted.

Members would have been aware that normally at this time of the year, Officers were preparing budgets for the next financial year, essential to this process was the establishment of a cohesive pricing policy that determined the appropriate rate for activities and facilities operated by the Council. Once approved, this would inform the budget setting process on the basis of predicted income generation to offset the cost of leisure operations.

NCLT / Serco Pricing Proposal – 1st January to 31st March 2023

Members would have been aware that under the terms of the Leisure Services Management Contract NCLT/Serco was not obliged to seek approval from Council for any changes to their pricing structure but had, as a matter of courtesy, submitted their pricing proposals each year to Council. Members would also have been aware that NCLT price changes took effect from 1 January each year in line with the Serco financial year.

Members would have recalled that in 2021, following an evaluation process, a decision was taken not to extend the contract with NCLT and to insource the services following expiry of the contract at the end of March 2023. Therefore, as it proposed that from 1st April 2023 onwards for the facilities currently managed by NCLT/Serco, would have their prices harmonised with the Council's prices (**Appendix 1**) as expediently as practical.

The NCLT/Serco Pricing Policy for the period 1st January to 31st March 2023 is included at **Appendix 2**.

Council Pricing Proposal – 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

The in-house team were obliged to seek Council approval for any changes in their pricing structure and these proposed changes were normally presented at this time as they were developed as part of the overall budgeting process and any changes approved either take effect from 1st April or 1st September (Clubs traditionally had their prices adjusted at the start of their playing season) 2023.

The proposed Council pricing policy for the financial year 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 for all leisure facilities is included at **Appendix 1**.

The following points should be noted:

- Members would also have been aware that over the last couple of years, attempts had been made to harmonise the pricing of leisure activities operated by NCLT/Serco and the in-house team of the Council. Further harmonisation continued this year to harmonise prices in light of the Serco managed facilities being brought back inhouse from 1st April 2023.
- Where a price increase was imposed by NCLT/Serco on 1st January, and it as not aligned with Councils proposed price increase in April, a harmonisation process would be initiated to minimise impact on the customer but would ensure consistency across the Borough. In some cases, this may have resulted in prices not being fully aligned until the 2024 price setting process was applied as to do so would have had significant adverse effect the customer.
- A five centre membership had been included from 1st April 2023 which would provide residents with opportunities to access gym, fitness classes and swim

in any of the five centres across the Borough (Ards Blair Mayne, Aurora, Queens Leisure Complex, Comber Leisure Centre and Portaferry Sports Centre). Leisure members of all five centres were also to have the opportunity to add on popular facilities such as Council spa facilities and Leisure Waters to many membership types from 1st April 2023.

Members would have noted that almost all prices showed a minimum of a 5% increase as directed by the finance department. Serco had also applied this level of increase to the majority of their prices. This increase was to help reduce the burden on the ratepayer of the energy crisis, inflationary pressures, and the pandemic.

The leisure team believed that this proposal presented a fair and balanced way forward that should continue to ensure the Councils leisure facilities were well utilised by the residents and visitors to the Borough. This in turn would help the Council in achieving its stated objectives in regard to health and wellbeing of the Boroughs residents by ensuring that exercise and activity were affordable to the residents.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the prices detailed by NCLT/Serco for the period 1st January to 31st March 2023 for NCLT/Serco managed facilities and approves the proposed pricing schedule applicable to all leisure facilities for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

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

Councillor Boyle referenced the report as having some moderate increases regarding overall structures and understood why such may be the case but believed it should offer good value for money. He referenced AQUA membership from 1.4.23 and asked why it had been referenced as so in the report. Secondly, he asked of the costs associated with renting swimming pools per hour and did not see any figures listed. He wanted to know why many of these items may not be available after 1 April 2023.

The Head of Leisure explained that Council procedures for next year had assumed a 5% increase in income across leisure, and that the £6.5M income which was already in the budget that had been assumed already. Secondly, in regard to membership categories, they were looking to do away with some membership categories with considerable issues re harmonisation and low uptake. He was happy to provide further information to Members outside of the meeting should they wish. One key driver of the merger of two services had been to harmonise. This was another step toward that, and he hoped to bring another report soon that referenced floodlights, pitches, sauna use etc which may have increases too for centre users as opposed to ratepayers taking on the additional expense. The next report may be in Spring 2023. Councillor Boyle gave thanks for the explanation. The Head of Leisure explained that at the time of writing the report, they had not envisaged the need for another report regarding utility pricing but after a recent meeting with assets and property services,

expenses had been revealed in terms of various leisure services. Councillor Boyle asked if a model would exist for individuals whose memberships came to an end and was advised that their memberships would exist until the end of the membership term and placed in a like-for-like class if one such existed for the remainder.

Councillor Thompson believed the increases were relatively modest and welcomed that pricing had been kept as competitive as possible.

Councillor T Smith referenced his colleague's term of, 'modest price increase,' and cited £4.40 to £4.90 which he thought was an 11.3% increase. He asked if he was reading it correctly in regard to Ards Blair Mayne swimming prices whilst £2.80 to £3.50 concession increases were listed and furthermore, referenced a Spa 8% increase as well as listing several other examples. He queried why such increases varied across different services in leisure instead of quoting a specific percentage that could be applied across the board.

The Head of Leisure explained that it was in part harmonisation with a standard to be the same price across the Borough. Councillor T Smith asked what income would be generated if 10% increase was suggested across all leisure services and wanted to ensure any shortfall would not be picked up by ratepayers. The Head of Leisure advised that the more prices were put up, the more that customers including the socially deprived would not be able to afford. A 10% increase in prices did not mean 10% income increase, exemplifying bread sold at £1 or £0.80 in two different shops. If consumers could get cheaper products elsewhere, they would use that which would in turn influenced income. £6.5M to £7M was taken via the tills. Leisure would hopefully contribute in the coming year and if customers were lost, Council would have to make up the difference.

Councillor T Smith reiterated that he did not want a ratepayer who did not use the services to subsidise those he did not use. The Head of Leisure explained that he believed elected Members would be investigating this through budget setting processes which could be a viable mechanism, but he reminded Members that if prices were to be raised too high in that setting, any number of customers would go to basic private gyms and the ratepayer would be left to subsidise that loss.

Councillor Woods believed that she did not use most of the leisure services upon which a portion of her rates were spent but in regard to pricing, she asked if there would be any further price restructures coming from 1st April 2023 or if the figures displayed in the report what would be the expected final figures.

The Head of Leisure advised that if work could be done between January 2023 to April 2023 for the same price across the board, a report would be created. He referenced a report of suggestions and proposals regarding users paying more for services for those which were significantly more expensive than outlined in the current report which may require further harmonisation work.

Councillor Woods asked if there was a requirement for an equality impact assessment and was advised that they were screened to ensure no detrimental impact occurred under section 75.

Councillor T Smith asked for it to be noted that he did not support the proposal.

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

(Alderman Irvine was returned to the meeting at 19:48 hours)

9. COMMUNITY HALLS PRICING POLICY (FILE CW66)

(Appendix IX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing as undernoted.

Members may have been aware that Community Centres and Halls prices were last increased in April 2020. Since that date, there had been no changes to the pricing structure. At the time of writing, Community Centres and Halls were operated at an annual deficit of approximately £400,000 excluding utilities, capital costs and general maintenance. Despite the high costs, the Community Centres were priced well under operating costs, due to the benefit that they provided to local communities.

Council also invested approximately £244,000 in refurbishing and upgrading sites this year. On average, Council's general maintenance across sites equated to approximately £120,000 for the current year. Utilities were estimated at approximately £150,000 across the 21 sites. Therefore, it could be seen that Council's commitment to subsidised use of these facilities was significant and in the region of an annual subsidy of over £900,000 for the 21 Community facilities across the Borough.

A minimum 5% inflationary increase was proposed by finance but in order to minimise the impact on the ratepayer and to take account of the significant investment and operational costs, management believed the below proposal was more balanced between the consumer and the ratepayer. Members should have noted that all prices needed to be divisible to facilitate pricing on the booking system so some adjustments would have been required dependent on the decision taken of which option was agreed on pricing.

All other terms and conditions of hire were to remain the same. Constituted groups and registered charities were also to continue to avail of 25% discount for all bookings.

Members would have noted variations in increase. This as reflective of recent refurbishments and hall capacities. If approved, all user groups would be contacted to advise of the change to charges which would only be applied to new bookings. At the time of writing there was no cost to amend/change bookings.

Amendments/changes to bookings were administration heavy. It was proposed to introduce an administration fee, in line with other services, as follows:

1. First amendment/change - FOC
2. Second amendment/change - £5.00 admin fee
3. Third plus any other amendment/change - £10.00 admin fee.

Birthday parties were bookable in three-hour slots. The cost at the time of writing was £11.00 per hour as per main hall hire cost. It was proposed to increase this to £12.00 per hour in line with main hall proposed increase. Therefore, a Birthday party booking was to increase from £33 to £36.

All halls offered use of kitchens with Ballygowan, Carrowdore and Donaghadee levying a charge of £6.50 for use. It was proposed to remove this charge in line with all other halls. This would have a minimal impact on income generation but ensure consistency across the portfolio.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve price proposal for Community Centres and Halls for implementation for the 2023/24 financial year.

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

Councillor Adair wanted to raise an issue regarding community centres and explained that he was visited by a potential user who had looked around the Portavogie Community Centre to bring some job centre services. It met their needs apart from having no working Wi-Fi. He referenced Alderman McIlveen having brought a Notice of Motion for Wi-Fi but that it was not working at Portavogie and had resulted in an organisation not booking a centre. He wanted to ask why Wi-Fi no longer worked and what plans existed for having it returned.

The Head of Leisure explained that a basic standard Wi-Fi access did exist at Portavogie but was poor and did not provide adequate service. When the building was being utilized, there were significant protocols to be put in place regarding monitoring. However, with Belfast City Deal investment, a significant upgrade of Wi-Fi for customers was hoped to be in place in nearly all of the Community centres across the Borough which would allow extra services to be offered such as that outlined by Councillor Adair. He understood that Portavogie would be one of those.

Alderman Irvine understood that Community Halls were heavily subsidised and noticed a potential discrepancy in terms of the increase of price. It had been

referenced in the report, but he was curious why a flat rate had not been introduced instead. The Head of Leisure explained that there needed to be consistency for similar rooms across the Borough. Following RPA, significant investment was made in community centres and process increased as this occurred and for some investment was later so during that time, they had not increased prices as they had done in other centres. He recommended the prices going up as proposed as this would now produce consistent pricing and ensure all received the same service across the portfolio.

Councillor Woods welcomed the Wi-Fi update and queried what centres were not going to receive this. The Head of Leisure did not have the information to hand but recalled there were two. He knew Redburn was one of those that would be receiving it.

Councillor Woods referenced administration with regard to changing bookings and asked if a booking was made and needed changing, for example, due to a case of Covid, would the charge be discretionary or remain. The Head of Leisure explained that although no one was keen on placing administration charges for changing dates, it was a requirement as some individuals reserved halls and changed the date several times regularly without consideration of staff who rotated around several buildings and agreed to do bookings but had to cancel when the reservations were cancelled. If it was due to something such as a pandemic, they would not initiate charges.

Councillor Edmund believed the report was quite positive in the current economic climate.

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

10. PARKS AND CEMETERIES PERFORMANCE REPORTING Q1 (FILE CW22)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing as undernoted.

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 2022)
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2022)

The Council's 18 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 will be reported to relevant Committees on a quarterly basis as undernoted:

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

The report for Quarter 1 2022-23 is attached.

Key Achievements

- Recruitment: Head of Service appointment completed and Apprenticeship scheme in association with Greenmount College has been agreed. Two Apprentices in Horticulture start in September 2022.
- Opening of Platinum Jubilee Park in Ballygowan to mark 70 years of service by Her Majesty, The Queen. Brandon Lewis, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland visiting Platinum Jubilee Park in Ballygowan.
- The new cemetery software system purchased - PlotBox is now being tested and implementation / integration progressing.
- Five Green Flag Awards received. Plus Castle Park Walled Garden was presented with an additional Pollinator Award.
- Completion of the trail network in Cairn Wood.
- Achieving 'Levelling Up' funding of £3.2 million for the Greenways.
- Gaining 'Complimentary Funding' of £7.4 million for Whitespots Country Park.
- Receiving Rural Development funding of £264,000 for the refurbishment of Castle Park, Portaferry and Cloughey playgrounds.
- DAERA awarded funding of £30,000 to resurface the path in Nugent's Wood via 'Tackling Rural Poverty and Social Isolation' Fund.

Action to be Taken

- Draft Local Biodiversity Action Plan will be completed in Autumn 2022.
- Plans underway for of a programme of Summer Events including Wild Days Out (Biodiversity Education Initiative), Play Day & Love Parks Week.
- Plans underway for 2022/23 Ards and North Down in Bloom and STAND4TREES initiatives underway.

- Orienteering trails for Cairn Wood to be progressed.
- Application for Levelling Up 2 Funding for Ward Park submitted.
- Play Parks to be refurbished: Johnny the Jig, Tower Park Conlig, Aurora, Upper Crescent Comber. Plus new splash pads at Groomsport, with an older children facility in Holywood (public consultations are underway for both Holywood and Upper Crescent).

RECOMMENDED that Council note the report.

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

Councillor MacArthur asked of the local biodiversity action plan that was due to complete in Autumn 2022, wanting to know more detail of its contents and if it had been completed. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries advised that the number of actions were being reduced that were compounding it. He hoped to bring a report to Members in November as a draft with some recommendations.

Councillor MacArthur congratulated the Council on its achievements. In regard to Linear Park, she had met with an officer regarding a more bespoke plan and asked if it would be part of the plan or separate. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries explained that his department believed more rewilding was required whilst a new machine, a Grillo had been purchased that would collect grass and sort it for seed which would be a significant improvement on promoting it. Linear Park had suffered somewhat as bigger machinery could not get in and whilst the gates had been planned to be widened, the Grillo which was purchased through a funded project, could enter.

Councillor Adair thanked The Head of Parks and Cemeteries for the significant improvements that had been made throughout the Ards Peninsula area since he came on board. He wanted to congratulate Council for Nugent Wood funding and the further funding from the Covid Isolation fund.

Councillor Thompson welcomed the report and its long list of key achievements such as the Green Flag. He also praised the Director for his efforts and was happy to see funding in place for the refurbishment of Castle Park at Portaferry and Cloughey playgrounds.

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

11. GREEN FLAG AWARDS (FILE PCA12)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the purpose of the report was to advise Elected Members of the Borough's success at the 2022 Green Flag Awards, managed by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, which took place in Brownlow House near Lurgan on Tuesday 26 July. Parks within the Borough that retained their Green Flag Award were:

- Castle Park
- Londonderry Park
- Kiltonga Nature Reserve
- Linear Park
- Ballymenock Park

Castle Park and the Walled Garden were also awarded the overall winner in the Pollinator Award. This new award was open to all 84 Parks in Northern Ireland that achieved Green Flag status and was designed to recognise areas that have gone the extra mile to ensure pollinators are thriving.

The application process involved completing an extensive report on actions taken by Parks Service and our partners to promote and protect pollinators, with supporting photographic evidence. Sites were then visited and scored by judges from Green Flag and Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful. The judges highlighted actions such as new woodland planting, pollinator friendly plant selection and minimal use of pesticides as some of the real positives, among many others.

Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful hoped to use applications received as a bank of resources and case studies, that could be shared with the Green Flag Award network to inspire others. A fantastic opportunity to showcase not only the positive environmental changes taking place in Castle Park and Walled Garden, but across the borough in general.

The Pollinator Award was a true reflection of the change in maintenance practices that encouraged a more diverse environment for the increase and protection of pollinators. The Green Flag Award was an international certification which recognised parks and open spaces with excellent levels of maintenance, facilities and community involvement. These green spaces were judged against following eight key criteria:

- Welcoming Place
- Healthy, Safe and Secure
- Clean and Well Maintained
- Sustainability
- Conservation and Heritage
- Community Involvement
- Marketing
- Overall Management

The accreditation of sites for Green Flag was a performance measurement element within the Parks and Cemeteries Service Plan and in going forward, it was intended that additional sites were to be assessed in the future to broaden the scope of Green Flag within the Ards and North Down area.

The Green Flag Award is one of a number of accreditation schemes that recognised excellence in the management of our public space, others include the Beach and Marina Awards and the 'In Bloom Awards.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the Green Flag Award programme and the Borough's success, hard work and collaboration between the communities and staff involved in maintaining the accreditation achieved.

Councillor McRandal proposed, seconded by Councillor MacArthur, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor McRandal congratulated Officers and those involved in retaining the awards. He asked what other potential sites might be as referenced in the report. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries suggested Ward Park as an obvious location but that they were attempting to bring all sites to the standard of Green Flag and as such, were working on multiple locations. He hoped to bring further sites next year dependent on progress.

Councillor MacArthur asked if communities could run parks, if open spaces could be included or if it was a requirement that the parks had to be of a certain size and Council-run and maintained. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries explained that communities were integral to the Green flag standard being achieved and any size of park could go for a Green Flag award, as well as different awards existing within it such as the heritage award that Council were hoping to apply for in the future. He offered to meet with Councillor MacArthur to discuss potential locations she was speaking of.

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

12. PLAY PARK LOCKING RESPONSE TO NOM (FILE PCA37)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing as undernoted.

The following Notice of Motion was agreed at the May 2022 Council meeting:
That this Council notes with the concern the recent decision taken to no longer lock playgrounds & 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 & Rathgill playparks and the playpark and MUGA at Clandeboye.

Background

Prior to RPA, no play parks nor many open spaces in the former Ards Borough Council Area were locked, but a number of sites in North Down Borough Council were locked by contractors. Discussions internally had been ongoing for some time since then around the need for security arrangements for certain play park and open space sites around the Borough including Linear Park, seven play parks in Bangor which continued to be locked from 2015 on and some cemeteries. Previously, the securing of these sites was undertaken by external contractors at an annual cost of £28,500. In 2020, gate locking was brought inhouse and was fulfilled by the Neighbourhood Environment Team, with that budget being transferred to the NET Team. However, it became apparent that it was detracting from their main enforcement role and was not considered to be as necessary due to lack of evidence for need in the majority of sites in the Borough, all of which were not locked. The locking of sites was generally a legacy North Down Borough Council approach but had been gradually reduced in number since 2015.

There were 80 play areas across the Borough including Playgrounds, Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA's), Skate Parks and Pumps Tracks and up until April 1st 2022 only seven of them, all of which were in Bangor remained as being locked overnight. These playgrounds were:

1. Bloomfield
2. Clandeboye
3. Green Road (Breezemount Park)
4. Kilcooley Community Centre
5. Kilcooley Square
6. Rathgill
7. Ward Park

Current Position

By 2020 we had already stopped locking a number of playgrounds at night including, Sportsplex (Bangor), Conlig (Tower Park), Jonny the Jig and Redburn in Holywood and there had been no issues occurring as a result (It should be noted that from April until 10th July 2020, all play areas that could be locked were, due to the Covid pandemic).

The locations of the remaining seven playgrounds that were being locked were in similar settings as many others across the Borough where no issues occurred therefore it was considered that the continued approach to locking them cannot be justified and that they should be brought in line with the remaining 73 play areas which aren't locked, and which don't experience and adverse issues as a result.

Those remaining seven had been left open since January 2022 and monitoring by the Community Safety team demonstrated that there had again been no adverse issues occurring as a result.

There had been a small number of reports of an irresponsible dog owner permitting a dog under their control to foul within the fence of the MUGA at Clandeboye. This was not as a result of not locking the facility. It was the result of the selfish actions of a selfish dog owner breaking the law and as such has been addressed by the Environment Directorate's Enforcement Service.

The intention was to keep this new approach under review by monitoring any issues, damage etc that may occur over the coming months via the logging of any damage as a result of vandalism via the Asset HQ software system, reports kept by the Community Safety Team and reports of any incidents as recorded by the PSNI. The existing multi agency team that was set up over three years ago as part of the Community Safety Partnership which included the PSNI, Education Authority, YMCA, Street Pastors etc had been made aware of the new approach and they had advised that they would keep an eye on the sites over the coming months for any issues which may arise. It was considered that while the locking of play areas may reduce the instances of potential anti-social behaviour in that area, it simply moved it elsewhere, it didn't address the issue, which was why engagement with the young people by the multi-agency team was considered a more proactive, effective approach.

The general consensus between the multi-agency team who were very experienced in dealing with young people was that they tended to consider play areas as 'safe spaces' albeit they no longer 'played' in playgrounds (whereas Skate Parks, MUGA's and Pump Tracks are targeted towards older children). So, they can in some instances gravitate towards them to 'hang out' or to escape from an unstable home situation etc. This was often misconstrued as antisocial behaviour, when in fact it was not.

While there had been occasions of littering and damage across our play area portfolio in the Borough, this was not generally attributable to older children misusing the facilities in terms of equipment damage, it was mainly due to general wear and tear. The play areas were inspected every ten days by the Assets and Property Team and any defects were logged and actioned. If an issue was brought to our attention between those inspections via Councils Parks Team (who attended the sites on a regular basis), the public or Elected Members, it was actioned accordingly in terms of level of urgency with issues such as broken equipment or glass being given the highest priority for action by the relevant teams. It should be noted that on occasion there were instances of littering or damage to those play areas that were locked, it simply occurred outside the times that they were locked, therefore demonstrating that locking play parks did not prevent issues occurring. Overall, any issues occurring are generally intermittent and not specific to any particular play areas.

Following a request from the Community Association at Bloomfield it was agreed that the playground would be locked over the Twelfth period given the proximity of the bonfire etc to the playground.

At a recent Play Development Officers meeting facilitated by Playboard NI there were six Council's represented at that meeting. The issue of locking playgrounds was raised and those in attendance confirmed that they do not generally lock any of their playgrounds or MUGA's.

Costs

If a return to the locking of these seven play areas was to occur, at current estimates that would cost approx. £30,000 per annum which includes staff (agency/casual) and transportation costs. The estimate for external contractors providing this service is £50,000 per annum, the service has not included these costs in the budget for this financial year. Officers would advise that this is remains an unnecessary expense and that the more sustainably practice approach of engagement with young people by the expert multidisciplinary team is a much more favourable way of managing any issues.

RECOMMENDED that Council does not change the current approach of not locking any play areas in the Borough as there are no overriding reasons why such an expense should be incurred, and that the resource is continued to be directed towards the more targeted and sustainable face to face interaction with young people as required as described above, ensuring a consistent approach across the Borough.

Alderman Irvine proposed, seconded by Councillor Woods, that an alternative recommendation be tabled.

That Council notes the report and expressing concern with the reports of anti-social behaviour that is ongoing in and around Playpark agrees to the locking up of the 7 playparks identified in the North Down area.

Alderman Irvine did not believe the report paid heed to issues that had arisen in particular areas. For example, playgrounds that were near houses such as pensioner bungalows; if they were left open, individuals gathered at them whether youths or adults. The PSNI had noted that they had been called to antisocial behaviour around play parks. He believed Council had to listen to the residents near those areas and reminded Members that there had been damage to surface and equipment in recent months such as Rathgill, Skipperstone and Conlig. He hoped the costs would be minimal given reasonable proximity to one another.

Councillor Woods referenced certain issues in particular areas that local communities had made clear why locking parks was important but agreed that if it came to a stage of not requiring the locking of parks, she was happy to see it changed.

Councillor MacArthur stated that her preference was for parks to stay open but in reality, it was not the optimal choice dependent on a park's location. She cited reports regarding antisocial behaviour around Bloomfield and Clandeboye areas. She had dealt with families who had moved house due to such behaviours and reminded Members of the vulnerability that older residents who dwelled close by play parks may feel and also agreed that if evidence pointed toward a marked improvement in the behaviours of those in troubled areas, the decision to lock parks could be reviewed again.

Alderman Carson asked how the Committee could go forward in keeping parks open with no costings supplied. He estimated 41 play parks in the Borough. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries advised that the cost of locking the 7 playparks was in the report and was between £30,000 and £50,000. He clarified that Council operated eighty play parks at present.

Councillor Boyle referenced other comments regarding antisocial behaviour and, given the estimated figured provided by the Head of Parks and Cemeteries, it may be a cost of £7,000 per playground to keep locking per year. He suggested that if there have been little to no incidents, why would Members wish for playgrounds to be locked; something that he believed sent out the wrong message to the area it was located in. He felt it was a slight against young people to do other than the report suggested. He suggested if vandalism and antisocial behaviour continued in locations, that such could be used as evidence to lock play parks. However, the alternative proposal was one that he could not support at this time given the level of spending quoted.

Alderman Wilson had been to Clandeboye and saw what had happened with glass and dog waste on the football pitch itself. The community had been tortured by antisocial behaviour which seemed to occur in the early mornings with efforts having been taken to stop it but to no avail. With inflation being high and Council costs inevitably going up as well as desperately trying to reduce costs, £30-50k to lock parks seemed extortionate and as such he could not support the amended proposal.

Councillor T Smith asked if some Councillors lived near playparks and if such would influence their attitudes in the meeting to the possibility of continuing to lock playparks. He noted the report stating that the community safety team had carried out monitoring and asked what kind of monitoring had occurred. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries explained that it meant they had been regularly visited every 10 days with a software system to check see and record what, if any, issues existed. From that point any reports from the public, the problem areas could be identified. He agreed that antisocial behaviour existed in parks and open spaces in general and that one reason for a play development officer had been to have 100 events a year placed by that officer to divert activity positively. The more events in parks and play parks, the less likely antisocial behaviour would occur and the more respect may be

given to such sites. Seven play parks being locked would not be value for money, given that part-time staff had been removed to remain in budget.

Councillor T Smith believed it was hard for Members to judge the difficulties of local residents unless they were in similar locations. He asked if Alderman Irvine wished to change his proposal to reflect something akin to, *'following local consultations, Council may decide on a path to take.'*

Alderman Irvine advised that the Notice of Motion had been brought forth at May Council. It was concise and had been brought to him as a Councillor to resolve. Councillor T Smith would require evidence to show real antisocial behaviour to justify the costing. Alderman Irvine was happy to add the suggestion to his proposal for consultations to take place. He believed costings and reports were essential as the costs did seem prohibitive. Both he and Councillor Wood as seconder were happy to re-word the alternative proposal. The Head of Community and Wellbeing would look toward providing a report that outlined additional information on the subject.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Irvine, seconded by Councillor Woods, that *That Council notes the report and expressing concern with the reports of anti-social behaviour that is ongoing in and around Playparks. Furthermore, that Council agrees to carry out local consultation before taking a decision on the locking up of the 7 playparks identified in the North Down area.*

13. SPONSORSHIP OF ROUNDABOUTS POLICY (FILE PCA108) (Appendices X to XI)

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

Background

The purpose of this report was to set out an innovative Borough-Wide sponsorship programme and approval to adopt a new policy for the Sponsorship of Roundabouts on Council managed land.

In recent years Parks Services throughout the UK had been reviewing and considering ways to be more efficient, while at the same time improving service delivery. Within Ards and North Down Borough Council, Officers continually sought to identify sustainable methods to manage Council assets which had led to some very successful partnerships. Roundabouts and grass verges within the Borough were owned and controlled by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI). While the DfI had a statutory duty to maintain roundabouts and roadside verges, in many circumstances Councils undertook this function on DfI's behalf. Although the Council had maintained many roundabouts within the Borough, it did not at the time of writing, obtain any income, unlike many Councils in Northern Ireland. The guidance for the private funding and maintenance of roundabouts was set out in the DfI's

guidance document RSPPG E004 – attached under Appendix 2. For the Council to start a sponsorship programme it would require a policy to clearly specify the roles of each partner and set out conditions for the review of agreements between partners.

Key Issues/Points

The purpose of this policy was to provide clarity for partners/sponsors as to the requirements when undertaking to sponsor a roundabout within Ards and North Down. The document sets out Benefits of Sponsorship, the Limitations of Sponsorship, Breach of Agreement and Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of the policy.

The Decision-Making process was proposed as follows:

1. Sponsorship opportunities would be advertised in local press and / or online platforms
2. Potential sponsors must submit draft agreements, before the deadline, setting out their bid and the proposed sponsorship period, i.e., minimum two years and maximum five years
3. Submissions would be reviewed and written up for consideration by the Community and Wellbeing Committee and decision by Council.
4. A letter of award would be issued to the winning bidder upon submission of an agreed planting and maintenance scheme

The Council would endeavour to enhance the appearance of roundabouts by agreeing sponsorship within set guidelines without compromising Highway safety. It was intended to compliment the DfI Road Service document 'RSPPG E004' which covered in detail health and safety whilst working on/near the Department's roundabouts and verges amongst other such matters.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the attached policy on Sponsorship of Roundabouts.

Councillor McRandal proposed, seconded by Councillor MacArthur, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor McRandal agreed with the report and policy document. He asked if officers had examples of other Council areas and their successes in similar ventures.

The Head of Parks and Cemeteries advised that other Councils had already been doing this for quite a number of years and that he was surprised a sponsorship scheme did not exist when he started at Ards and North Down Borough Council. Consultation took place with Planning and other Council departments to investigate any issues, the report of which was the result.

Councillor MacArthur asked if two to five years for sponsorship was due to both the design process and the intricacies of it, and secondly if, with sustainability such as

Item 15, would such be part of the guidance given to companies. Lastly, she asked how much a roundabout was worth for bidding.

The Head of Parks and Cemeteries hoped a long relationship could exist with a company regarding a particular roundabout that they could invest in hence the timeframe suggestions. With planting, sustainable planting would be more realistic especially given Corporate Social Responsibility and sustainable planting policies. Costs could vary dependent on the popularity of a roundabout and what company may wish to pay such monies, and he knew of one roundabout that he had previously been responsible for promoting had achieved a £30k annual figure elsewhere in Northern Ireland.

Councillor MacArthur asked if a roundabout had structures already upon it, such as Bloomfield roundabout, would it be a case of those items being removed upon a successful bid. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries explained that they could enhance what was there or pay for Council to maintain them as they were. They had the option to take over the roundabout.

Councillor Woods referenced Council working on Department for Infrastructure owned locations and receiving no money and asked how long it had been occurring. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries did not believe any money had been received from The Department for Infrastructure, hence the sponsorship programme would help offset costs. He referenced Appendix 2 of the report and believed the procurement policy would have allowed Council to put that in place.

Alderman Wilson was happy to see the report but disappointed it had taken so long to occur. He asked in regard to people placing their own posters, what would stop other individuals putting their own adverts up around bank holidays with advertising on lampposts etcetera and if any recourse existed. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries advised him that they could not stop this from happening, but parks staff dealt with them and then did contact them to say they had removed said items for collection which, more often than not was recycled or binned.

Councillor Thompson welcomed the report and queried if there was a specific size that a sponsor could put up on a grass verge. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries referenced that this was in relation to roundabouts only and pointed to Appendix 2 regarding DfI permitting advertising within its property. They would have to direct them to DfI as Council did not have capacity to take over other DfI verges. Some areas existed that could be used hence its mention within the report.

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

14. LITTER BIN RATIONALISATION RESPONSE TO NOM UPDATE (FILE PCA98)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing In April 2022, Parks Officers submitted a progress report to the Community and Wellbeing Committee regarding the two Notice of Motion's below:

In September 2021, Council agreed a Notice of Motion asking:

"That Environment Directorate Cleansing and Parks Officers work together to agree a draft plan for collaborating to ensure that waste management staff can be deployed to problem litter locations in a timely manner, having regard for severity and urgency. This should include consideration of need for a single, cross department out of hours contact to log issues and to facilitate the deployment of resource. That a report outlining the plan, complete with costings, is brought before the relevant committee."

In addition to the above Notice of Motion, a further Notice of Motion was submitted in November 2021 requesting:

"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."

In order to address the issues raised by these two Notice of Motion's, Council Managers from the Parks & Cleansing Services had met on a number of occasions to work more collaboratively to maximise efficiency and effectiveness of litter bin maintenance across all areas of the Borough and maximise outcomes. The key objective of this was to firstly ascertain where there were areas of service cross over and identify where both services can work in collaboration to address litter collection during peak demand. Greater levels of communication were vital on the effectiveness of the approach and through the regular meetings and further collaborative interventions, both services were now interacting jointly. This had been particularly evident during the recent sustained hot spells when there was significant pressure on the services.

During the pandemic, people had turned to their local parks and beaches in droves for exercise or solace from stressful situations. However, this increased footfall had led to unprecedented levels of litter and waste, putting an additional strain on already stretched budgets and workforce. Litter not only directly impacted people's ability to enjoy our wonderful facilities, but also affected wildlife and polluted our waterways. We would continue to meet with Council partners in various departments to tackle litter and deliver continuous improvement in the following areas:

- Operations - efficient and effective service design and infrastructure
- Engagement - working with our community partners
- Communications - education and behavioural change campaigns
- Enforcement - taking swift and effective action

The Council's Parks Service had been strengthening our litter collection capabilities since the end of lockdown. For example, all litter bins (Parks & Cleansing) across the Borough were now plotted on the Council's GIS system this had allowed for greater route maximisation and sharing between departments. The right bin in the right place was very important and the Parks Service had already actioned on our ongoing review of litter bins. In many coastal locations, we had changed to bird proof bins as well as installing or replacing over 80 litter bins borough wide in the last twelve months alone.

The Parks department had introduced five new Park Ranger posts, effectively doubling the number of staff hours dedicated to waste collection across the borough each weekend. During spring and summer months, this seven-day service was again strengthened with a further four posts, assigned to beaches and visitor hotspots. Parks Supervisors were now working on a seven-day shift pattern to include peak times.

In the interests of providing an integrated, single point of contact to Members for the purpose of flagging up significant and urgent littering issues that arise at the weekend, whether they be in areas maintained by the Parks or Cleansing Service Units, a single email address had been circulated to Members for this purpose. The message sent to this email address would be forwarded to both Parks and Cleansing staff who were providing weekend service cover – and the matter would then be responded to by the appropriate service unit. A response would subsequently be provided to the Elected Member on the action taken. This has streamlined the service and decrease response times and we were receiving positive feedback.

Work of local volunteer groups like Ards and North Down Beach Cleaners, gave great encouragement that people were acting and demanding change. The Parks Service had been supporting many volunteer litter-picking events in the borough, by providing tools and equipment to groups free of charge, as well as assisting with the disposal of collected material. The opening of a Community Tools Store had allowed us to again improve this assistance. Any groups organising collections were able to contact Parks Service to avail of this equipment. Parks Officers continued to engage with local groups and schools through biodiversity workshops and the In Bloom campaign, continually promoting the need for people to look after our environment.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

Councillor McRandal proposed, seconded by Councillor Woods, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor McRandal was happy to see the report being brought back as an initial proposer to one of the Notices of Motion. In regard to Seapark and Ballyholme, he did not think things had been as untidy as previous years, perhaps due to weather or performance at busy times by the Council was better. The Notice of Motion was for

two directorates to work more closely together, but it seemed that the directorates were doing their own thing. He asked if the Parks Teams saw seasonal bins like Environment with the same worth. In regard to the second Notice of Motion regarding Littering being under one directorate, he asked why it was not mentioned in the report and if any conclusion existed.

The Head of Parks and Cemeteries welcomed the Notice of Motion as it encouraged working with colleagues across departments such as cleansing and Communications. All bids had to be put on GIS which allowed for a root master opportunity to improve how bins were emptied in a quicker way.

At the time of writing, bins were being swapped around the 30 mark to speed things up. With seasonal bins, they were at full capacity with staffing and had no budget for bins which meant monies were taken from other areas of the service. With regard to a restructure, such was beyond The Head of Parks and Cemeteries remit to change department positions. The Director of Community and Wellbeing confirmed that discussions were occurring between him and the Director of Environment but that the swapping of bins between Environment and Community and Wellbeing was making the service provision more efficient.

Councillor Woods asked for the function of job of park rangers, where they worked and if they had an enforcement role as well as how the parks in which they worked in were decided upon. The Head of Parks & Cemeteries explained their duties included closing parks, lifting litter and to help education by working with communities to carry out events. There were around six at this moment in time. They also operated community tool stores to assist with things such as litter picking.

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

15. PLANTING SCHEMES (FILE PCA110) (APPENDIX XII)

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

Background

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on the various planting schemes across Ards and North Down Borough.

Ards and North Down ad a reputation for leading the way with floral displays. The Borough had won regional and national competitions in recent years and the common theme throughout all successes, was the incredible hard work and enthusiasm shown by our staff and the local communities they worked with. In recent years, the style of planting had changed to reflect the need for greater biodiversity and sustainability.

Traditional bedding displays, those that needed replanting twice a year, with significant costs in both plant material and labour, were gradually being replaced with herbaceous perennials, bulbs, and shrubs. These plants were chosen to provide colour, hardiness, and biodiversity value. Not only did they enhance the green spaces within the borough, but they also helped to ensure our parks were managed in line with council's obligations to climate change and sustainability.

Although the initial cost of plants was greater than bedding material, they were permanent installations, which once established, represented a significant reduction in long-term cost. Although basic maintenance was still required such as weeding and minimal pruning, labour hours were reduced as well as a reduction in fuel and green waste. Permanent plantings required less watering than annual bedding schemes, which was welcome during increased drought periods being experienced each year. All these factors allow Parks Service to operate in line with the Sustainability and Climate Change Policy.

The planting within the borough fell into 4 categories:

- Seasonal bedding
- Sustainable mixed planting
- Half-hardy annual/wildflower sowings
- Naturalised bulb planting

Seasonal Bedding

Spring bedding displays were planted in autumn of the previous year using annual material and were enhanced with bulb material such as Daffodil and Tulip. Summer bedding was planted in late spring, once all risk of frost had passed, to provide colour for the summer months. In both instances, once displays were finished, the plants would be composted, although the bulb material was offered to community groups for replanting.

While Spring bedding was now only planted at Bangor Castle and Walled Garden. Summer bedding was still used at key locations, e.g., Bangor Post Office, Conway Square and War Memorials.

In 2017 Parks Service purchased circa 210,000 bedding plants. In 2019 this figure was reduced to 180,000 and further to 52,000 through 2022. The use of non-permanent bulbs had reduced from circa 100,000 to 20,000 in the same time frame, mainly focussed on Bangor Castle Walled Garden. This represented a reduction of more than 75% in the use of annual bedding plants and an 80% reduction of non-permanent bulbs.

Seasonal bedding and sustainability do not go together. From bedding production and the use of peat-based composts, heating of greenhouses in winter, to the delivery, planting and maintenance, it was not a sustainable practice. With

increasing summer temperatures and drought conditions, the need for watering newly planted and established bedding was growing. The annual nature of these plants meant that all 52,000 bedding plants used this year would go into green waste.

Parks Service were aware of the value that colourful floral displays added to our city, town and villages and had implemented a display replacement scheme that maintained the aesthetic value while considering environmental impact.

Sustainable Mixed Planting

The majority reduction in bedding had been achieved by replacing bedding material with mixed plantings of herbaceous perennials, shrubs and permanent bulbs. Plants were carefully chosen to give long lasting flower colour, winter interest, biodiversity value and hardiness. Once established, they were permanent plants that needed minimal maintenance. Examples of where these had been used include Abbey Street, Bangor, Court Street Newtownards, Main Street Groomsport (appendix), Ballygowan roundabout, Watson's Corner Cloughey.

Half Hardy Annual Wildflower

In other areas, bedding had been reduced by sowing annual wildflowers in spring. These seed mixes had been carefully chosen to give maximum colour while providing a range of flowering plants to benefit bees, butterflies and birds. were sown every spring and only needed weeding until established. Examples of these plantings could be seen at: Grays Hill, Bangor, The Stables, Groomsport, Marine Gardens Donaghadee (appendix) and Portaferry Road Greyabbey.

Naturalised Bulb Planting

In recent years the Parks Service had introduced naturalised bulb plantings to not only replace annual bedding, but also to utilise large areas of grass to enhance aesthetic value and biodiversity value. The bulb mixes, planted in Autumn, contained approximately 10 different species to provide colour from February through to August. The seed heads of certain species added another layer of interest as well as providing a food source for birds.

These plantings provided additional benefit as the grass did not require cutting until late summer, thereby reducing labour, fuel consumption and environmental impact. Examples of this style of planting could be seen at: High Donaghadee Road Bangor (appendix 3), High Trees Junction Donaghadee and Fredrick Street roundabout Ards. Parks Service have committed to the installation of a further 100,000 naturalised bulbs through Autumn 2022.

Plantings discussed above was sustainable. They were long term features in the landscape that did not need replacing. Carefully selected plants did not need extra water once established and with basic maintenance they would continue to thrive year after year. Annual wildflowers needed to be sown every spring to avoid excess weeds and particular species domination, but this process was much quicker than

bedding and the benefits to wildlife, in particular insects is immeasurable. Naturalised bulb plantings were carefully chosen to give maximum benefit to wildlife and once planted do not need further intervention.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the changes in approach to floral displays and continue to support a move towards more sustainable planting.

Councillor MacArthur proposed, seconded by Councillor Woods, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor MacArthur wished to comment on war memorials, advising that not everyone had a green area nearby but that many did. She believed those areas needed to be kept exceptionally well whether with annuals or perennials. The Marine Garden display was from last year which seemed to consist of wildflowers. When Queen Elizabeth II passed away, that site looked in poor condition. She wanted to know the longevity of wildflower site and maintenance. Flowerbeds sat idle that the Council used to manage, and she asked if a community group work might exist whereby Council provided wildflower packs. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries agreed that War memorials should be kept to a high standard and hoped they were. Rewilding areas around such would not be appropriate but was happy to continue work with the stakeholders around war memorials. With maintenance, there was less maintenance for a wildflower meadow by comparison to bedding plants. Where signage had been placed such as now, wildflower was seeding and could look messy whilst some beds had been removed. From September the wildflowers are in the process of naturally reseeding for the following season and so could not look as well as what they did in warmer weather.

With regard to Community Groups, photos found the appendices were subject of work carried out by the community group in that area as well as in Groomsport where a community group carried out most of the planting. They wanted to promote volunteering further by extending the volunteering friends group.

RECESS: AT 21:01, THE MEETING WENT INTO RECESS, RESUMING AT 21:11.

Councillor Adair advised that wildflowers had been introduced in his area and that constituents were happy with it by comparison to the higher maintenance of the way they used to be done.

Councillor Thompson welcomed the use of wildflowers. In regard to the Frances Street roundabout, the plants were very high which caused problems for vehicles and visibility. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries would meet with Councillor Thompson regarding the flowerbed he was discussing. The supplier for wildflowers had been changed this year and the Council was experimenting with different flowers

to see what would work best in which locations which may in part have been what led to the issue being described.

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

16. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE REPORTING Q1 (FILE CW22)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that members will 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 in October 2015. The Performance Management Handbook outlines the approach to Performance Planning and Management process as:

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

The Council's 18 Service Plans 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 will be reported to relevant Committees on a quarterly basis as undernoted:

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

The report for Quarter 1 2022-23 is attached.

Key points to note:

- Staff absence rates have been detrimentally affected by long term sick whilst short term absence rates continue to remain low.
- The % Private Tenancy Order (PTO) inspections completed in 180 days is below target due to the backlog created during Covid when staff were unable

to gain access to premises. It is expected that the annual target will be met by the end of the year.

- The % of premises in priority sectors inspected and permits issues has been retained at 90% for year end in this year's business plan. It is now thought not to be realistic due to the need for a survey to ascertain a realistic picture of these businesses following on from Covid 19. With Committee's approval it is proposed to reduce the yearend target from 90% to 50%.

Key achievements:

- The Service had generally performed well against the KPI's and had transitioned back to a business as usual service.
- Recruitment of Senior EHO's and a Health and a Wellbeing Officer were well progressed.

Emerging issues:

- Affordable warmth as taking on greater importance coming into the autumn months and with the increase in energy costs. An update had been provided as a separate report item.
- Staffing levels remained a challenge with long term sick and temporary vacancies in officer and administration posts proving difficult to cover.

Action to be taken:

- Further recruitment would be completed to fill vacant posts.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the report and approve the amendment to the KPI in relation to % priority sector premises.

Councillor MacArthur proposed, seconded by Councillor Woods, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor MacArthur wished to clarify what priority sectors were given reductions quoted in the report and if petroleum sites referred to garages.

The Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development advised that the current target was at 90% with a proposal to reduce to 50%. Those priority premises were vapour recovery licences sites including petrol stations, dry cleaners, paint suppliers and manufacturers of concrete and cement. 90% had not been achievable in the past. Their remit also included noise and Health and Safety, so inspections had not been carried out to the same level this last few years due to being re-positioned for Covid. Petroleum sites referred to were garages.

Councillor MacArthur asked why they were not a priority given Health and Safety. The Head of Environmental Health, Protection & Development explained that Health and Safety is but it was due to a regime of recording, like licensing on a record rather than not going on with enforcement responsibilities regarding Health and Safety.

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

**17. PUBLIC DRINKING WATER SUPPLY 2021 (FILE CW98)
(APPENDIX XIII)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - A report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that attached was the Drinking Water Quality Report produced by Northern Ireland Water for the Ards and North Down Borough Council area for 2021. The report indicated a 100% level of compliance with an extensive array of drinking water quality parameters as laid down in the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 as amended in 2018.

As was the case in 2020, sampling was intermittent at various periods during 2021 in response to the changing Covid risk level.

No classified major or serious water quality failures were recorded for the Borough during the year; however, three significant incidents were reported. Those related to the aluminium content of the water and a malfunction of the disinfection system at Drumaroad Water Treatment Works. Upon further investigation, it was determined that there had been no risk to the public and all parameters were satisfactory.

Northern Ireland Water had identified the need to deliver a significant volume of water mains rehabilitation and other works across its ageing network in this area. A map of locations where rehabilitation works are planned is contained in the body of the report.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the report.

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

18. AGE FRIENDLY UPDATE (FILE CW29)

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

Background

Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC) signed a commitment to Age Friendly status with the World Health Organisation (WHO) in October 2018. At that time, a PHA funded Age Friendly Co-ordinator (AFC) was appointed and shared with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council (LCCC). Under the Community Planning umbrella, a Council led Age Friendly Alliance (AFA) was established and a 2019-2022 Strategy and Action Plan was produced.

In emerging from the Covid 19 pandemic and resultant changes in service delivery, the PHA reviewed their financial commitment and provided funding for an AFC in every Council in Northern Ireland, with key objectives over a 5 year period. A new AFC started full time in ANDBC on 1 February 2022 and had been working to deliver the funding objectives, and the actions identified as important to the people of ANDBC through both our older people's survey and the Big Plan consultations and surveys.

Key Achievements

1. The Big Guide to Age Friendly Ards and North Down

Worked closely with Community Planning, a guide/directory of information, advice and support, to signpost residents to services had been produced in response to surveys indicating that many constituents, especially older people, had not been aware of key services and support, or where/how to access many services.

The Big Guide contained valuable information on council services, what other organisations provide and how to get assistance and advice on areas such as finance, housing, travel & transport, safety & security, health, civic participation, emergency numbers, the Here2Help App etc.

Elected members, Service Unit managers, AFA, and some community/voluntary groups had been involved in shaping the content, look and feel of the guide to reflect their experiences of service users' needs, as well as taking into consideration the survey findings.

Hard copies will be distributed to libraries, older people, community and leisure centres, community networks, Community Advice AND, Food Banks and the Social Supermarket (Well Fed). Elected Members, reception staff, and appropriate council officers will receive a reference copy. An online version would also be available and updated regularly.

2. Here2Help App

The Here2Help App provided quick access to advice and support services for anyone in crisis or needing help. It provided the details of local, not-for-profit organisations who could help with many issues such as mental health, addiction, housing and domestic abuse. The App was created through a local initiative and developed by Noel McKee from East Antrim Counselling and with input from the Community and Wellbeing's Community and Culture Department.

ANDBC has worked with the developer to further improve the App by getting our local community and voluntary organisations to sign up and provide information on local services and current programmes designed to tackle social isolation and loneliness. Community Development had led on sending out the app's registration form and Community Planning will collate the results and work with the app developer to get all our local organisations listed. A local list would then also be available on our website and linked to the online version of the Big Guide to AF.



Elected Members had been encouraged to download, use and promote the free Here2Help App from Google Play Store or the App Store.

3. Walking Audits

As part of the AF Outdoor spaces priority, we had been working in partnership with Parks & Cemeteries to develop a walking audit to identify improvements needed to make open spaces more friendly and attractive for all age groups and mobilities such as pavements, seating, bins, etc . Ward Park had been chosen as the initial location for audit because it is also the focus of the Parks & Cemeteries Levelling Up fund application, which can be used to implement improvements identified. A preliminary audit of Ward Park was undertaken in July, with the assistance of Elected Members from the Charter Plus committee. Two full audits were undertaken in August with a range of representative service users.

One clearly emerging issue was the provision of suitable seating and engagement is well developed with Parks on increasing provision of benches which comply with AF guidance, as well as specific Chatty Benches to encourage social interaction. We were also partnering with SEHSCT to install QR codes and reference the Here2Help app on benches signposting to mental health support.

4. Over 50s Council

As an essential criteria for AF accreditation, a public notice had been advertised for over 50's volunteers resident in the Borough to form an Over 50s Council, similar to Youth Voice. The Over 50s Council would represent the views of older people on local issues which will feed into the Age Friendly Alliance.

The Over 50s Council would provide older people with the opportunity to:

- have their say on local issues
- participate in decisions which affect their lives
- meet new people and build relationships
- work with organisations to develop an Age Friendly Programme

Following a press launch with the Mayor and our Age Champions, over 130 Expression of Interest were received from constituents in their 50's – 80's. Three information sessions had been held in Newtownards, Bangor and online providing further information. It is possible that, with the initial interest shown, we may need to facilitate more than one group.

5. Internal/Officers Age Friendly Forum

It had been identified that as a Council we need to consider how all our plans and strategies impact on section75 groups and how we engage better with older

people and each other. To address this an internal Officer forum has been established which will meet monthly.

6. Positive Ageing Month

Several local events were being developed in partnership with PCSP, AGENDA and other members of the AF Alliance over the October Positive Ageing month on feeling "safe at home", "safety in the community", "getting ready for winter" and "reconnect and get active". (One event per week covering Bangor, Newtownards, Kircubbin and Comber) We had also advertised a calendar of weekly events of both local and regional activities which consisted of a mixture of new events and an opportunity to publicise existing activities such as active ageing etc.

RECOMMENDED that Council:

- Note the update on Age Friendly and continue to support and engage in Age Friendly proposals and activities across the Borough.
- Download the Here2Help App for their own use and encourage its use by others.

Councillor MacArthur proposed, seconded by Alderman Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor MacArthur congratulated the Age friendly coordinator on the work carried out from taking up post in February 2022. As a Council, Ards and North Down had the highest percentage of +65, 22%. She asked if Council spending reflected the demographic of those served. She had worked with groups who organised dances with many over 80 years. Other councils had carried out events for this age group and asked if any update existed on this. The Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development could not comment across the board on spending regarding older people. This was age-friendly month the team were working on events throughout the Borough. They were not specifically Council run but with partners. In relation to tea dances, it had been discussed at length with Down Rural Community Partnership which was planning an event in Queens Hall on 7 December. Whilst the Council had not organised it, they were supporting and assisting and directly older people to that so they could enjoy the event they were asking Council to organise.

Alderman Irvine expressed the importance of tackling social isolation and the fears like rising energy costs. With regard to fears of the upcoming winter, he asked if the age friendly network had made this a focus and what initiatives may exist to help address it. The Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development explained that a number of requests had been received from various people in regard to warm rooms and activities. Opening community centres was not seen as cost effective due to heating costs, and so existing places already heated like libraries and churches and community organisations may be more adequate

locations which were being listed to promote. This was being followed through by the Community Support Group which the Council co-ordinated.

Councillor Thompson welcomed the report including the "here to help," app and offers from groups to assist. He thanked officers for their ongoing efforts.

The Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development was able to provide updates on the report. For the Over 50s group more expressions of interest had been received and inaugural meetings were due to occur. It was much more successful than expected with 74 people interested. The initial walking audit was complete for Ward Park, and the top issues were as expected such as footpaths, paving, beds and planting. That report would be brought to a future meeting.

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

**19. UPDATE ON AFFORDABLE WARMTH SCHEME APRIL 2020 TO DATE (FILE CW8)
(APPENDICES XIV TO XV)**

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

The Council had historically been supportive of the Affordable Warmth Scheme, recognising that it targeted low-income households, likely to be living in fuel poverty, enabling them to avail of extensive home insulation improvements thereby significantly lowering heating bills. With the rise in cost of living and inflation predicted to reach even higher levels, such home improvements were essential to help keep households warm whilst trying to manage massive increases in energy costs.

Challenges

Previous reports had highlighted the challenges associated with the delivery of the Affordable Warmth Scheme including:

- Department of Communities (DfC) submission of a 5 year Business Plan to the Department of Finance (DoF) without due regard to Council concerns.
- DfC determined that in lieu of a fixed a grant for the Affordable Warmth Scheme, councils would only be paid by referral. (without consultation or agreement with Councils),
- The change in target numbers during the year without notice making resource management a key concern.
- The difficulties associated with targeted addresses rather than an open scheme (to manage numbers and expectations within budget constraints).
- The high number of contacts required to encourage eligible applicants to sign up resulting in a low return despite high effort.

- The difficulties in retaining suitably trained staff with funding uncertainty.
- The variable time spent on applications required, particularly to support the most vulnerable, for a flat rate fee and no payment for the time to identify ineligible applications.
- Lack of transparency over past reviews of the scheme.

Emerging issues

The Council in recent years had expressed concerns through a multi-party meeting and letters to the Permanent Secretary, and through the regular Senior Officials group set up with DfC and Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) on aspects of the schemes delivery including funding. A review of the targeting model took place in 2021 (Appendix 1 BSC Review - targeted approach - January 2022), t three councils have been involved in a targeting pilot, which is awaiting DfC approval prior to rollout.

A further review of the scheme took place earlier this year, with an interim report presented to Senior Officials in June 2022. (Appendix 2 - BCS Evaluation of the DfC Affordable Warmth Scheme and Partnership Model - Emerging Findings June 2022). The full report was yet to be made available at the time of writing. There was clear recognition that the councils were unhappy with the current model, mainly based on funding model and targeted area restrictions, and it was hoped that a more satisfactory proposal will be made available.

In the last financial year (2021/22), our Affordable Warmth team had benefited from greater stability than usual, having the Coordinator supported by two full-time Project Officers, with the most recent recruited in October 2020. This however had been offset against a climate where, in the wake of the pandemic, there had still been a marked reluctance from many households (especially elderly) to engage with the scheme as they did not want visitors/workmen in their home. The situation gradually improved over the year but despite sending 2,353 letters and "cold calling" at 694 targeted homes, Expressions of Interest and eligibility numbers remained low, resulting in 341 households of the target number of 360 (95%) being submitted to the NIHE for them to advance the works. Details outlined in the table below.

ANDBC Affordable Warmth Scheme 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022 – NIHE Report						
Referrals accepted from ANDBC	ineligible /cancelled	Properties Visited (by NIHE)	Approvals to proceed with works	Value of Approvals	Measures Installed	Homes Improved
341	74	306	231	£861,913.35	392	241

The high cancellation rate remained a concern. Households declining to proceed when contacted by NIHE or deciding not to carry out works once approved were

rejected by NIHE due to inability to contact the householder. A system was now in place where the AW team were notified of possible cancellations and would undertake some follow up work to reach these households and encourage them to proceed with the application. Sometimes the AW team could reassure the householder about the process, having built up relations during their communications, which would have ensured that some of the most vulnerable accepted the home improvements that would ultimately save them money and improve the housing stock.

Despite the difficulties outlined above, the team continued to work extremely hard to meet the annual target of 30 per month for April and May and dropping to 20 per month because of central budget constraints (Subject to review in September). This had caused significant Human resource challenges.

Performance

In 2022/23 Q1, 75 referrals were accepted by NIHE. In April and May 65 approvals were issued by NIHE, 34 homes were completed with a total of 54 different measures (such as loft insulation, cavity wall insulation/refill, boiler replacement, windows etc) to a value of £137,861. (These figures relate to April and May only)

In addition, 501 letters were sent out, 280 "cold call" visits were undertaken and over 23 referrals were made for Benefits entitlement checks, home safety, AND secured scheme and the NIHE energy advice line.

It had been recognised that with escalating fuel costs there were more likely to be questions on energy efficiency savings from members of the public beyond those eligible for the scheme. The AW team had therefore been improving their knowledge in this subject area and working with guidance prepared by the Community Planning Manager for the new Social Supermarket in the Borough, to be in a position to provide advice and information on energy efficiency savings as well as signpost those in need to specialist support services should they be required. This as a natural extension of their work and a need that has been identified in the current climate, which no doubt Members would support and encourage.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the Affordable Warmth update

Councillor MacArthur proposed, seconded by Alderman Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor MacArthur referenced the costs of living and energy pricing, believing the scheme outline could be a benefit, though not for those who could not get particular works carried out in their homes. With the DfC criteria for affordable warmth and the Council being unable to advertise the scheme these were of concern despite 2353 letters sent out and 694 cold calls, the expression of interest was low. She asked how the Council compared to other Councils and why the expression of interest was

so low. In addition, she wished to know if the DfC made any effort to change an outdated criteria of basing entitlement upon postcodes.

The Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development advised that all Councils faced the same challenges that had been reported to DfC. As stated, the returns of EOI were low which were due to perhaps eligibility criteria and when individuals realised they had to produce financial documentation, it may have put them off. With referrals to the Housing Executive, employing their own workmen to do the work may also put people off. When signed into the scheme, for example, an elderly person only wanted a new boiler, but their property needed loft insulation too. They would have to take on all that they are eligible for, or nothing. She could not supply details at this time in regard to other Councils but would seek it.

Regarding the DfC's targeted areas, a pilot was carried out with three Councils to widen the area in regard to being more lenient where a postcode was selected. However, to reach others in need, being able to advertise the scheme more widely would be of benefit. Another element of it had been that it was a three way partnership with communication from Council getting passed over to the Housing Executive; the passing of information could cause difficulties. DfC had given some assurances that they were taking these concerns on board.

Alderman Irvine supported the change to eligibility criteria. With the application stage and those cancelling, he asked for more information on those who could not get through to the final stage of the process.

The Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development's department had received feedback such as the change of organisation and the time of the application process; enthusiasm may wane as well as the elements of upheaval mentioned previously whilst some householders have carried out their own boiler replacement works. As well, having to find those who could carry out the work could be challenging and though explained to them at the time, it was a deterrent.

Councillor Woods had been investigating the affordable warmth scheme that stated the budget had dropped in September with 20% being applied. She asked if this Council was part of the initial pilot and whether the final report on the review had any reasons as to why it was not published.

The Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development explained that 30% per Council per month to 20% per Council per month had been due to central budgets. It was subject to review and with the 20% target per month but that they struggled to meet it and instead were around 18%-19%. With reduced staff as well, the Council was not directly involved with the pilot, but instead Belfast, Derry and Strabane and Newtownabbey. The review report had yet to be published despite combined requests from the Councils.

Councillor Woods asked if an emergency response team existed to engage with other agencies as was done in the pandemic given that it was a social emergency now. No emergency response group existed but through community planning and a steering group that would be talking about supporting vulnerable people re bills, energy and getting through the winter. A social supermarket had also been set up that could support eighty families which was also a good resource. Criteria had been set up for those families but once within that scheme, they could go there and also get training for cooking and signposting to agencies that could help, such as employment, warm packs, mental health areas etc.

Councillor Adair believed the scheme meant those that needed help did not get it due to red tape and bureaucracy, through no fault of the Council but that of DfC. He had proposed a delegation for Council to meet with DfC four years ago which took place but there had been little progress. He provided some examples of the unfairness existing in the eligibility and criteria held by DfC.

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

**20. SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE (FILE EHPD3)
(APPENDIX XVI)**

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

Safety Advisory Groups (SAGs) had been in existence for many years, to some extent as a consequence of the recommendations of Lord Justice Taylor following his inquiry into the Hillsborough Tragedy of 1989. Whilst this encouraged the establishment of SAGs in relation to football it is also recognised that there was potential advantages in terms of SAGs for a broad range of other events.

Key Information

The SAG was an advisory group with no legal status, although it was considered best practice. A group had been set up as required for large events in the Borough such as the Snow Patrol and Lets Rock concerts, but these had been more like task and finish working groups and not fully established. If established, a SAG would not make any decisions on behalf of Ards and North Down Borough Council, or the other parties involved in the group, and as such it would have no authority to either approve or ban events. The decision-making still sat within the individual organisations, and it is up to each organisation to determine and exercise their own statutory decisions.

Although any event could be reviewed by a SAG, it is recognised that events which are either large in numbers attending and/or carry a degree of risk and/or are

unusual in nature and/or are being undertaken by a new event promoter or in a new venue, should be reviewed.

The SAG provided a quality assurance process in terms of the safety arrangements by bringing together key partners and act in an advisory role to event organisers. Decisions on the use of statutory and enforcement powers were not a matter for the SAG but for individual authorities according to their statutory responsibilities and individual enforcement policies.

Major event SAG's had previously been in operation, led by the Council or PSNI on an ad-hoc basis in the format of a working group, using the attached Terms of reference. The terms of reference document formalises the SAG process.

A number of Senior Council officials would have had membership on the SAG and thus required a significant amount of commitment and resource.

A terms of reference (ToR) document (Appendix attached) had been signed off by the Corporate Leadership Team for approval by Council. The ToR included further details on the purpose, objectives, membership, roles and governance of the SAG as well as a process flow chart.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the attached Safety Advisory Group Terms of Reference.

Alderman Irvine proposed, seconded by Councillor McRandal, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Irvine was pleased to see the report, as was Councillor McRandal. Councillor Thompson hoped that the Terms of Reference would help with future needs.

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

21. OBESITY EXPRESSION OF INTEREST AND WHOLE SYSTEMS APPROACH EARLY ADAPTER SITE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (FILE EHPD5) (APPENDICES XII TO XIII)

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

Following the review of The Big Plan for Ards and North Down, our main priorities had been identified and published in the document: The Big Plan Part II Our Big Priorities April 2022.pdf (ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

Priority 4 of the Big Plan: Health Equity stated: *The social determinants of health, such as employment, local environment and access to health services, influence a person's health outcomes. Individuals are significantly disadvantaged from health inequity, and face worse health outcomes, than those who are not. It is not equity to simply provide every individual with the same resources; that would be equality. To achieve health equity and change current outcomes, resources must be allocated based on an individual need.*

Obesity in Northern Ireland

A significant and worrying example of health inequality was found in considering Northern Ireland data on Obesity from the Department of Health 2019 survey. 1 in 4 children (aged 2 – 15) had been living with overweight or obesity and almost 2 in 3 adults (65%) were either living with overweight (38%) or obesity (27%). Overweight and obesity rates were not evenly spread throughout the population with people living in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland more likely to be overweight and obese.

Whole System Approach to Obesity

A key workstream was identified as a priority in Ards and North Down community plan (workstream 4.1) to adopt a Whole System Approach (WSA) to Obesity, with the community planning partners Public Health Agency (PHA) taking the lead.

"While individually partners focus on key aspects of health and wellbeing, collectively we can work together to consider a 'whole system approach'. Evidence suggests that only looking at diet and exercise does not make a difference and that we need to look at the wider determinants of health, such as environment, infrastructure and education to help people make long term changes. This is a workstream with a regional, Northern Ireland wide focus as many of the actions that will be required go wider than just local influence."

PHA Funding for Early Adopters

In view of importance of tackling obesity, there had been a high interest across Northern Ireland in including this as an action/priority within community plans. PHA had presented to SOLACE (See Appendix 1 – Solace Briefing paper) to encourage the use of this approach. The PHA were unable to resource the delivery of WSA across all 11 councils simultaneously so had proposed rolling this new approach out to 2 or 3 early adopters, as contained within the attached briefing paper (See Appendix 2 - WSA Council Briefing Paper). Other councils were to follow on at a later date, with the benefit of the learning from these early schemes.

The PHA requested Councils who were interested in being considered as early adopters to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) by 16 September 2022. Ards and North Down had submitted an EOI to be considered as an early adopter on the understanding that formal approval would be sought from both the Council and the Strategic Community Planning Partnership, as this approach required buy in from all community planning partners.

The criteria for choosing early adopters by the PHA had not been made available and whilst Ards and North Down did not have the highest levels of overweight or obese children and adults across NI, the PHA resource, focus and momentum offered made it a very attractive option to become an early adopter and thus tackle an existing Big Priority.

RECOMMENDED that Council agree to become an Early Adopter of the WSA to Obesity if selected by the PHA and to contribute fully to its implementation through the Community Planning process.

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

22. CONSUMER PROTECTION MARKET SURVEILLANCE PROJECT ON SECOND-HAND GOODS (FILE CW99) (APPENDIX IX)

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

The Bank of England had warned that the UK was expected to face its longest recession since the global financial crisis, saying GDP growth was "slowing", and the latest gas price rises had led "to another significant deterioration in the outlook for activity" in the UK and Europe. (The Week, 2022)

The UK was expected to experience a recession in the final months of the year, as inflation rose above 13%. Households' post-tax income will "fall sharply in 2022 and 2023, while consumption growth turns negative". (The Week, 2022)

Second-hand goods sales

Consumer purchases of second-hand goods in Great Britain from 2011 to 2021 had seen ups and downs. In 2020, the percentage change in the sales volume of second-hand goods reached its lowest ever and decreased by 16.7 percent. In 2021, however, the percentage change in the sales volume of second-hand goods from the year prior recorded its highest ever at an increase of 24.1 percent. (Statista, 2022)

This increase in frequency for consumers choosing second hand goods retailers as their point of purchase, along with a noticeable uprise in charity shop presence on our High Streets offered justification for our officers carrying out a market surveillance project on second-hand goods retailers by identifying such retailers within the Borough and offering advice to allow them to assess the safety of second-hand goods they are selling.

Ards and North Down Market Surveillance Project

The role of the Environmental Health's Consumer Protection team was to ensure consumers are protected against the potential risks from unsafe goods that are manufactured, supplied, or sold within the Ards and North Down Borough Council area.

As part of this project Environmental Health Officers from the Consumer Protection team visited a total of 43 second hand goods retailers across the Borough between April 2022 and August 2022.

Officers distributed advice on general product safety and product specific safety requirements to be met by the stores. (*The General Product Safety Regulations 2005* require that all products placed on the market, regardless of new or used status, are required to be safe). The advice pack outlined to the management of the stores guidance on how to assess if products are safe by doing appropriate checks and recording their findings by way of record keeping. The advice packs also contained product specific advice on certain popular high-risk products found in charity shops such as:

1. General Product Safety
2. Electrical Goods
3. Furniture
4. Gas Appliances
5. Oil Heaters
6. Nursery Goods
7. Toys
8. Children's Clothing
9. Bunk Beds
10. Bicycles

Plug checker devices were also offered during the visits to allow premises to check the size and suitability of appliance plugs along with plug pin width and lengths.

Outcomes from the surveillance

Of the 43 Premises visited 16 (37%) were not registered with the Consumer Protection team on the councils Tascomi software system. Currently, businesses are not legally required to register with the Environmental Health Service making initiatives of this

nature even more valuable as such premises can now be provided with further written advice regarding product safety when appropriate.

All the premises visited were found to be welcoming of the advice and grateful for the advice pack, and some have also been in touch since regarding bespoke articles and requests for further advice regarding the sales of second-hand items.

During the visits, whilst officers did not have capacity to assess all items offered for sale, three products (2 electrical items and 1 toy) were voluntarily removed from sale. The toy was disposed of at the time of the visit and the electrical items were voluntarily suspended until documented compliance checks were carried out.

Next Steps

This market surveillance project not only protected the business in relation to compliance but also the consumers of the Borough by ensuring second-hand products being sold within the Borough are compliant with product safety legislation and safe for use. Officers were to continue their market surveillance role, future planned surveillance work included Halloween and Christmas goods.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the Consumer Protection Market Surveillance Project Report on second hand goods.

Councillor T Smith suggested an alternative proposal, seconded by Alderman Irvine; *"Subject to legal advice, going forward, the Council continues its market surveillance in accordance to the General Product Safety Regulations 2005 as they are applied in Great Britain."*

Councillor T Smith discussed with Members that two versions of legislation existed for Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Here, they were implemented with the European Union Directive that was no longer required in the UK thence the provisions apply in Northern Ireland. He was opposed to the Northern Ireland Protocol and suggested that the only laws to exist be those by Westminster or Stormont. When an EU regulation was adhered to, Councillor T Smith felt that it was agreeing to all-Ireland regulations. He believed the Protocol was the genesis of an all-Ireland and did not wish to see it implemented. Alderman Irvine agreed with Councillor T Smith.

Alderman Wilson believed that if Council attempted to make changes to protecting resident rights, he would need to know the repercussions and hear what experts would say before being able to make an informed decision. Councillor Boyle agreed with Alderman Wilson but pointed out that the Protocol was not part of the agenda this evening.

Councillor Smart was happy to support the proposals to garner a better understanding of laws applicable and to do what was possible to detract from the

Protocol. He hoped the implications of adhering to different laws than those current would be included in the proposed amendment.

Councillor MacArthur explained that Northern Ireland had been referred to as importing to GB and vice versa. As a Unionist, she also believed that the Protocol was designed to create an all-Irish republic and so would support the proposed amendment.

Councillor Adair agreed with both the proposal and those comments made by Councillor MacArthur. He believed the protocol was doing great damage to NI, adding to cost of living and dividing society. Furthermore, he suggested that politicians in Northern Ireland had no way implement or change laws as they were placed solely by the European Union.

Councillor Douglas called for a recorded vote to which Councillor T Smith stated he was not surprised that Alliance were not in support as they had called for the rigorous implementation of the protocol.

<u>FOR ()</u>	<u>AGAINST ()</u>	<u>ABSTAIN ()</u>	<u>ABSENT ()</u>
Aldermen	Aldermen	Aldermen	Aldermen
Irvine	Wilson		Carson
Councillors	Councillors	Councillors	Councillors
Adair	Boyle		Chambers
Edmund	Douglas		S Irvine
MacArthur	McRandal		Moore
Smart	Woods		
T Smith			
Thompson			

With seven voting FOR, five AGAINST, zero ABSTAINED and four ABSENT, the alternate proposal was carried.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor T Smith, seconded by Alderman Irvine and in a vote of seven voting FOR, five AGAINST, zero ABSTAINED and four ABSENT, that the alternative proposal be CARRIED in that subject to legal advice, going forward, the Council continues its market surveillance in accordance to the General Product Safety Regulations 2005 as they are applied in Great Britain.

23. REGULATION OF COSMETIC TREATMENTS (FILE EHPD6) (APPENDIX IXX)

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

The purpose of this report as for Council to consider a request to write to the Minister for Health to seek better regulation of cosmetic treatments in Northern Ireland.

Background

In October 2021 the Botulinum Toxin and Cosmetic Fillers (Children) Act 2021 came into force in England making it illegal to administer Botox or a filler by way of injection for a cosmetic purpose to a person under 18 years of age. No such law existed in Northern Ireland at the time of writing.

The UK Government had recently confirmed its intention to introduce a licensing regime for non-surgical cosmetic procedures to better regulate the cosmetic industry in England through an amendment to the Health and Care Bill.

The licensing scheme in England would introduce consistent standards that individuals carrying out non-surgical cosmetic procedures such as lip fillers, Botox etc must meet, as well as hygiene and safety standards for premises. It was to focus on those cosmetic procedures which, if improperly performed, had the potential to cause harm.

In recent years, there had been a significant rise in the number and type of non-surgical aesthetic procedures available, with many practitioners performing treatments without being able to evidence appropriate training and the required standards of oversight and supervision.

The existing legislation available to Environmental Health Officers to regulate this sector in Northern Ireland was considered to be no longer fit for purpose and no licensing scheme (similar to that being introduced in England) existed in Northern Ireland.

The Local Authority Health and Safety Liaison Group (HSLG) as a subgroup of Environmental Health Northern Ireland (EHNI). HSLG as seeking the support of all Councils by requesting that consideration be given to writing to the Minister for Health to ask for better regulation of cosmetic treatments in Northern Ireland, along with the introduction of a licensing scheme for non-surgical cosmetic procedures.

RECOMMENDED that Council considers the request and that a letter is sent to the Minister for Health to request better regulation of cosmetic treatments in Northern Ireland, along with the introduction of a licensing scheme for non-surgical cosmetic procedures.

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

24. **AIR QUALITY (FILE CW7)** **(APPENDICES XX TO XXI)**

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

Council Air Quality Monitoring

The Council had monitored air quality within the Borough and reported the findings to the Department for Environment, Agriculture and Rural Affairs (DAERA) on an annual basis. A real-time monitoring station was operated by the Council on the A2 in Holywood due to high traffic flows. The effects of COVID 19 on air quality were evident in that Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) resulting from vehicle emissions monitored at the automatic station and several hot spots within the Borough had fallen by a significant amount. This was due to reduced traffic flows during lockdown and with ongoing home working policies.

In addition to measuring NO₂ levels, we also analysed particulate levels (PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀) at the A2 station in Holywood. A new PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} analyser was installed in November 2020. Real time results were available on the Northern Ireland Air Quality website <https://www.airqualityni.co.uk/>. The Council's Air Quality Progress Report for 2022 is attached in Appendix 1 to this report and contains data for particulate levels recorded at the Holywood site for the 2021/22 period.

DAERA Clean Air Strategy

DAERA launched a Discussion Document in 2020 in advance of developing the first Clean Air Strategy for Northern Ireland. This included a twelve-week public consultation starting on 23rd November 2020. The synopsis of responses received was published in June 2022 and is attached in Appendix 2 to this report. The consultation received 71 substantive submissions. Responses were mixed but there was broad support for reducing emission within urban areas. In support of this, proposals to ban the import of high sulphur coal and the sale of unseasoned wood received positive comments overall.

Schools Initiative – Engine Off – Prevent the Cough

Although pollutant levels had remained below National Air Quality Objectives in the Borough, an emphasis was to remain on reducing emissions. As such, the Council launched a schools' initiative in conjunction with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council called 'Engine Off – Prevent the Cough', with the aim of reducing the number of idling vehicles outside primary school sites in the Borough. The campaign was impacted by Covid in that schools were required to operate differently in 2020, and uptake was lower in 2021 as teachers adapted to pupils returning to classrooms. All primary schools will be contacted this year to encourage participation and discussions have commenced with Translink regarding extending the initiative to buses. A further update to the Committee will be made in early 2023.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the report.

Councillor Woods proposed, seconded by Councillor MacArthur, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Woods noted that nitrogen oxide levels were inconclusive during Covid as a reduction of pollution existed during lockdowns. She wanted to know if air quality could be improved around schools and areas where vulnerable people accessed locations and cited information pertaining to Shore Road of Holywood where double statistics existed in regard to unclean air. She asked how Council could improve air quality. The Head of Environmental Health, Protection & Development explained that increasing monitoring was not part of the proposal at the moment. They hoped that some improvements could be made and that air quality around schools and health centres and that a school initiative existed to attempt reducing pollution caused by idling cars. A number of schools were signed up to this. With regard to the A2 at Holywood, the Council did not have significant powers to do anything although the strategy could promote working from home and the purchasing of electric cars. It was hoped that a reduction could occur but as a Council, monitoring was their responsibility, the information of which would be put forth to other responsible departments. Councillor Woods asked if those formulating the Local Development Plan were amidst discussions regarding these issues. The Head of Environmental Health, Protection & Development stated that involvement did exist and that the quality progress report could be shared to show where the hotspots were.

Councillor MacArthur welcomed the report especially with increases of Asthma cases in Northern Ireland and cited some examples of children who had died. Buses and cars idling near schools were a concerning issue. She noted that all primary schools were to be contacted in the report and asked if a bank of resources would be sent to schools to assist. The Head of Environmental Health, Protection & Development said that four lesson plans and a number of resources were already used as ready-made packs. They had written to schools to meet and engage with lesson plans designed to help children understand pollution, what action could be taken, how to communicate it and the evaluation of the impact on schools.

Councillor Edmund explained that he had lost a 16 year old cousin to asthma and had brothers who suffered from it. As such, anything that improved air quality would be very much welcomed.

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

**25. COMMUNITY AND CULTURE PERFORMANCE REPORTING Q1
(FILE CW22)**

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

Context

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 had approved the Performance Management Policy and Handbook in October 2015. The Performance Management Handbook outlined the approach to Performance Planning and Management process as:

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

The Council's 18 Service Plans outline 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 to be reported to relevant Committees on a quarterly basis as undernoted:

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

The report for Quarter 1 2022-23 is attached.

Key points to note

Whilst the Queens Jubilee Grants scheme ad been delivered, some outstanding paperwork was still to be closed out.

Key achievements

There had been some key achievement including the Community Safety multi agency meetings that were held, including the standing forums for Ards Blair Mayne, Aurora and multi-agency meetings for Helen's Bay beach. These meetings had been extremely beneficial for the collective engagement of key stakeholders including the PSNI, Community Safety, Youth Services and Street Pastors, working together to reduce ASB.

Community Safety has also exceeded its targets for school and community engagements in Q1.

Emerging issues

The number of people volunteering within the services remained significantly lower than target.

Action to be taken

The spend against budget figure was unavailable at the time of preparing the report.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

Councillor Douglas proposed, seconded by Councillor Woods, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Douglas, in relation to the emerging issue regarding volunteers remaining low, asked if the Council had a policy on volunteering and who would lead such an initiative. The Head of Community & Culture explained that each service unit was responsible. In 2016/17 with Volunteer now, a process was set up for the manager to engage with a volunteer in the organisation. Despite this, Councillor Douglas spoke of an experience involving a group interested in volunteering who said they had approached Council and asked about a policy but heard nothing back.

The Head of Community & Culture advised that the policy was not on the website as it was a support policy for managers but that discussions were ongoing within the Council to support volunteers with the hope to promote such upon the website soon. In the meantime, Councillor Douglas queried who she could direct a volunteer to which the Head of Community & Culture responded that volunteers worked in many different areas, and it would depend on their interests. It was hoped a section for volunteers on the website could be built to register an interest but that until that time, volunteers could be directed to her. Councillor Douglas wanted public facing information to exist stating that there was no point in saying that a low number of volunteers existed when the Council had no information for the public regarding support. The Head of Community & Culture explained that this related to Q1 and the numbers were considerably low due to Covid.

Councillor Woods noted the report was dated August 2022 and no spend against budget number existed, though The Head of Community & Culture did not have these details but would supply them post-meeting.

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

26. GOOD RELATIONS GRANT FUNDING (FILE GRE417)

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

Members would have been aware that the Good Relations Grant funding was distributed via a grants process in May 2022. Council agreed to award funding at risk as a final Letter of Offer had not been received.

The total grant budget ring fenced was £10,000. A maximum of £1,000, per grant was available and a total of 7 applications were received by the closing date. A total of £7,000 was recommended for approval with the £3,000 surplus being held until a Letter of Offer was received.

The initial Good Relations (GR) Action Plan submitted to The Executive Office included a request for funding for £191,475. Following confirmation that the management and programme costs would have to be reduced due to budget constraints a revised Action Plan was submitted and a final Letter of Offer received totalling £170,053.50.

The £3,000 not allocated was included as part of the reduction requested by the The Executive Office due to budget constraints, along with a part-time administrator post which was vacant and a slight reduction to programme costs, so that the total cost of the final approved GR Action Plan was £170,053.50.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

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

27. PEACE IV MINUTES 3 FEBRUARY 2022

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above minutes

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Smart, seconded by Alderman Wilson, that the recommendation to note be adopted.

28. PEACEPLUS (FILE PEACV-1) (APPENDICES XXII TO XXIII)

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

As Members would have been aware, Council was supported by its assigned consortium support consultant, Blu Zebra to establish a PEACEPLUS Partnership and undertook a co-design approach to produce an Action Plan, which would form the basis of the Councils submission to the Special EU Programmes Body.

The attached presentation was presented by Blu Zebra at the first PEACEPLUS meeting held on 28 July 2022 and provides an update on the process and the stages of design of the PEACEPLUS Plan.

Also attached is letter dated 26 July 2022 from the Chief Executive of SEUPB confirming the PEACEPLUS Programme had been approved by the European Commission and an indicative allocation of funding for the Ards and North Down area will be circa €5,681,833.

Blu Zebra had been also awarded the contact for consultancy support to develop the Ards and North Down Borough Council PEACEPLUS Plan following a quotation process and it is anticipated community consultation will begin in September 2022. RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Irvine, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the recommendation to note be adopted.

**29. PROGRAMME OF EVENTS TO MARK THE BI-CENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH 2022 (HER/08-2/08 22)
(APPENDIX XXIV)**

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

The following Notice of Motion had been agreed by Council:

That this Council notes that 12 August 2022 will mark the bicentenary of the premature death of Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh British Foreign Secretary during the Napoleonic Wars, architect of the Treaty of Vienna which brought peace to Europe, Chief Secretary of Ireland during the time of the Act of Union and ultimately becoming the 2nd Marquess of Londonderry the year before his untimely death.

That this Council agrees to develop a series of events, on its own, in partnership or in conjunction with others, mark and develop a wider public appreciation of the huge role played by Robert Stewart in Irish, British and European history. The Council will also give consideration as to how this influential individual can be more permanently commemorated in the Borough.

In doing so, officers are tasked with consulting with the National Trust, who have responsibility for Mount Stewart, the Londonderry family and other key stakeholders who may have information, material and/or artefacts to assist in this endeavour or who may wish to take part in an event or events.'

A Working Group has been established comprising the following Officers and Members:

- Councillor Colin Kennedy
- Councillor Lorna McAlpine
- Councillor Stephen McIlveen
- Councillor Ray McKimm
- Councillor Richard Smart
- Arts and Heritage Manager, Emily Crawford
- Museum Manager, Heather McGuicken

A fifth meeting of the Working Group took place on Thursday 23 June on Teams to finalise the programme of activity.

Programme of Activity

The draft programme had been streamlined and the final programme of events was presented at Appendix 1.

It was previously agreed that the focus of the bicentenary commemorations should be on specific areas of significance in Castlereagh's life and career, with the National Trust proposing the areas of **Family Man, Politician, Statesman and Peer**. The overall strapline for the programme of events will be **Castlereagh: Life & Legacy**.

Education

Officers met with the education team and Property Curator at Mount Stewart again on Tuesday 21 June 2023 to agree plans for the education offering as part of the programme of activity.

The National Trust were to provide a dedicated 'Castlereagh Day' on Friday each week between January-March 2023 for school children in the Borough to visit. The National Trust would develop a bespoke animated tour for Key Stage 2 children but specifically aimed at the post AQE Year 7 children. An additional programme was to be targeted at GCSE and A-Level Politics students and would provide a more in-depth study of Castlereagh. The National Trust will provide a comprehensive and engaging tour with takeaway materials for the school visits. Pre and post visit packs/online content for children would also be provided. Subsidies for transport to and from Mount Stewart will be available as this was identified as the main barrier to attendance.

Blue Plaque

As part of the series of events to mark the bicentenary of the death of Viscount Castlereagh, the Ulster History Circle had approved the siting of a Blue Plaque in Newtownards to acknowledge the time Castlereagh spent in the town as a child. Ards and North Down Borough Council approved the siting of the Blue Plaque on the Town Hall Arts Centre at their meeting in July 2022.

It was proposed that the Blue Plaque would be unveiled in a ceremony on 23 November 2022 by Lady Rose and Peter Lauritzen (subject to their availability), with

a reception to follow in the Londonderry Room. The siting of the Plaque was subject to Listed Building Planning approval and an application was being processed.

Additional Walking Tours

At the Working Group Meeting on 23 June 2022, Councillor McKimm had proposed a series of animated Walking Tours in Newtownards based on Castlereagh's Life and Legacy. With limited staff resources, Councillor McKimm had worked in partnership with walking group 'Dander Down' to develop the tours that would take place on Sunday 28 August and Sunday 11 September at 2pm at a cost of £10.

Funding

A budget of **£40,000** for the programme was successfully secured through the Estimates Process and the National Trust have sponsored the exhibition and tours and both parties are contributing to the school's education programme.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report and approves the final proposed programme of activity.

Councillor Smart proposed, seconded by Councillor Douglas, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Smart spoke of the Castlereagh events that had been successful and advised of the two issues that Alderman McIlveen had discovered; display beds had no date for placement and banners were meant to be raised in Bangor and Newtownards. It was decided not to put one in Conway Square but he believed it was a mistake as events were running in some locations that advertising could assist. Councillor Edmund believed he had seen a bed being placed at the war memorial for the Viscount and the the Head of Community & Culture would confirm

Councillor Douglas thanked officers for their efforts as well as all those involved and hoped to encourage other Members to attend the events.

Councillor Adair also congratulated Officers and in addition, Alderman McIlveen for bringing the Notice of Motion forward.

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

30. ARTS AND HERITAGE ANNUAL SUMMARY (ART/MUS 03/21) (APPENDIX XXV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that The Arts and Heritage Service had prepared an Annual Summary for 2021/22 (Appendix 1) that offered an overview of all the activity that took place and highlighted key successes throughout the year.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

Councillor Douglas proposed, seconded by Councillor MacArthur, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Douglas thanked officers involved for the wide range of events organised whilst Councillor MacArthur spoke of the in-depth, comprehensive nature of the report and the many events that had occurred, thanking all those involved.

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

31. GRAFFITI PROJECT AT COMBER TOILETS (FILE PCSP208)

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

Background

The toilet block located in the car park adjacent to Comber Leisure Centre had been subject to ongoing anti-social behaviour involving graffiti being sprayed on the outside walls.

A Constable from, PSNI Neighbourhood Team had contacted the Community Safety Team to confirm that he had secured funding from the Tackling Paramilitarism Team to deliver a project to help tackle anti-social behaviour and had asked for permission to undertake a project for a piece of graffiti art to be placed on one of the walls.

The project aimed to build on the very positive response from local youths to the Peace IV Skate Park Project delivered by Thunder Park. Activities at the Skate Park summer scheme included two sessions creating a piece of graffiti art at the Comber skatepark in partnership with CODO Art. The art piece gave youths a chance to put their art on the walls, moving away from tag's, gang signs and needless unsightly graffiti.

The project was to be aimed at youths 11-15 years of age from local schools, groups and youths already known to PSNI with a view to tackling the issue through engagement with the most likely perpetrators.

Comber toilets had been an area of complaint to Council for graffiti and it is hoped that if local youths created a joint art piece for the wall with PSNI and the Community Safety Team, they would gain a sense of ownership and belonging leading to a reduction in needless unsightly graffiti on the toilet block and the rest of Comber town.

The Head of Assets and Property and Head of Waste and Cleansing had been consulted and raised no issues. Should Council approve the project, the Head of Administration was to be involved in dealing with any issues such as indemnity.

RECOMMENDED that Council grant permission for a graffiti art to be placed on the external gable wall of the toilet block at Comber.

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

Councillor Boyle appreciated that this had allowed better working alongside young people who, if they worked on a project like this, would be more likely to protect it.

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

32. NOTICE OF MOTION

32.1 Submitted by Councillor Cummings and Councillor Johnson

(Councillor Cummings was brought into the meeting at 22:36)

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.

Councillor Cummings asked Members to recall the Park Way matter at the rate setting process at which point, officers acknowledged that if funding became available the matter may be addressed. However, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport Minister announced a Grassroots Facilities Investment Fund which had been launched to coincide with the Women's Euros and was designed to build upon the positive impact and legacy of the tournament. The challenge was that the scheme was phased with a limited window of opportunity to submit applications and as such, a pre-prepared business case would be required.

Councillor Cummings congratulated Comber Rec Football Club for their initiatives to improve their own facilities through assistance via the Irish Football Association and praised the forward thinking that had been present in their strategic development plan and wished them every success. The Comber Rec grounds sat parallel to that of the Council pitches and Councillor Cummings believed that the Council should look toward honouring the commitment to improve their own grounds. He advised that the Council-owned pitches were used by Comber Young Men, Comber Star, Comber Rec Ladies and Comber Rec Juniors who would all benefit from long-

overdue improvements. Councillor Cummings had been frustrated by the years of delays on promised works to Park Way but believed an opportunity existed at the time of writing to engage Officers to act.

The Council pitches included a redundant all-weather pitch and ageing changing rooms which had long been recognised as needing upgraded but the challenge had been making it sustainable and in keeping with the development of the game, and the Council's own strategy to make the game as accessible as possible to all including junior leagues, disability and the woman's game.

Councillor Cummings had spoken with Officers about this Notice of Motion and representatives of the governing bodies of football at the Irish Football Association regarding criteria, and Officers were already in possession of proposals from the consortium of local football clubs.

Councillor Cummings reiterated the need for a pre-prepared business plan being crucial if they were to avail of a funding opportunity that would address the needs of junior clubs and facilitate the growth of women's football.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Cummings, seconded by Councillor Adair, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

32.2 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

(Alderman McIlveen and Alderman Armstrong-Cotter were brought into the meeting)

Alderman McIlveen professed his passion over local history. Those areas that already had site-specific signage did not contain much information and he had heard from a local who had wanted for more information to be displayed for Blair Mayne.

With advancements in technology, Alderman McIlveen believed this could be rectified by leaning into said technology by way of QR codes which would allow for greater accessibility whilst also aligning with Officers' plans for digital solutions.

Alderman Armstrong Cotter had seen the use of QR codes whilst on vacation and believed replicating such could allow for a way of direct people around locations. With QR codes linking to an information page, it would allow for larger amounts of information to be available than what could be placed upon a sign.

Alderman Irvine spoke of the innovative nature of the Notice of Motion and how it could become popular throughout the Borough.

Councillor MacArthur believed it would enhance tourism. She had discussed chatty benches and the here-to-help app and that the basis of a model existed with which this could support such projects.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

32.3 Submitted by Councillor Kendall (supported by Councillor Woods on the day of the meeting), 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, the purpose of which will be to ascertain community need and desires in respect of the Queen's Leisure Complex asset. A report, to include a costed plan, should be presented to Council before the end of 2022.

Councillor McRandal presented a revised proposal; that within the last line, the date of 2022 be replaced with September 2023. He reminded Members the Notice of Motion's existence was due to the desire of the community. Over the course of his tenure at the council, Councillor McRandal spoke of numerous occasions where he had been involved in discussions with community activists and others regarding the demise of Queens Leisure Complex as a community asset in Holywood and how it might be saved. Given that Leisure asset management was due to be managed by the Council again, it was believed that it may present an opportunity to take positive action which led to the cross-party Notice of Motion before Members at the meeting.

Councillor McRandal provided a brief history of the Queens Hall, citing how it had been designed to provide a central community facility including a theatrical space and a youth and community wing with a later-added leisure centre annex. Over the last decade, the use of the complex by non-sporting entities had dwindled, such as Irish dancing classes that Councillor McRandal's children had attended, the organiser of which has since moved to an alternative location. The aforementioned theatrical space has deteriorated to such an extent that it is no longer in use due to health & safety concerns.

Taking the above into consideration, those involved in the Notice of Motion were asking for an engagement exercise with the local community including community and youth groups, sports clubs, churches and schools to ascertain both needs and desires in regard to the Queens Leisure complex. It would be hoped that Officers could then consider these expressions and how best to deliver upon them.

Consideration should be given to potential appropriate models of community management or part-management of the facility with an aim for Council to provide a costed plan for delivery to be returned for consideration by September 2023.

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

32.4 Submitted by Alderman McIlveen and Councillor Cathcart

This Council notes with concern that a number of planted trees in urban settings along roads which have died or have been removed but not replaced; Notes the importance of environmental and social benefits of such trees in the built environment; Notes that DfI Roads formerly had a partnership arrangement with Belfast parks for the replacement of trees but that this partnership ended some time ago; That Council officers are tasked with opening discussions with DfI Roads and DAERA with a view to exploring the possibility of a partnership which will involve the supply and replacement of lost trees in the Borough and then providing a report to Council for further consideration.

(Alderman McIlveen returned to the meeting to discuss the Notice of Motion).

Alderman McIlveen outlined how the Council had made the environment a key focus of their activities. Alderman McIlveen had championed environment friendly options for the borough and this Notice of Motion was strongly in support of the Council's biodiversity plans. He cited the benefits of natural resources and nature itself whilst expressing concern over the continual loss of trees within DfI properties and how no policy existed for the DfI to replace trees. An agreement had existed with Belfast Park some time ago and as such, it was not implausible to look toward a similar agreement with ANDBC. DAERA had been included in the Notice of Motion as they may be a potential source of trees or may assist in management.

Councillor Woods asked if the tree strategy of the Council had already sought to carry out the actions of this Notice of Motion to which Alderman McIlveen advised the tree strategy Councillor Woods spoke of was solely in regard to Council land.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Adair, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

32.5 Submitted by Councillor Adair and Councillor Thompson

That Council task officers to carry out a review of Play Provision in Loughries with a view to its inclusion in the Councils Play Strategy going forward.

Councillor Adair explained that this Notice of Motion had been brought forth on behalf of constituents in the Loughries area after he had received communications in regard to the lack of play facilities. In the 2011 census, the local population was

recorded as 188 whilst in the 2021 census, this number had increased to over 300, something that Councillor Adair believed could be due to a number of turn-key houses that had been constructed in the area within which a number of young families dwelt.

Though Loughries was located within close proximity to both Newtownards and Carrowdore, no safe link existed between the towns and an old agreement between the Council and a local farmer for the lease of a field for traditional games had been used to fulfil this requirement in the past. Councillor Adair queried how Loughries had been missed in the last play strategy given that the population growth and the fact that the school had recently received an integrated status. Though the speed limit had been reduced around the school, the vast majority of the Loughries area was not within the 20-30mph zones. The Council had a similar facility in the Ballystockert area near Comber.

Councillor Thompson agreed with his colleague and reiterated that the Loughries population had grown and the linked need to a safe space for play.

Alderman Irvine asked if a consultation had taken place with the Loughries community. The Director of Community & Wellbeing advised that a number of consultation events had taken place for all areas and the whole borough had been reviewed. At that time, only 2 or 3 years ago, Loughries was not deemed to have been a location for a new playpark if the demographics did not stack up.

Councillor Boyle had been to Loughries in recent times to assist in the supply of hand sanitiser through a local distillery and noted that school places had gone from 45 to circa 90 with the integrated status. He believed a review of play provision in the area was required and asked if it was possible to add it to the current council play strategy, and if such was possible, if it could be prioritized based upon an independent evaluator.

The Director of Community & Wellbeing explained that Loughries had been reviewed in the existing play strategy but if Council were asking officers to look at it particularly again, the two-step process would include the assessment of need of the hamlet, and if things had changed since the last assessment would then result in a recommendation being included in the prioritisation list of provision.

Alderman Wilson asked if it was possible for the play strategy to be live, in that it would be updated as required dependent on shifts in demographics across the borough. The Director of Community & Wellbeing advised that the plan had been adopted as a ten-year plan for investment in terms of play and had not been created with the view of amendments to the overall direction of travel. However, he suggested that if circumstances had changed in particular areas, it could be possible to do so and change prioritisation for delivery dependent on how significant any changes might be. But this was not the intention of that planned medium to long term investment and service delivery strategy.

Councillor Adair confirmed that his Notice of Motion was to seek independent evaluation of the need to introduce a safe play spot to Loughries, to be carried out by Officers as opposed to Councillors having sway on the matter.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor Thompson, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

33. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

Update on the matter concerning the seizing of food from World foods, Church Street, Bangor

Alderman Irvine had raised the issue of the above matter, citing that the owner had been concerned with what had happened. He had been informed that Council officials had attended the shop and wanted to remove Korean noodles, which, if the owner did not comply with, said officials would return with a search warrant. Alderman Irvine hoped an update could be provided as to what had been happening and if the items had been returned, believing it may have been linked to the protocol given the reports that had been made on both local and national news.

The Head of Environmental Health, Protection & Environment explained that a number of food products had been surrendered on the 23 September as they were imported without essential documentation including a certificate that indicated a high-risk product was safe. Those documents were required for being sold through the UK, not just Northern Ireland and as such they should have been seized at the docks, but the retailer had not declared the product, which at the time of writing remains in the possession of the Council who had have written to request the aforementioned documentation before items are returned. In this case, the importer was the seller. In response to Alderman Irvine's suggestion that they would have been checked when entering the UK, The Head of Environmental Health, Protection & Environment agreed that they would have should have been subjected to the same checks with three key documents being required. However, it was not known if these had been missed or the documentation removed. The legislation that ports operate upon dictated that items moving from the UK to NI were subject to further checks, a document from which was required to sell due to a high-risk ingredient that could contain faecal matter.

Alderman Irvine advised that the owner was a responsible trader to which The Head of Environmental Health Protection & Environment stated that the individual had been importing similar items for quite some time.

Councillor T Smith thanked Alderman Irvine for raising the subject and suggested a report would have been useful given the importance of the subject. He asked if it had not been for the NI Protocol whether there would have been any issue. The Head of Environmental Health, Protection & Environment advised that there would have been

checks at the Northern Ireland ports but that such checks and documents would also have been required for the items' entry into other parts of the UK as the product came from overseas. Councillor T Smith summarised that the additional checks were therefore only due to the protocol and, as it was still being operated under a grace period, the totality of difficulties were yet to be felt by the protocol.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Adair, seconded by Councillor Douglas, that the public/press be excluded from the meeting at 23:51.

34. NORTHERN COMMUNITY LEISURE TRUST QUARTER 4 2021/22 AND QUARTER 1 2022/23 (FILE CW51) (APPENDICES XXVI TO XXVII)

*****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)

35. LEISURE INSOURCING UPDATE (FILE CW148)

*****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)

36. ABMWLC CAFÉ INSOURCING UPDATE (FILE CW148)

*****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)

37. PORAVOGIE 3G PITCH AND PAVILION PROJECT COST AND PROGRAMME UPDATE (FILE PCU32/CW74) (APPENDICES XXVIII TO IXXX)

*****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 Thompson, seconded by Councillor MacArthur, that the public/press be re-admitted to the meeting.

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated on Thursday 13th October at 00:30

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A special meeting of the Corporate Services Committee was held remotely via Zoom on Thursday 13 October 2022 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor P Smith

Aldermen: Girvan (7.02 pm)
Mcllveen

Councillors: Blaney Irwin
Dunlop (7.12 pm) McKimm (7.02 pm)
Greer T Smith
Gilmour

Officers: Director of Organisational Development and Administration (W Swanston), Director of Finance and Performance (S Christie), Director of Regeneration and Development (S McCullough), Director of Environment (D Lindsay), Director of Community and Wellbeing (G Bannister), Head of Finance (S Grieve) and Democratic Services Officer (P Foster)

1. APOLOGIES

The Chairman sought apologies at this stage.

An apology had been received from Aldermen Gibson and Irvine and Councillors Chambers and Douglas.

NOTED.

(Alderman Girvan and Councillor McKimm joined the meeting at this stage – 7.02pm)

2. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman thanked Members for their attendance adding that it would be his intention at this meeting for the Director of Finance & Performance to guide Members through the report which had been tabled and seek comments from them.

NOTED.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair sought Declarations of Interest at this stage and none were notified.

NOTED.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

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)

4. ESTIMATES 2023/24 FIRST UPDATE REPORT (FILE FIN149)

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 TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor McKimm, seconded by Councillor Blaney, that the public/press be re-admitted to the meeting.

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 8.32pm.

From: DAERA Forestry Planning <forestry.planning@daera-ni.gov.uk>
Sent: 22 September 2022 12:56

Dear Mr Stephen Reid

The Forest Service invites you, Ards and North Down Borough Council, to take part in a consultation regarding forestry planning for the Down Forestry Planning Area.

The consultation is intended to enable you, and other stakeholders, to become involved in the process of developing revised forest plans. You are invited to express your views, opinions, interests or concerns and share any information held by you or your organisation. Your comments will be considered in the preparation of draft forest plans.

You can respond to the consultation either through the online tool, Citizen Space, or by email. At the end of this email I have included hyperlinks to the consultation and other documents that you may find useful.

The consultations started on 22 September and ends on 30 November 2022. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you in anticipation.

- The consultation can be accessed via [Citizen Space](#).
- The consultation document can be viewed via [Scoping a new forestry plan for forests and woodland in Down](#)
- Easy Read version - [Finding out what the best plan is for Northern Ireland forests and woodland](#)
- More information regarding the forestry planning process can be viewed via the [Forestry Planning Story Map](#).

Yours faithfully
Breandan Mulholland

| Forestry Planning, Strategies and Silviculture | Forest Service | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs | Inishkeen House, Enniskillen BT74 4EJ | forestry.planning@daera-ni.gov.uk |



Sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone.

RQIA Draft Strategic Plan

Consultation on RQIA's Draft Strategic Plan 2022-27

Online Consultation Events: 18,24,27 October - To book a place, visit:
bookwhen.com/rqia

You may be aware that the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) is seeking views on its Draft Strategic Plan 2022-27, through a 12 week public consultation, which opened on 25 August 2022 and closes on 17 November 2022.

This consultation sets out to engage with all stakeholders on the core purpose of RQIA, our strategic objectives as Regulator, and actions we plan to take to deliver on those objectives.

As part of our consultation, this month we are holding a series of five online consultation events to hear your views on our proposals.

These are taking place on:

18 October: 12.30-1.30pm
6.00-7.00pm

24 October: 1.00-2.00pm

27 October: 12.00noon-1.00pm
6.00-7.00pm

To book a place, visit: bookwhen.com/rqia

(See attached poster for further information and booking details.)

If you are unable to attend an event, you can access the [Consultation documents](#) on our website, and we would welcome you engagement in this consultation.

Kind regards,

Malachy Finnegan
Communications Manager
The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority
7th Floor, Victoria House
15-27 Gloucester Street,
Belfast
BT1 4LS

Tel: 028 9536 1921 (direct line)
Mobile: 07920 187 881
Email: malachy.finnegan@rqia.org.uk
Web: www.rqia.org.uk
Twitter: [@RQIANews](https://twitter.com/RQIANews)



The Regulation and
Quality Improvement
Authority

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**ONLINE
EVENTS**

CONSULTATION DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-27

**TUE
18**

Tues 18 October 2022
12.30pm to 1.30pm

**TUE
18**

Tues 18 October 2022
6.00pm to 7.00pm

**MON
24**

Mon 24 October 2022
1.00pm to 2.00pm

**THUR
27**

Thurs 27 October 2022
12.00 noon to 1.00pm

**THUR
27**

Thurs 27 October 2022
6.00pm to 7.00pm

To **book** a place, visit bookwhen.com/rqia

If you are unable to attend an event, you can
respond to our consultation [HERE](#)
or scan this QR code



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

028 9536 1111

info@rqia.org.uk

www.rqia.org.uk

From: DoJ MACR Views <macrviews@justice-ni.gov.uk>

Sent: 03 October 2022 10:03

Subject: Launch of consultation on Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility (MACR)

The Department of Justice is today launching a new consultation on increasing the **Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility (MACR)** in Northern Ireland, and is seeking your views.

The consultation document provides background and information on the issue, which we know is an important one given the potential impact it has on children's lives, and we are therefore very keen to hear your views. We would encourage everyone with an interest to read the consultation document and submit a response. We are particularly keen to hear the views of children and young people, as they are the group most impacted by the issue; a youth friendly version of the consultation document has been developed to assist with this.

All information and relevant documents, along with the ways to respond, can be found on the Department's website at:

[Consultation on increasing the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility in NI | Department of Justice \(justice-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

The deadline for response is **Friday 23rd December 2022**.

Please share this with other colleagues and interested parties – we hope to reach as wide an audience as possible.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Reducing Offending Policy Unit

Department of Justice

3 October 2022

Email: macrviews@justice-ni.gov.uk

ITEM 9.1**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	26 October 2022
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	18 October 2022
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Subject	NAC UK Conference & AGM 25-27 November 2022 Carlisle
Attachments	Conference booking form and agenda

The NAC is holding a conference on The Effect of the Financial Crisis on Community Facilities in Carlisle from 25–27 November 2022. Information on the event is included in the attached conference booking form. Delegate fees are £350 + VAT, accommodation is £85 + VAT per night, plus there would be costs associated with flights and travel.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council considers whether it wishes to nominate a Member(s) to attend the NAC Conference.

National Association of Councillors,
National Conference and AGM.
The Station Hotel, Carlisle
25th-27th November 2022

THE EFFECT OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS ON COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Dear Colleagues,

This Conference is open to all members of the NAC

The Station Hotel is situated next door to the railway station in Carlisle and is well placed to access facilities in the City Centre.

Due to the financial crisis many community facilities are under great financial pressures. These facilities are very important to the structure and wellbeing of our communities. This Conference will examine ways in which we as members of local authorities can help these important community groups.

We will have speakers from all parts of the United Kingdom and delegates will be given time to ask questions.

The AGM will take place at 9.45am on Saturday the 26th November please see agenda attached.

Registration will be at 5pm on Friday and the event will close at 1pm on Sunday the 27th

To book your places at this Conference and AGM please complete the form attached and return it to me by email or post.

Yours Faithfully

B. Nelson

Councillor Brian Nelson
National Secretary

Councillor Brian Nelson
National Secretary
National Association of Councillors
0191 3789947 office
0779 1574879 mobile



National Association of Councillors, AGM

26th November 2022
9:45
Station Hotel, Carlisle

Meeting called by: Cllr Charlie Casey (Chairman)

Note taker: Cllr Susan Nelson

Attendees: Delegates to the NAC

Agenda topics

Chairman's Welcome	Cllr Charlie Casey
Apologies for Absence	
Minutes of the 2021 AGM	Cllr Brian Nelson
Election of Chairman for 2 years (Nominations from England Region)	Chairman
Voting on Nominations New Chairman to be presented with the Chairman's Chain of Office	
Chairman's Address	New Chairman
Retiring Chairman's Address	Cllr Charlie Casey
Election of Vice Chairman (Nominations from the Scotland Region)	
Voting on Nominations The New Vice Chairman to be presented with The Vice Chairman's Chain of Office	
Appointment of the New President, (2 year term)	
The Retiring President Shall invest the new President with the Chain of Office.	Cllr Marie Garrity
Presidents Address	Cllr Beth Adger
Retiring Presidents address	Cllr Marie Garrity
Election of Vice president (2 year term)	

Nominations for Vice President	
Voting on Nominations	
Vice presidents address	
National Secretary’s Report	Cllr Brian Nelson
Papers to be available at the meeting	
NAC Support Services	
Annual accounts	Ald David Nicholson
Copies available at the meeting	
Resolutions, to be given in writing 7 days before meeting.	Cllr Brian Nelson

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILLORSConference & AGM*Financial Crisis*

Station Hotel, Carlisle

25th-27th November 2022

Delegate Booking Form

Name of Delegate.....

Organisation

Delegate's Email

Telephone Number.....

Authorising Signature.....Order No if reqd.....

Printed Name.....

Position.....Organisation.....

INVOICE, email address for invoice.....

To Register – Complete the delegate details above, and either: -Email a copy of this form to
 Generalsecretary@nationalassociationofcouncillors.org

or Post form to NAC Bookings, Council Offices, 6 Goatbeck Terrace, Langley Moor, Co. Durham DH7 6JJ

Delegate Fees: £350 plus VAT – Metropolitan, County, Unitary, Borough & District Councils

£295 plus VAT - Town, Parish and Community Councils

Accommodation is available for delegates at the Conference Hotel at the special NAC Conference Delegate rate of £85 plus VAT per night. If you book the hotel direct the rate will be £135 inc VAT The accommodation fee is payable by delegate on arrival at the hotel unless otherwise indicated on the booking form.

Delegate Accommodation Friday & Saturdays nights YES / NO

Local Authority to be billed direct for accommodation YES / NO

Please note that double and family rooms are also available (prices available on request)

Booking Condition: Please note that a charge is payable on any bookings cancelled. These charges will be kept to a minimum and will be in accordance with cost incurred by the NAC.

Alison McCullagh
Chief Executive



Fermanagh & Omagh
District Council
Comhairle Ceantair
Fhear Manach agus na hÓmaí

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Our Ref: Democratic Services

Date: 10 October 2022

Email: democratic.services@fermanaghomagh.com

Chief Executive
Ards and North Down Borough Council
Townhall
The Castle
Bangor
BT20 4BT

Dear Chief Executive,

Re: Motion - Justice for Noah Donohoe

At the Council meeting held on 4 October 2022, Fermanagh and Omagh District Council adopted the following substantive Motion:

“That Fermanagh and Omagh District Council supports fully the Justice for Noah campaign.

This Council requests that there should be a rigorous, open and transparent police investigation, where every avenue is explored, to get justice for Noah and his family.

This Council also calls on the Secretary of State to withdraw the PII (Public interest immunity) Certificate in this case.

Finally, we request that this motion is sent in writing to all other Councils on the island of Ireland as well as the relevant leaders of the political parties that are members of the Policing Board.”

The Council looks forward to receiving your response on this matter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alison McCullagh".

Alison McCullagh
Chief Executive

ITEM 11**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	26 October 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Organisational Development and Administration
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administration
Date of Report	3 October 2022
File Reference	CEV29
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/>
Subject	Arrangements for Remembrance Sunday
Attachments	

The Council has received invitations to attend a range of Remembrance Day Services across the Borough. Details of arrangements for Remembrance Day Services on Sunday, 6 November 2022 (Groomsport) and Sunday, 13 November 2022 are laid out below. Members are asked to confirm which Service, if any, they plan to attend.

Bangor

Members are asked to meet at the Bowling Pavilion, Ward Park, Bangor at 10.20am for robing. They will then process to the War Memorial for 10.40am for the Remembrance Day Service. Please note there will be no church service on this occasion. After the service at the War Memorial, the parade will march through the town to the Royal British Legion Social Club and will disperse from there.

Holywood

Members are asked to assemble for robing at Queen's Leisure Complex (Studio Room) at 10.00am. Refreshments will be available on arrival. The Parade will form up in the car park at 10.40am and march to the Cenotaph for the Service at 10.50am. After the 2 minute's silence at 11.00am the Parade will proceed to St Phillip and St James Parish Church, Church Road, Holywood. Members should make their own way to the church.

Newtownards

Robing will take place at the Royal British Legion, Court Square, at 9.45am after which members are asked to form up at Old Cross Street car park at 10.00am to parade to the Cenotaph, Court Square, Newtownards. Following a wreath laying ceremony at 10.10am, the Royal British Legion will parade to St Marks Parish Church, Church Street, Newtownards for the Remembrance Service which commences at 11.30am. After the Church Service the parade will march back to the Royal British Legion. Refreshments will be available.

Donaghadee

Members are invited to meet at Donaghadee Parish Church for a Service of Remembrance at 10am. The parade will leave the Church at 10.40am and process to the War Memorial where an Act of Remembrance and wreath laying will take place. Members are then invited to join other dignitaries to take the salute.

Comber

Members are asked to meet at St Mary's Church Hall, The Square, Comber, at 10.00am for robing. Refreshments will be available. They will form up and march to the War Memorial in The Square at for a wreath laying ceremony. This will be followed by a Church Service in 2nd Comber Presbyterian Church, Killinchy Street. Further timings will follow. Please note there is no parking in St Mary's car park as this is reserved for parishioners.

Millisle

Members are asked to meet at the Royal British Legion, Churchill Avenue at 10.30am to parade to the War Memorial for a short Act of Remembrance at 11.00am. The parade will then proceed to the Millisle and Ballycopeland Presbyterian Church, for the Service at 11.30am. Light refreshments will be served in the Legion after the service.

Ballywalter

Members are asked to meet at 10.30am at the Beach Car Park, Main Street, Ballywalter. The parade will march off at 10.45am for an Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial at 10.50am. This will be followed by a Church Service at Ballywalter 1st Presbyterian at 11.15am. The Parade and march past will take place at approximately 12.05pm, Lord Dunleath, Deputy Lieutenant will be taking the salute. Refreshments will be served at 12.30pm in the Orange Hall.

Craigavad Helen's Bay

A service of remembrance will be held at Ballygilbert Presbyterian Church at 11 am.

Portavogie

A service of remembrance will be held at Portavogie War Memorial, Harbour Road, Portavogie at 9am.

Groomsport

The Groomsport Remembrance Day Service will be held on Sunday, 6 November 2022 at 2.45pm. The Walter Nelson Hall, Main Street, will be available from 2.00pm for robing and Councillors will parade from there to the War Memorial at

approximately 2.30pm. There is no Church Service. Light refreshments will be served after the service at the Walter Nelson Hall.

Members' Robes

Members' robes will be taken to the services at Bangor, Holywood and Newtownards. Members attending other services are asked to collect their robes from the Town Hall, Bangor, no later than **3pm on Friday, 11 November 2022**.

Robes will be available at The Walter Nelson Hall, Groomsport, for those members who indicate their intention to attend the Groomsport Service on 6 November 2022.

Those members requiring wreaths are asked to contact the Democratic Services Office a week in advance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

1. Note the arrangements as set out above.
2. Indicate, via email to democratic.services@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk which service they plan to attend; and
3. Note the above arrangements for robing and collect robes in advance, where appropriate.

Unclassified

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ITEM 12**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	26 October 2022
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	N/A
Date of Report	03 October 2022
File Reference	
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Nominations to Working Groups
Attachments	None

Places on working groups are filled through nomination at the Council's Annual Meeting and are thus held by individual Members rather than Parties. When a position becomes vacant, it reverts back to Council to nominate a Member to fill the place rather than Party Nominating Officers.

Following the resignation of Lauren Kendall from Council, a place has become available on each of the following groups:

1. Holywood Town Steering Group
2. Community Development Grants Working Group
3. All Party Group on Climate Action

The below tables reflect current membership of the above working groups.

Body: Holywood Town Steering Group – 5 Places (4 Year Appointment)

	2019/23
--	----------------

Unclassified

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1	Councillor Johnson
2	Councillor Greer
3	Councillor McClean
4	Councillor McRandal
5	Vacant since resignation of Lauren Kendall

Body: Community Development Grants Working Group – 5 Places (1 Year Appointment)

	2022/23
1	Councillor Thompson
2	Councillor Cathcart
3	Councillor Smart
4	Councillor Douglas
5	Vacant since resignation of Lauren Kendall

Body: All Party Group on Climate Action – 2 Places (1 Year Appointment)

	2022/23
1	Councillor Thompson
2	Vacant since resignation of Lauren Kendall

Nominations are sought from Council to fill each of the above places for the remainder of the year or four-year term as the case may be.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. It is recommended that the Council nominates a Member to the Hollywood Town Steering Group.
2. It is recommended that the Council nominates a Member to the Community Development Grants Working Group.
3. It is recommended that the Council nominates a Member to the All Party Group on Climate Action.

ITEM 15

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Council
Date of Meeting	26 October 2022
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	12 October 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 – OCTOBER 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. Further report to follow in the Autumn.
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.	On draft agenda for CSC November 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
						(September 2022).	
16/01/20	Closing of a public right of way at Andrew Shorefield, Groomsport	Alderman Keery	Council – January 2020	Corporate Committee – February 2020	Agreed	Reported to CSC in March and October 2020. Further report to come back (September 2022).	On draft agenda for CSC November 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 garden, both should be	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 Donaghadee

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
	considered as options in the report. The process should involve consultation with the local community."						and bring back a report thereafter.
19 April 2021	Flying of Union Flag on all Council buildings and war memorials all year round. Flags at half mast on death of any monarch or any other member of the Royal Family or Prime Minister of the UK for the period of mourning.	Councillor Cooper	Council April 2021	Corporate Committee – September 2021	NOM as amended agreed at March 2022 Council	CSC - October/Nov 2022	EQIA closes 30 August 2022. Report expected once outcome known.
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 Conference of Ideas, and	Councillors Walker & Egan	23 June 2021	Environment Committee – October 2021 (deferred from September Committee)	Agreed	TBC	

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	values-based recommendations for next steps.						
20.10.2021	That officers bring back a report to consider the option of transferring responsibility for bins which are currently the responsibility of the Parks Section into the Environment Directorate.	Alderman McIlveen & Councillor Cathcart	Council November 2021	Community & Wellbeing December 2021	Agreed	Report to C&WC April 2022. Report to October 2022 C&WC	Subject to ratification by Oct Council.
3.11.2021	That this Council, in liaison with the Department for Infrastructure, will seek permission for and explore a source of funding in order to make an artistic feature of the steps which lead from Princetown Road to Queen's Parade at Bangor seafront as part of Bangor Town regeneration, and brings back a report to	Councillor Douglas & Alderman Wilson	Council November 2021	Regeneration & Development December 2021	Agreed	Report update at Nov/Dec R&D Committee	Consultation with Town Advisory Group currently taking place and outcome will be reported to future meeting.

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
	Council addressing how this can be achieved as a pilot for the Borough.						
31.12.21	Coastal and Storm Damage to Ballywalter Harbour, repair costs and reinstatement costs	Councillors Adair and Edmund	Council January 22	Environment February 2022	Agreed	TBC	Report to be brought back (TBC).
09.03.22	Calls for Council responsibility for a devolved Regeneration Budget	Councillor Walker and Alderman McDowell	Council - March 22	Regeneration and Development Committee – April 22	Agreed	Reported to Oct R&D Committee	Subject to ratification by Oct Council
13.04.22	Environmental damage caused by modern day packaging	Councillors McRandal and Douglas	Council – April 2022	Environment Committee – June 2022	Agreed - ratified by June Council		Report to be brought back - TBC.
14.04.22	Locking up schedule for Playparks	Alderman Irvine and Alderman Keery	Council – April 2022	Community & Wellbeing Committee May 2022	Agreed (to be ratified by April Council)	Report to Oct 2022 C&WC	Subject to ratification by Oct Council Local Consultation to be undertaken and further report to be brought back 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
							future committee.
10.05.22	Discussions with EA re redevelopment of the play area fronting Victoria Primary School as a potential Peace Plus project for Ballywalter	Councillors Adair and Edmund	Council – May 2022	Community and Wellbeing June 2022	Agreed (to be ratified at June Council)	TBC	Peace Plus details/project not confirmed. Officers will bring back report thereafter.
17.05.22	2028 Centenary of the internationally renowned Ards TT races. Asking Council how best to commemorate this important sporting anniversary.	Alderman McIlveen and Councillor Kennedy	Council – May 2022	Community and Wellbeing June 2022	Agreed (to be ratified at June Council)	TBC	Officers considering report to be brought back to future Committee
19.05.2022	Business case for redesign of the parallel sports pitches and facilities at Park Way, Comber	Councillors Cummings and Johnson	Council – June 2022	Community and Wellbeing Committee – September 2022 – deferred to October 2022		TBC	Officers considering report to be brought back to future Committee

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
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20.06.2022	Review of health and safety process re community groups	Councillors MacArthur, Brooks, T Smith and Kennedy	Council – June 2022	Corporate Services Committee – Sept 2022 - deferred to October 2022	Agreed		Subject to ratification at October Council, further report to follow.
20.06.2022	Report exploring the possibility of introducing a policy that shows commitment to supporting the wellbeing of our workforce by ensuring appropriate support is available to anyone undergoing IVF.	Councillor Greer and Councillor McKee	Council – June 2022	Corporate Services Committee – Sept 2022 – deferred to October 2022	Agreed		Subject to ratification at October Council, further report to follow.
21.06.2022	Widening the Council's use of digital technology (in particular QR codes) to promote and provide information about statues, built heritage and monuments	Alderman McIlveen and Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	Council – June 2022	Community and Wellbeing Committee – September 2022 – deferred to October 2022			Officers considering report to be brought back to future Committee
21.06.2022	Engagement with relevant community stakeholders to	Councillors Kendall,	Council - June 2022	Community and Wellbeing Committee			Officers considering

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	ascertain community need and desires in respect of the Queen's Leisure Complex	McRandal and McClean		- September 2022 - deferred to October 2022			report to be brought back to future Committee
5.07.2022	<p>That this Council changes the name of Queen's Parade to Queen's Platinum Jubilee Parade in honour and recognition of the 70th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne.</p> <p>*** Amendment Received from Councillor Cathcart</p> <p>That this Council, in recognition of Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee and her conferment of City Status upon Bangor, agrees to name an appropriate place or building within Bangor in her honour and that future Council Bangor entrance</p>	Alderman Irvine & Keery	Council - July 2022	Environment Committee - September 2022	Amdt agreed.		Sept 2022 - Recommendation to Council that item is referred to Corporate Services Committee and Report to be brought to a future meeting - TBC

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
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	signs make reference to Bangor being a Platinum Jubilee City.						
19.07.2022	<p>This Council notes with concern that a number of planted trees in urban settings along roads which have died or have been removed but not replaced; Notes the importance of environmental and social benefits of such trees in the built environment;</p> <p>Notes that DfI Roads formerly had a partnership arrangement with Belfast parks for the replacement of trees but that this partnership ended some time ago;</p> <p>That Council officers are tasked with opening</p>	Alderman McIlveen & Councillor Cathcart	Council – July 2022	Community and Wellbeing Committee – September 2022 Deferred to October 2022		TBC	Meeting with DfI Roads and DAERA to be organised. Officers will bring back a report thereafter.

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	discussions with DfI Roads and DAERA with a view to exploring the possibility of a partnership which will involve the supply and replacement of lost trees in the Borough and then providing a report to Council for further consideration.						
22.06.2022	That Council task officers to carry out a review of Play Provision in Loughries with a view to its inclusion in the Councils Play Strategy going forward.	Councillor Adair and Councillor Thompson	Council – August 2022	Community and Wellbeing Committee – September 2022 – deferred to October 2022		Report to Nov 2022 C&WC	
29.6.2022	That this Council notes with concern the significant impact rising energy costs are having on households across Northern Ireland; recognises the need for ongoing intervention from every level of Government and agrees to write to Her	Councillor P Smith and Councillor Smart	Council – August 2022	Agreed to accept NOM to be heard at Council and amended to include: This Council also resolves to write to the Dept. for Communities to	Letters sent from CEx to SoS and Minister, awaiting response.		

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	Majesty's Treasury to impress upon them in the absence of a functioning Northern Ireland Executive the need to urgently deliver the energy bills support scheme to households here.			request a special fund for Councils in relation to the Cost-of-Living crisis in order to- a. provide for the direct provision of localised responses; and b. assist local community and voluntary organisations Any such support would be additional to that provided by the Westminster Government and at Northern Ireland level.			

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
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5.7.2022	That this Council writes and calls on the Minister for Infrastructure to reduce the speed limit down to 30mph at the A48 Cotton Road after the latest road accident and fatality.	Aldermen Keery and Irvine	Council – August 2022	Corporate Committee – September 2022 – deferred to October 2022	Agreed		Subject to ratification at October Council, Letter to be sent to the Minister at DfI
29.07.2022	That this council withdraws all funding to any sporting organisations with any political objectives or named references to terrorism in their constitution, club names, stadiums or competitions, and tasks officers to bring back a report outlining the specific relevant council policy.	Cllrs Cooper, T Smith and Councillor Irvine	Council – August 2022	Corporate Committee – September 2022 – deferred to October 2022	Agreed with amdt		Subject to ratification at October Council, further report to follow – details TBC
3.08.2022	We ask this council to consider the urgent provision of sea rescue equipment to Cove Bay	Cllrs Chambers and Brooks	Council August 2022	Environment Committee – September 2022	Agreed	Report being brought to EC Nov - 2022	Ratified at Council - September 2022

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
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	beach, known locally as the third beach, in Groomspoint. A review into other locations around the Borough, should also be considered.						
14.08.2022	That this council notes the widespread move to low traffic neighbourhoods in city centres across the UK and Europe and tasks officers with producing a report detailing the steps involved in progressing a project for Bangor City Centre. The report should highlight the benefits that a low traffic neighbourhood can bring, including how it could support the Council's ambitions to revive local retail and hospitality, encourage active travel, support families, and play a	Alderman Wilson and Councillor Douglas	Council August 2022	Corporate Committee – September 2022 – deferred to October 2022	Agreed		Subject to ratification at October Council, further report to follow – details TBC

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
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	positive role in tackling climate change. A preliminary consultation should also take place to obtain views and ideas directly from City Centre businesses, residents, and other relevant stakeholders.						
17.08.22	Con Auld – memorial bench to be placed in the Borough	Councillor McClean and Alderman M Smith	September 2022	Environment Committee – October 2022	Withdrawn		
22.08.22	Street Clutter Audit for the Borough	Councillor Dunlop and Councillor Douglas	September 2022	Environment Committee – October 2022	Agreed	Reported to October 2022 EC Committee	To be ratified at October 2022 Council
14.09.22	Care Workers and Penalty Charge Notices for Parking	Councillor Cathcart and Councillor Gilmour	September 2022	Corporate Services Committee – October 2022 - deferred to November 2022		To be considered at CSC November 2022	

TO BE POPULATED BY DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
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19.09.22	Establishment of an Animal Abuse Register for the Borough and write to the DAERA Minister to ask for the introduction of Lucy's Law and Reggie's Law for Northern Ireland.	Councillor T Smith and Councillor Cooper Amendme nt received from Councillor Woods	September 2022	Environment Committee October 2022	Agreed	Reported to October 2022 EC Committee	To be ratified at October 2022 Council
21.09.22	Humane control of Pigeons in Conway Square, Newtownards	Alderman McIlveen and Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	September 2022	Environment Committee 2022	Agreed	Reported to October 2022 EC Committee	To be ratified at October 2022 Council

From: Michael McDonnell <Michael.McDonnell@choice-housing.org>

Sent: 26 September 2022 14:58

Subject: Choice Group Annual Report 2022

On behalf of the Board, Management team and Staff of the Choice Group, we are delighted to provide you with a copy of our 2021/22 Annual Report.

We believe that our work brings real benefits to society by increasing the supply of decent and affordable homes, by ensuring access to excellent support services, by promoting inclusive and thriving communities and by making best use of our resources.

The year ended 31st March 2022 presented many challenges for Choice and the wider voluntary housing sector, not least through the continuing impact of Covid-19. However, our end of year review reflects a range of significant achievements and further positive progress as we strive to enrich lives by working with and through like-minded organisations.

Ultimately, the Annual Report for 2021/22 reflects the skill, commitment, dedication and determination of our people, our tenants, our partners and of communities across the country. All have demonstrated our core values of being caring, committed and creative.

Thanks for your continuing interest in and support for the Choice Group.

Kind regards

Michael

choice 




Recognised by EFQM
★★★★ 2021

Michael McDonnell
Group Chief Executive

 0300 111 2211

 Michael.McDonnell@choice-housing.org

 www.choice-housing.org

 37-41 May Street
Belfast, BT1 4DN

Choice Housing Ireland Limited, 37-41 May Street, Belfast, BT1 4DN

Youth Justice Agency Performance Impact Report 2021-2022



Our Mission

'To make communities safer by helping children to stop offending'

Our Purpose Statement

'To reduce offending by supporting children to achieve their full potential'



Chief Executive Foreword

I'm really pleased to be introducing this second Youth Justice Agency Performance Impact Report covering the business year 2021-22. It clearly sets out what the Agency is aiming to achieve and the impact of our work on children who come into contact with the justice system, their families, victims and communities. This year's report introduces two new areas of work: the Sexting Referral Scheme and our participation work. Given the success of our participation work, we have moved it out of the pilot phase and are now making it a mainstream part of the Agency's business. Hearing the voices of children and young people and using what they tell us to shape how we do things is really important to us and I was very impressed by the quality of input we received as part of our corporate plan consultation.

A big thanks to my colleagues who led on producing this year's Performance Impact Report and I hope you find it useful, engaging & informative. We plan to publish performance impact information every year and would welcome your views on how it might be improved in future. Email: info@yjani.gov.uk

Stephen Martin

Performance Impact Report 2021-2022 – The Background

The Northern Ireland Executive is bringing forward an Outcomes-based Programme for Government (PfG) that is focused on achieving outcomes of societal wellbeing and delivering real and positive change in people’s lives.

To achieve this a PfG draft Outcomes framework has been developed, which builds on the outcomes-based approach that has defined strategic planning across the public sector since 2016. This report examines our Performance against Outcome 7 and Outcome 12 of the framework.

PfG Outcome 7: We have a safe community where we respect the law, and each other

PfG Outcome 12: We give our children and young people the best start in life

PfG Indicator 1: Prevalence Rate – Intervene early with young people who are at risk of coming into contact with the justice system	PfG Indicator 38: Increase the effectiveness of the youth justice system	PfG Indicator 39: Reduce Reoffending - adopting a welfare based rather than punitive approach to children engaged in offending behaviour		
Earlier Stage Diversion	Youth Justice Agency Interventions	Custodial Interventions	Resource Management	
YJA Outcome 1: Children are exited from the youth justice system at the earliest point, with appropriate support	YJA Outcome 2: Improved outcomes for children, families, victims, and communities	YJA Outcome 3: Improved outcomes for children through the delivery of a safe, secure, therapeutic, child-centred environment	YJA Outcome 4: YJA has a multi-skilled, flexible and diverse workforce which is well-led, highly performing and outcomes focused	YJA Outcome 5: YJA resources are used effectively, complying with corporate and financial governance

[Link to YJA Annual Report & Accounts](#)

[Microsoft Word - Youth Justice Agency - Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21 - Final \(nigov.net\)](#)



An Ghníomhaireacht um Cheartas I nLeith an Aosa Óig

Agency for Young-Yins Fang'it w'ith the Law

"Who we are?"



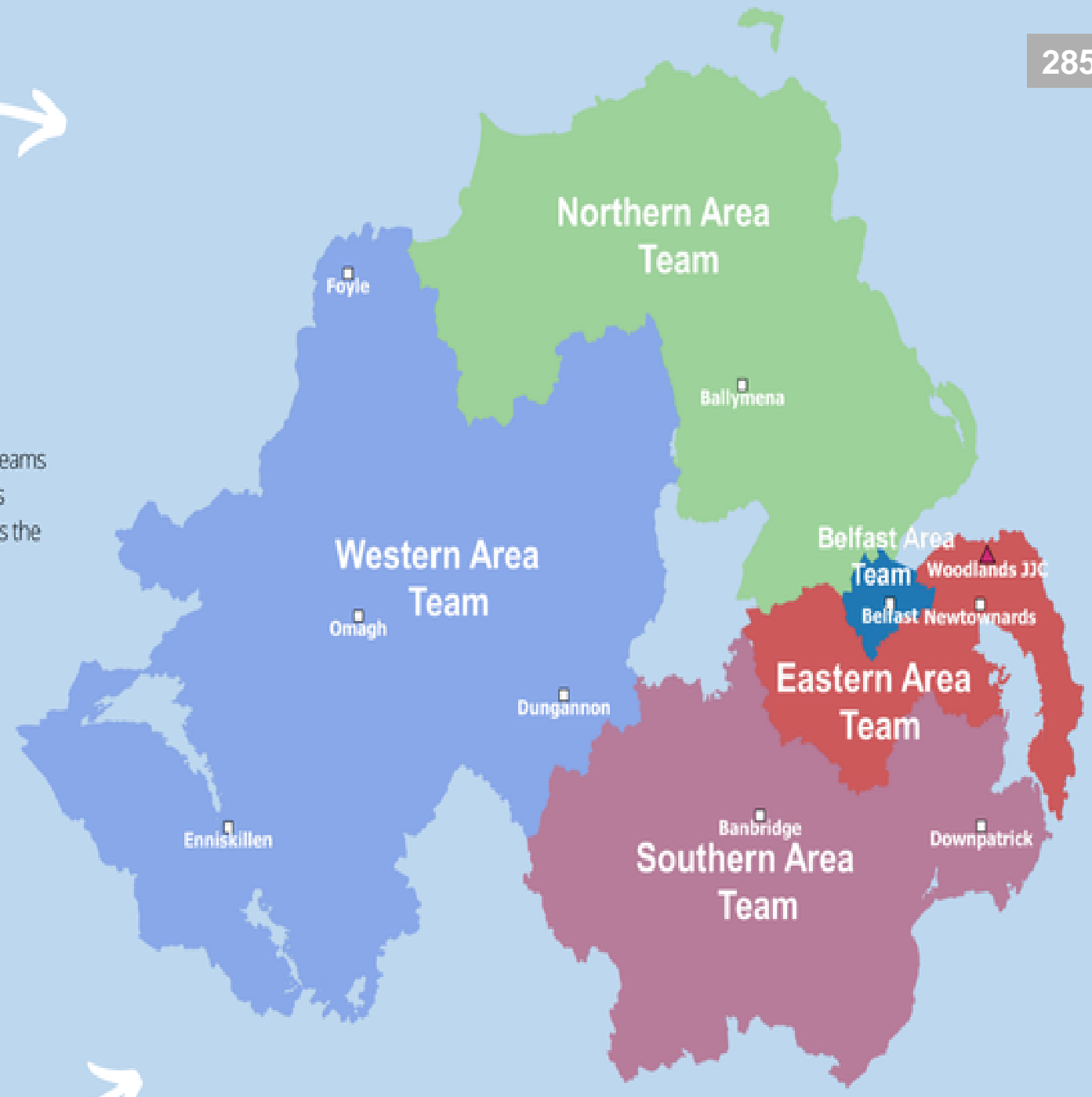
We have **5** community based area teams spread across **9** office locations
 Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre is the only custody facility in NI



The YJA recruits and trains volunteers to support young people

236

The number of staff who work across, custody, community & corporate services.





An Ghníomhaireacht um Cheartas i nLeith an Aosa Óig

Agency for Young-Yins Fang'it w/ the Law

“How much did we do?”



138 referrals to YJA from the Children's Diversion Forum



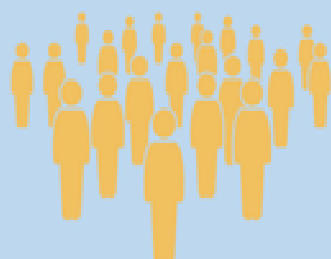
2,243* total number of children & young people we worked with both in custody & the community



YJA schools work programme delivered **375** schools based workshops to **11,461** children & young people



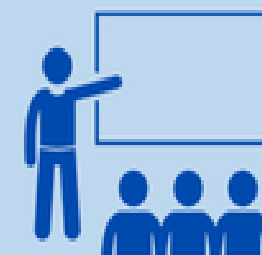
207 admissions to Woodlands involving **106** individuals



1,435 referrals to Youth Justice Services involving **904** individuals



25 young people attended Woodlands EOTAS in the last academic year & were awarded **114** qualifications throughout the academic year



1,093 Community Resolution Notices and **167** Sexting referrals



305 Earlier Stage Diversion referrals for voluntary support



324 children & young people & **13** community/voluntary organisations funded through Earlier Stage Diversion

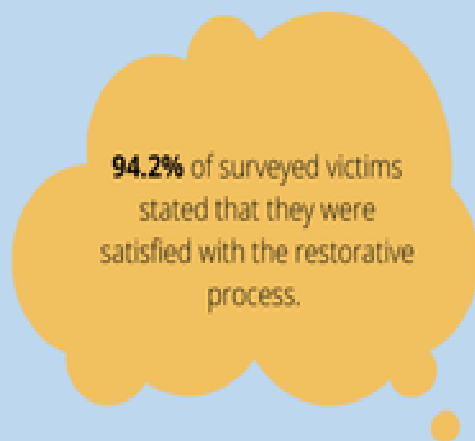
* Total number of young people we worked with includes those from Community Resolution Notice and Sexting programmes and totals may not add up due to some individuals admitted to more than one Community Resolution Notice



An Ghriomhaireacht um Cheartas I nLeith an Aosa Óig

Agency for Young 'Ynis Fang'it w'ith the Law

“How well did we do it?”



88.9% of children & young people attending school workshops stated that they were more aware of issues that can lead young people into offending



95.9% of parents/carers stated they strongly agreed that YJA helped with family relationships



94.7% of children & young people surveyed rated their experience of YJA as either very good or good



96.4% of Community Resolution Notice programmes were successfully completed



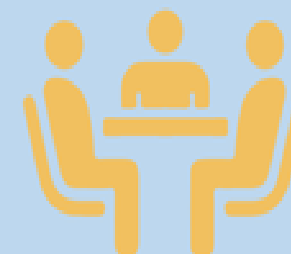
99.3% of surveyed parents/carers were either very satisfied or satisfied with the service they received



84.5% of Youth Engagement Clinics successfully completed



During 2021/22, 100% of children & young people and parents/carers rated their experience of the CDF referral as very good or good



84.4% of Earlier Stage Diversion referrals were successfully completed



An Ghníomhaireacht um Cheartas I nLeith an Aosa Óig

Agency for Young-Yins Fang'ti w'ith the Loo

“Is anyone better off?”



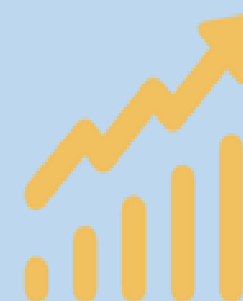
100% of young people who have engaged with YJA CAMHS partnership had an improvement in their mental health

100% of children & young people with CDF intervention referrals felt their experience of YJA would help them avoid further offending



4 out of **5** young people did not reoffend in the first year following YJA intervention

98.9% of children & young people & **100.0%** of parents/carers surveyed stated that Youth Engagement Clinics helped their understanding of choices available



Earlier Stage Diversion referrals have increased year on year and have contributed to fewer young people reaching the formal justice system

81.2% of young people surveyed after the schools programme felt their experience would help them avoid offending



83.8% of young people were in Education, Training & Employment at discharge

Out of **847** children & young people who attended Community Resolution Notice programmes in 2019/20, only **7.7%** received a statutory referral to YJA within a year of completing the programme

YJA Outcome 1 Earlier Stage Diversion : Children are exited from the youth justice system at the earliest point, with appropriate supports.

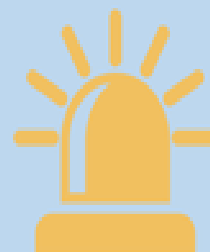
Youth Justice Agency Schools Programme: As part of earlier stage diversion work, the Agency delivers a series of targeted education sessions in post-primary schools educating young people on a number of justice related topics.



In 2021/22 staff delivered 375 workshops to 11,461 pupils.



99.1% of school staff felt that the issues and questions raised were relevant for their pupils.



81.2% of young people felt that their experience of the workshop would help them avoid offending.

User Feedback

- 91.5% of school staff surveyed felt that the workshop had raised awareness of consequences of risk taking behaviour.
- 88.9% of children & young people attending workshops stated that they were more aware of issues that can lead young people into offending.

A great session that kept the students engaged. Lots of useful information delivered.

School Staff

Excellent should be rolled out to all young people in schools.

School Staff

I think it's good that children are taught this so they know what can come out of one punch.

Pupil

Excellent! very useful and relevant. Pupils were engrossed.

School Staff

In my opinion this workshop is really impactful and will help me now and in later life.

Pupil

I really loved this workshop as it made me more aware of the ins and outs of offending.

Pupil

It was very helpful with the effects of drugs and alcohol.

Pupil

It was informative and greatly explained.

Pupil

It was very open and informative, especially upon issues that are not usually talked about, but need to be.

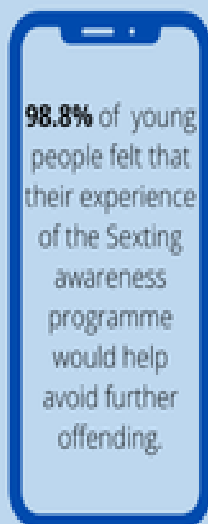
Pupil

YJA Outcome 1 Earlier Stage Diversion : Children are exited from the youth justice system at the earliest point, with appropriate supports.

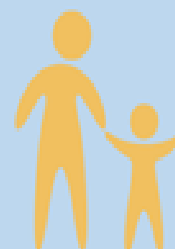
Youth Justice Agency - Sexting Referral Scheme- In 2019, the Agency launched the Sexting Referral Scheme whereby the PSNI can refer young people who involved in sexting offences to YJA for education & awareness sessions.



In 2021/22 the Agency received **167** sexting referrals.



98.8% of young people felt that their experience of the Sexting awareness programme would help avoid further offending.



95.8% of parents/carers surveyed felt their experience would help their young person avoid further offending.

User Feedback

- **98.8%** of young people surveyed rated their experience of the Sexting Awareness Programme as 'very good' or 'good'.
- **98.6%** of parents/carers surveyed rated their experience of the Sexting Awareness Programme as 'very good' or 'good'.

I feel more confident to say 'no' as I am more aware of the consequences of sexting for me and my future.
Young Person

I am more aware of the consequences of how sexting can impact on me and my future career aspirations.
Young Person

Learnt a lot about the law.
Young Person

Worker was really down to earth, made talking about a very difficult topic really easy. Really took into account son's autism during work.
Parent/Carer

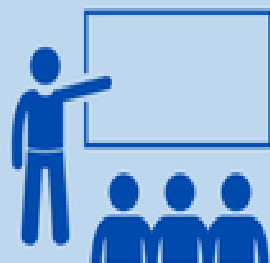
Great meeting, very educational for parents also. Thanks.
Parent/Carer

Super informative.
Parent/Carer

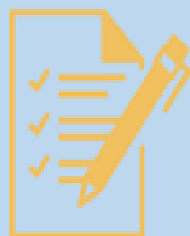
Great advice given, easy to listen to, very informative.
Parent/Carer

YJA Outcome 1 Earlier Stage Diversion: Children are exited from the youth justice system at the earliest point, with appropriate supports.

Community Resolution Notices (CRN): A Community Resolution Notice can be issued to someone 10 years or over for a range of minor offences. The YJA receives referrals from the Police and deliver educational sessions on drugs, alcohol, public order, criminal damage etc.



1,093 CRN Programmes delivered to 1,002 young people



96.4% of CRN programmes were successfully completed



Numbers of CRN programmes are increasing and may contribute to fewer young people reaching the formal justice system

User Feedback

- 94.7% of children and young people and 98.6% of parents/carers surveyed rated the Community Resolution Notice programme as either **Very Good** or **Good**
- 96.8% of children and young people and 95.2% of parents/carers surveyed felt that the Community Resolution Notice programme would help avoid further reoffending

I did not think about the potential consequences of my behaviour and I am more aware of how a criminal record can impact my future.
Young Person

I have been able to talk about how to manage peer pressure and see the potential consequences of offending for my future.
Young Person

A Young Person's Story

Sarah received a CRN for theft in a shop in her local area, alongside a number of her friends. Sarah completed a CRN education session with a YJA staff member & explored the consequences of theft and peer influence. Sarah shared that she was bored & didn't have a lot to do. Sarah's YJA worker contacted youth workers from a local youth club. Sarah & a few of her friends started attending the youth club 3 nights per week, which reduced the amount of time they spent in and around the town centre.

I appreciated the opportunity to discuss the consequences of offending and the importance of choosing 'good friends'.
Young Person

Brilliant, feels like closure, we are able to move on now.
Parent/Carer

It has made me think about the importance of managing my behaviour to make sure that I do not get into trouble again.
Young Person

Fantastic opportunity for my son to get back on track, support to get him a CSR card and a job was life changing, he's a different boy, thank you so much.
Parent/Carer

YJA Outcome 1 Earlier Stage Diversion : Children are exited from the youth justice system at the earliest point, with appropriate supports.

Earlier Stage Diversion: Children's Diversion Forums – A Children's Diversion Forum (CDF) is a meeting arranged by the Youth Justice Agency (YJA) between Police, Social Services, Education Welfare, Youth Service and YJA to discuss how we can all work together to help children stay out of trouble with the law. It is based on consent from the parent/carer and child. The CDF members share what they already know and then agree the best intervention to offer. This may include some work with one of these organisations, or referral onto another service, or both. An intervention plan is shared with the parent/carer and child and they can decide if they wish to agree to it or not. Plans are time bound and are based on exiting the child to other services where appropriate.



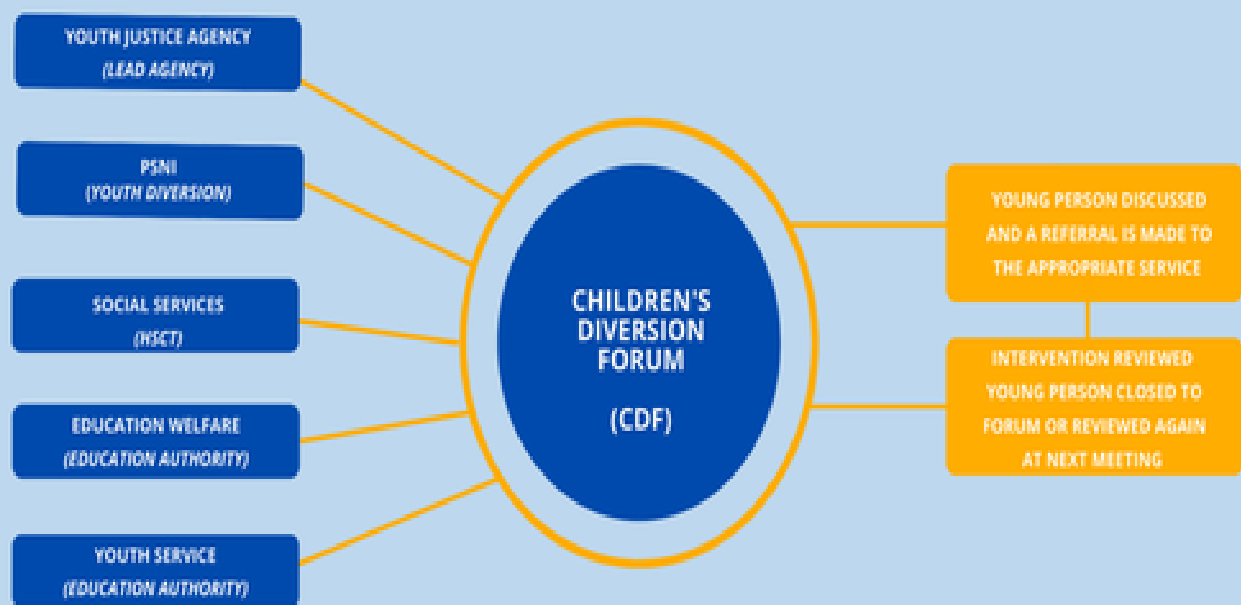
138 referrals from the Children's Diversion Forums



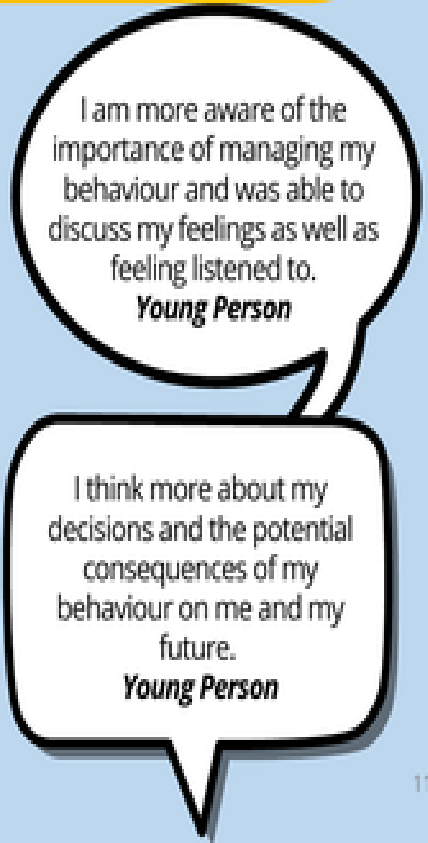
89.7% of referrals from the Children's Diversion Forums were successfully completed

User Feedback

- **100%** of children and parents/carers surveyed rated their experience of the Children's Diversion Forum as either **Very Good** or **Good**
- **100%** of children and **95.0%** of parents/carers surveyed felt that their experience of the Children's Diversion Forum would help avoid further reoffending



(Children's Diversion Forum process)



I am more aware of the importance of managing my behaviour and was able to discuss my feelings as well as feeling listened to.
Young Person

I think more about my decisions and the potential consequences of my behaviour on me and my future.
Young Person

YJA Outcome 1 Earlier Stage Diversion : Children are exited from the youth justice system at the earliest point, with appropriate supports.

Youth Engagement Clinics: Youth Engagement Clinics (YEC) are meetings facilitated by the Youth Justice Agency (YJA) between Police, YJA and those children; support from their Parents/Carers and solicitor if required, whose cases the PPS have deemed suitable for Diversion (i.e. Pre court disposals). Their aim is to encourage children to engage in the diversionary process with supports as necessary.



671 Youth Engagement Clinics held involving 718 children



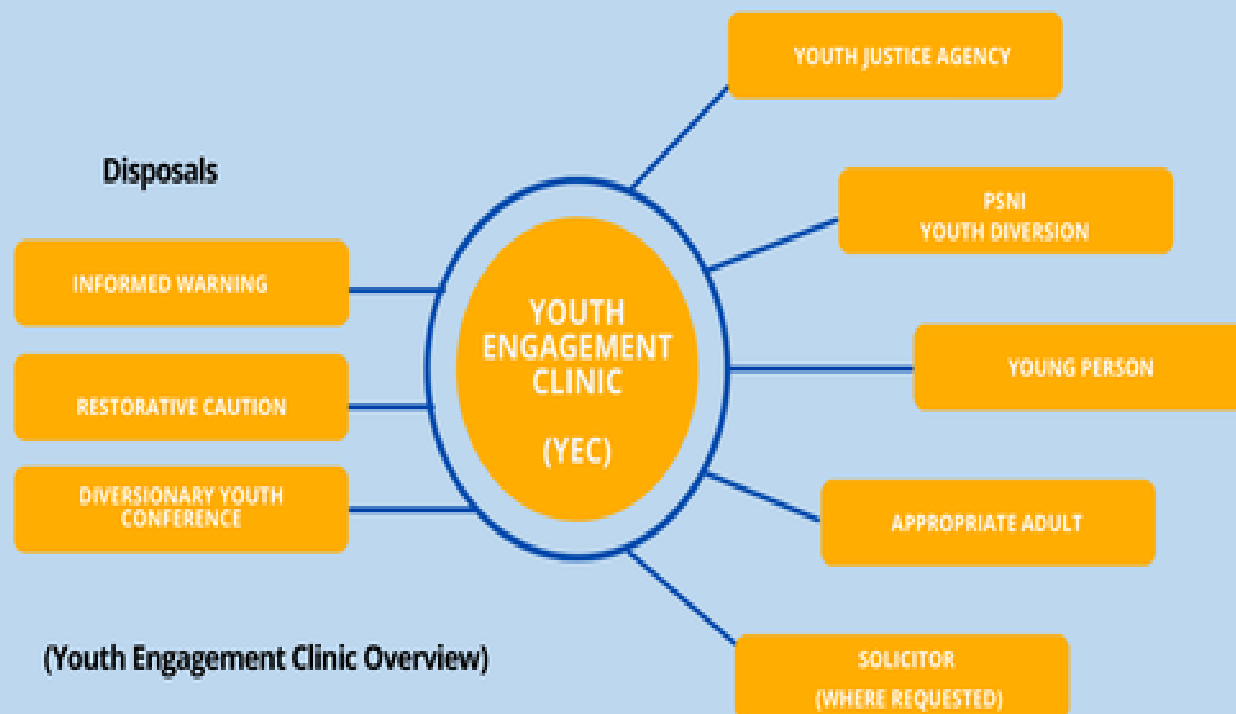
84.5% of Youth Engagement Clinics successfully completed



Youth Engagement Clinics are held in YJA offices and community venues across Northern Ireland

User Feedback

- 98.9% of children and young people and 100.0% of parents/carers surveyed stated that Youth Engagement Clinics helped their understanding of the choices available



Friendly staff put us at ease, explained everything.
Parent/Carer

Wasn't as scary as I thought it would be, explained everything to me.
Young Person

My worker was brilliant with me and made me feel involved with everything.
Young Person

Thought the whole process was good.
Parent/Carer

YJA Outcome 2: Improved outcomes for children, families, victims and communities.

Restorative Practice – Diversionary and Court Ordered Youth Conferences: A youth conference gives the young person and their victim an opportunity to meet and discuss the impact of the offence and agree actions to help the young person to stop offending. Referrals are received from the Public Prosecution Service for Diversionary Youth Conferences and from the courts (Court Ordered Youth Conferences).

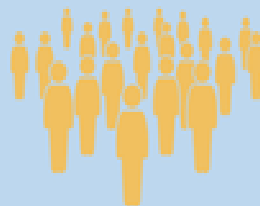
294



647 diversionary referrals
and **400** Court ordered
referrals



89.2% of diversionary
referrals were
completed on time



619 individual young people
involved in youth conferences

User Feedback

- **99.3%** of parents/carers surveyed were either very satisfied or satisfied with the service they received
- **99.5%** of children and young people and **99.1%** of parents/carers surveyed strongly agreed or agreed that their experience of YJA would help the child avoid further offending

What happens at a Youth Conference

Everyone will talk about the offence & how it has affected them. The young person may agree to an action plan. An action plan can include:

- An apology to the victim
- Actions the young person will do to make up for the offence (reparation)
- Payment to the victim (not exceeding cost, replacement or repair of damage)
- Supervision by an adult at Youth Justice Agency
- Performing unpaid work in the community
- Participating in such activities designed to address offending behaviour
- Restrictions on conduct or whereabouts
- Treatment for mental health or dependency on drugs or alcohol
- If the young person has been referred from court, an electronic tag or custody can be discussed as part of the Action Plan.

What happens after a Youth Conference

The Youth Justice Agency will tell the Public Prosecution Service or the Court what the young person has agreed.

If the Action Plan is accepted the young person will have to start it within a couple of days.

The Youth Justice Agency will supervise and support the young person to complete their Action Plan.

If appropriate, the victim will be kept updated on the young person's progress throughout their plan.

It helps you mature
and become a better
person.
Young Person

Worked well with me
and listened to me.
Understood me and
how I see things.
Young Person

YJA Outcome 2: Improved outcomes for children, families, victims and communities.

295

YJA CAMHS Partnership: There is strong evidence that children & young people within the justice system in Northern Ireland struggle to engage with formal mental health services. This gap in service provision led to the establishment of a partnership between Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the Youth Justice Agency, initially within the Southern Trust area.

In 2021/22 the Southern Trust area partnership has continued to deliver positive outcomes. The Western Trust area partnership became operational in October 2021 and is now well established. YJA are currently looking at how to continue the further roll-out of this service over the next business year.

This partnership has resulted in better outcomes for children as it has considerably increased the engagement of children & young people involved with YJA CAMHS and improved the standard of mental health services and support provided by YJA.

As the Western Area became operational in year, the below figures are only for the Southern area.



227 children were screened for mental health needs.



During 2021/22, **100%** of children referred successfully engaged with CAMHS



100% of children who have engaged with CAMHS had an improvement in their mental health

Young Person's Story

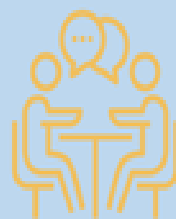
A YJA staff member was allocated a 17 year old, Michael, from Children's Diversion Forum. Michael had a diagnosis of autism & was referred for an online safety intervention. Following emotional and mental health screening, a number of areas were highlighted relating to Michael's well-being. A consultation between Michael's YJA staff member and the Senior Mental Health Practitioner was arranged & Michael received immediate assessment and support. Michael presented with psychotic type experiences, namely auditory and visual hallucinations, anxiety and previous concerns relating to self-harm. Alongside timely assessment and brief intervention, the YJA staff member, Linda liaised with other professionals including the Trust Social Worker and CAMHS Multi-disciplinary team. The senior mental health practitioner was also able to put actions in place for future transitions and supports for Michael. Michael's parents reported that they were delighted with the quick response from CAMHS Senior Mental Health Practitioner and the supports offered.

YJA Outcome 2: Improved outcomes for children, families, victims and communities.

Restorative Practice – Victims: YJA are committed to ensuring that the Victim’s voice is heard as part of the Youth Conference process. Victims of crime committed by the children and young people we are working with can access relevant information and support at an appropriate time throughout their involvement in our processes. 296



456 cases involved victims - 584 individual victims were identified and supported



78.9% of victims engaged in the youth conference process



99.0% of victims surveyed felt well informed about the conference process

A Victim’s Story

Of all the years that I have been doing this Mark has been the most outstanding young person I have met; even the cleaners in the depot were really impressed. After meeting and talking to Mark on a one to one basis we just knew that he was remorseful for what he had done and the work that he put in on the two days he was with me was unbelievable. It is just a pity that he has been caught up in something like this, even drivers within our depot knew him and they were surprised to see him. At the end of his time Mark wanted to write an apology letter to all those impacted by the incident.

Everything was explained well beforehand. Very satisfied with how I was treated and with the communication
Victim

Make this service available to all. I was unaware of it but thought the service and process was excellent
Victim

User Feedback

- 94.2% of victims surveyed stated they were satisfied with the restorative process
- 97.1% of victims surveyed felt their contribution to the conference process was valued

She was shaken up by offence and Conference helped her move on
Parent/Carer

It is good to be given the opportunity to tell him how I felt in a controlled environment
Victim

YJA Outcome 2: Improved outcomes for children, families, victims and communities.

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Family Work: Family work is undertaken with families of children & young people referred into our services. This may be in the form of group work or individual sessions. We also facilitate support groups for parents and carers of children referred to YJA where they can discuss issues arising and learn how they can help their child avoid further offending.



In 2021-22, family work was undertaken with **448** children & young people

Our Parents' Support Group continued to provide vital support to parents, carers and families throughout the pandemic although much of this had to be delivered electronically via virtual means rather than face-to-face meetings. A monthly newsletter was produced and distributed to parents by way of additional support.

User Feedback

- **95.9%** of Parents/Carers surveyed "strongly agreed" or "agreed" that the YJA supported or helped relationships with family
- **98.7%** of Parents/Carers surveyed stated they were "always" or "mostly" involved in decisions made about their child.

Youth justice & my worker in particular done more than I ever thought could have been done to help my son. He has changed a lot for the better, which I didn't think was possible, great outcome.

Parent/Carer

The YJA has been invaluable for help and the support has been amazing. Thank you.

Parent/Carer

Everyone involved was very professional and absolutely amazing.

Parent/Carer

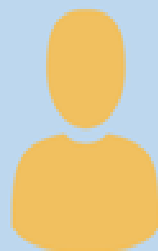
Parent's Story

I found the parents group very helpful. Not only were they full of relevant information but it was good to see that I was not alone, we are all struggling at times & my boy wasn't just the only one not being 'the perfect child' if there is such a thing. When times are bad we think its only ourselves that go through it & that we are doing something wrong. After the parents group I felt better equipped to deal with challenges ahead & I was reassured that there was help available if I needed it. Being able to talk to people going through the same things was really insightful. The information was vast & well put together by the organisers. They covered what was most relevant for us.

Deborah (Northern Area Team- Parent's Support Group)

YJA Outcome 2: Improved outcomes for children, families, victims and communities.

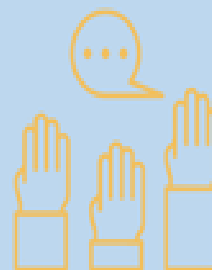
Participation: YJA is committed to continuing to develop and deliver services in partnership with service users. Informed by the Child First principle and underpinned by the UNCRC, YJA is developing work in the area of Participation to actively seek the experiences, thoughts & opinions of young people, victims and families to shape service design & delivery.



In Jan 2022 the agency appointed a Participation Officer as part of its participation pilot.



In Feb 2022 YJA carried out a consultation with the DfI on unlawful driving, as part of the new road safety strategy.



In March 2022 the agency carried out a consultation with 23 young people on areas in the new YJA Corporate Plan.

I know that the YJA advocated on my behalf. I know that they tried to involve the victim and their family. The YJA were very good and sensitive in repairing the harm caused with family relationships, particularly with my mum. We worked in partnership with others, other justice professionals, PPS & police. We focused on my needs and not just what I had done and focused on positive outcomes for me in life beyond the youth conference and court. Intervention worked well.

Young person's feedback on YJA values, Corp Plan Consultation 2022

In Woodlands we go to school and I enjoy it. My view of education is asked for by the head of school each month. We discuss education in youth forum.

***(Education, Employment & Training)
Corporate Plan Consultation 2022***

Yes of course we should be involved because its about me so what I have to say matters. They wouldn't be able to help me if they didn't know what is going on and they only know that if I tell them.

***(YJA Assessments)
Corporate Plan Consultation
2022***

Yes its important as its just not me that's affected. Parents need help too! Maybe more time, opportunities for parents to engage.

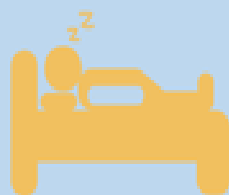
***(Family Work)
Corporate Plan
Consultation 2022***

YJA Outcome 3: Improved outcomes for children through the delivery of a safe, secure, therapeutic, child centred environment.

Custodial Services: Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre provides a safe, secure and stimulating environment for 10 to 17 year old boys and girls who have been remanded or sentenced to custody by the Courts in Northern Ireland. The Centre also accommodates young people under Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) legislation.



207 admissions to Woodlands involving 106 individuals



100% of children & young people surveyed reported improvement in their sleep, their mood or their energy levels from engaging in the Woodlands Wellbeing programmes



90.9% of young people surveyed felt involved in decisions about their future

User Feedback

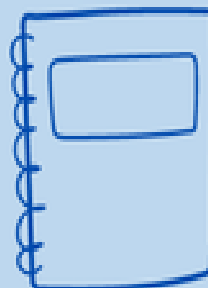
- 81.2% of children & young people surveyed felt that Woodlands will help them "stay out of trouble"



6 young people in Woodlands completed sections of the Duke of Edinburgh Award



90.9% of children & young people surveyed stated that Woodlands staff made them feel safe



On average 88.0% of young people attended education whilst in Woodlands

It was good to speak with CAMHS about my worries

I loved education it was best time of the day when in Woodlands

I feel safe in Woodlands and staff have really looked after me

Woodlands staff have really helped me and my family during visits. It can be difficult for me during visits. However staff arranged activities for me and my brothers to do which made it more enjoyable

Structure and routine makes me feel safe and good relationships with staff

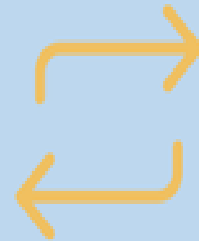
covering period Nov 21 - Mar 22

YJA Outcome 3: Improved outcomes for children through the delivery of a safe, secure, therapeutic, child centred environment.

The Provision of Mental Health Services In Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre: For children admitted to Woodlands, there is a statutory requirement to provide appropriate medical care, including mental healthcare within the Juvenile Justice Centre Rules (NI) 2008.



All young children are subject to a medical examination within 24 hours of admission. This incorporates a physical and a mental health screening to identify issues at the earliest opportunity.

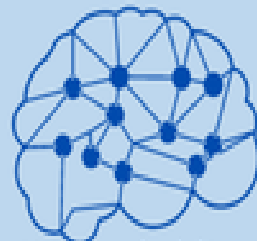


This also prompts any supports required immediately or onward referral to specialist mental health services which are available in Woodlands. The specialist services are detailed below.



106 children & young people upon admission to Woodlands received a Wellbeing & Mental Health pack to help support them in understanding and dealing with Covid-19

67 CAMHS Referrals in 2021-2022



41 Neuro-disability assessments



42 substance misuse assessments



Young people receive a CAMHS appointment in the community within 10 days of release from Woodlands.

Jane's Story

Jane, who has a diagnosis of ASD and ADHD, was admitted to Woodlands for a serious offence. Jane was supported by a multi-disciplinary team at Woodlands to think about her reasons for offending and complete bespoke interventions. Jane engaged in all support available to her, completing Duke Of Edinburgh, OCNNI, Emergency First Aid and won a Kestler Award for her artwork. These skills assisted in enabling her to re-integrate back into the community. She availed of mobility leave supported by all professionals involved with her case to further this re-integration. Jane expressed remorse for her involvement in her offence and made a continuous effort throughout her placement in JJC to involve herself in positive personal development.

Youth Justice Agency Charity Partner

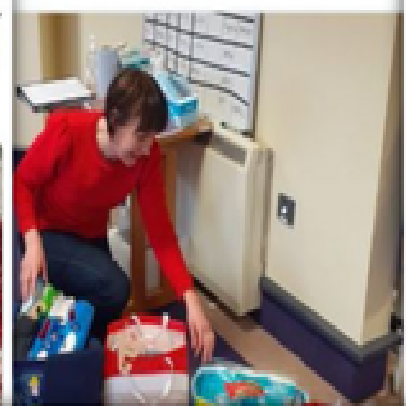
2021 saw the beginning of a new partnership for the Agency, this time with local foodbanks in the community. All five Area teams and Woodlands are supporting foodbanks in their communities with donations, volunteering their time making deliveries and helping in warehouses. Young people in our custody centre got involved by organising their own fundraising events selling hand made items, made by them. This partnership has been extended into a second year and will end in March 2022.

Youth Justice Agency @Y_J_Agency - Dec 20, 2021
 Catherine from our Omagh office taking items to Omagh Foodbank. Our chosen charity partnership for 2021-2022 are local foodbanks so we can continue to support young people and their families and build relationships in the community
 #reparation #givingback

Youth Justice Agency @Y_J_Agency - Nov 29, 2021
 Our Staff & some young people we help were out supporting @AntrimFoodbank Christmas Appeal. Chief Executive Stephen Martin joined the team in collecting donations at a local Tesco. 70 Pairs of pyjamas were collected as a part of the 'Jammies for Families' initiative.
 #reparation

Youth Justice Agency @Y_J_Agency
 Thanks to the Foyle Foodbank for giving the Young People we support an opportunity to give something back to the local community & help make amends for their offending behaviour.
 @TrussellTrust #reparation

Youth Justice Agency @Y_J_Agency - Nov 29, 2021
 Staff from our Belfast Area Team were volunteering in the @CashforKidsNI warehouse today packing and preparing Christmas parcels for children and young people in the community.
 #missionchristmas



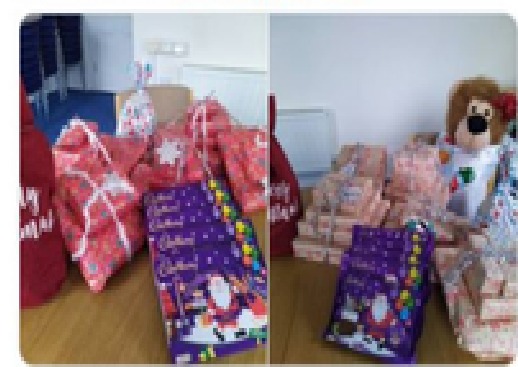
Staff and young people from Youth Justice Foyle helping out today at local food bank. This is the first of two events that have organised. Today were sorting out donations on 10th December we will be doing a street collection with donations being given to Foyle Foodbank



Youth Justice Agency @Y_J_Agency - Dec 7, 2021
 Kelvin Doherty & Julie Wilson of our Eastern Area Team took delivery of Christmas food parcels from Lisburn Foodbank that we will be distributing to some young people we support and their families in the Lisburn area.
 #community @LisburnFoodbank



Youth Justice Agency @Y_J_Agency - Dec 20, 2021
 As part of our drive to support foodbanks this year staff from our Southern Office have donated and collected gifts and foodstuffs for young people and families in the area. #community @GVP_Ireland





An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Máinnystrie o tha Laa



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Thank you for taking the time to read our report.

If there are aspects of our work that you would like to know more about or that you would like to see included in future reports please let us know by clicking the feedback button or by emailing us on info@yjani.gov.uk.



CAWT – Cross Border health and Social Care: Annual Report 2021

From: McDermott Joanne M. <Joanne.McDermott@westerntrust.hscni.net>

Sent: 12 October 2022 14:48

Subject: CAWT - Cross Border Health & Social Care: Annual Report 2021

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 Chief Executive/Council Member

Please find a copy of CAWT's 2021 Annual Progress Report [here](#) for your information. I hope you find it informative.

Regards

Joanne McDermott

Personal Secretary

Co-operation and Working Together (CAWT)

Cross Border Health and Social Care *'Celebrating 30 years of cross border collaboration in health and social care | CAWT 1992 – 2022'*

Tel: +44 (0)2871 272100 / +44 (0)78 0839 0734

Email: joanne.mcdermott@westerntrust.hscni.net

Web: www.cawt.hscni.net



From: DfE Gas Branch <gasbranch@economy-ni.gov.uk>

Sent: 14 October 2022 16:21

Subject: The Gas (Designation of Pipe-lines) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022

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.

For information:

The Gas (Designation of Pipe-lines) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022

The Department for the Economy has made subordinate legislation entitled "The Gas (Designation of Pipe-lines) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022".

Under Article 59 of the Energy (NI) Order 2003, the 2022 Order will "designate" for the purposes of the common transmission tariff a new 3km section of gas transmission pipe-line connecting Kilroot power station, Carrickfergus to the existing Northern Ireland gas network with effect from 2nd November 2022. This will allow certain costs associated with the new pipe-line to be added to a "postalised" pot and recovered from all Northern Ireland gas consumers (business and domestic) through the regulated common transmission tariff within gas bills.

The common transmission tariff currently represents around 5% of a domestic customer's overall gas bill. It is not expected that designation of the Kilroot pipe-line will result in an increase in gas prices for consumers as the small additional costs should be offset by the additional gas demand from Kilroot power station.

By supporting the economic viability of the project, the 2022 Order will facilitate the conversion of Kilroot power station from coal to natural gas, a less polluting fossil fuel, in turn contributing towards lower carbon power generation in Northern Ireland.

The 2022 Order can be viewed by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2022/248/contents/made>

The regulatory impact assessment, equality screening form and rural needs impact assessment for the 2022 Order are available at the following link:

Gas (Designation of Pipe-lines) Order (Northern Ireland) 2022 | Department for the Economy (<http://www.economy-ni.gov.uk>)

If you have any queries, please contact Irene McAllister (tel: 07388717682 or e-mail: irene.mcallister@economy-ni.gov.uk)

Children's Social Care Services Northern Ireland **An Independent Review**

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

Our October newsletter opens with a statement from Professor Ray Jones, the Lead Reviewer for the Independent Review of Northern Ireland's Children's Social Care Service in Northern Ireland, at this halfway stage of sixteen-month period of the Review.

Half Way Reflections from Ray Jones



It is now already half-way through the sixteen months (February 2022 - June 2023) Independent Review of Northern Ireland's Children's Social Care Service and it may be timely to do a little reflecting and stock taking.

First, a BIG thank you to everyone involved in and with children's social care services in different ways for the time, experiences, advice, and wisdom you have shared with me – children and young people, parents and family carers, foster carers, adopters, practitioners, managers and leaders across statutory children's services and within the community and voluntary sector right across the region, trade unions (NIPSA and Unison) and the British Association of Social Workers, social work students and educators and researchers, policy makers and other colleagues in the Department of Health (DoH) , and those in schools, the judiciary, and other agencies who work with and alongside children's social care services. I am truly grateful.

And thank you to the Voice of Young People in Care (VOYPIC) for facilitating my engagement with children and young people, to Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI) for helping with my

meetings with parents and carers and with community and voluntary sector (C&VS) organisations, to the Fostering Network for making links for me with foster carers and independent fostering agencies, and to the Review's advisory panel and secretariat for helping shape the Review and for keeping the Review on track and on the road.

So what has it been like? Well, not always straightforward!

The Review was launched during what were still the limitations of Covid lockdowns with meetings having to be postponed or re-routed on-line as infections were still quite rampant (and as I sit here typing today with Covid for the second time this is clearly not behind us!). And I have had the joy of many hours at Bristol and Belfast International airports with fingers crossed, not always successfully, that EasyJet will fly me.

CHANGES SINCE THE REVIEW STARTED

But the most significant unexpected events during the eight months so far of the Review have been the political and leadership changes impacting on children's social care.

Just after the Review started the Northern Ireland Assembly was dissolved and there has been no functioning Executive since, although I have much appreciated the continuing commitment and interest of the Minister of Health.

There has been a change of Permanent Secretary in the Department of Health (and I am grateful that the new Permanent Secretary has demonstrated considerable commitment to the Review), and recently there has been the change of Deputy Permanent Secretary and Chief Social Worker.

There has also been the organisational change with the migration of what was the Health and Social Care Board into the Department of Health (DoH) with the creation of the Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SSPG), which also has had significant internal changes over recent months.

And within the five Health and Social Care Trusts (HSCTs) since February one Director of Children's Services (DCS) was and is an interim appointment and three have resigned. The majority of DCSs are now interim appointments.

Amid all these changes it has been especially important and beneficial in anchoring the Review, without any compromise or challenge at all to my independence as the Lead Reviewer, to have had the engagement with the Director of Family and Children's Policy in the DOH who is widely respected for her experience and expertise.

THE REVIEW'S PLANNED PHASES

The Review is now into phase three of its programme. Phase one (February-April) included meeting the regional infrastructure organisations for children's social care, getting out and about across the region into each Trust and meeting leaders, managers and practitioners (I have probably met more than 600 social workers), spending evenings in children's homes, and visiting regional children's residential facilities.

Phase two (May-July) included meeting lots of children and young people and parents and other family members, foster carers, meeting with C&VSs and visiting their services, and

engaging with schools, the police, public health workers, judges, and others working with and alongside children's social care.

Phase three (August and continuing) includes drilling down into practice, and through a series of workshops – each attended by about 90 people - checking I am spotting the most significant issues and whether my direction of thinking is sensible. Workshops have or are being held on disabled children and their families; looked after children; family support; the social care workforce; and the organisation and delivery of children's social care.

Phases four and five in the new year will include beginning to shape the Review report and filling in the gaps in my understanding and thinking and then preparing the final report by June 2023.

To assist the Review briefing papers are being prepared on the changes in statutory children's social care in Northern Ireland since 2000; an overview of family support services; comparative trends and patterns in children's social services from across each of the UK administrations and the Republic of Ireland; comparative analysis of children's social care budgets and expenditure; and children's social care workforce comparisons.

THE SERIOUS CRISIS IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

But I have been heard to say I see little point in just preparing another review report (although of course I will!). There are many other reviews currently underway but there is a history of many past reports not delivering what they intended and lying on the shelf waiting to be read by the next reviewer.

In this context it particularly concerns me that there is a continuing political vacuum with urgent issues which need to be addressed and needing the decisions of a functioning Executive, which are drifting and without actions, especially regarding increasing poverty, the government funding of public (and therefore also C&VS) services, and the impact of the ending of European Community grants for C&VSs.

A major concern should be that there is a serious crisis in children's social care services. This is not just my view. It is what I am told in meetings and in individual conversations with young people and families. It is what I am told by practitioners and managers. It is what I am told by those working with and alongside the services

It is a significant serious crisis which is endemic and it is systemic. It is endemic in that it is long standing. It is systemic in that it is right across the region and every HSCT. It is not about the failings of individuals. It is structural. But it is fixable.

It is characterised by thousands of children and families who have crossed a threshold of being recognised as needing the involvement of children's social services but who have not been allocated to anyone to work with and to assist them from within the HSCTs' children's social care services.

This should be no surprise when there are workforce vacancies of 30-40% across children's social care teams. Even some of those children and families who may have an allocated worker may see little activity because of the workload pressures or they may see no continuity of worker because of the churn within the workforce.

Within the HSCTs there are understandable and inevitable major concerns about the pressures and waiting times within hospital and health services. It should not be a surprise that despite considerable board and top leadership commitment children's social care may not be the biggest of the issues taking time and attention and needing to be tackled. Directors of Children's Services are then distracted from and squeezed in their focus and grip on children's social care amid bigger corporate agendas and service responsibilities.

There also sometimes seems to be a tension between the DoH wanting to achieve consistency of services and standards across the region and the HSCTs and DCSs wanting to take action within their areas without needing to reference or seek permission from the Department of Health.

SO WHAT TO DO?

Action is already being taken to increase the skills mix within frontline children's social care teams both to support social workers and, importantly, to provide more help for children and families. And DCSs have been given the necessary space to take actions without having to seek the approval of the DoH in, for example, setting aside some of the procedural recording and reporting requirements to free up more time for direct work with children and families and to reduce the backlog of work.

The Minister of Health recently announced an embargo from June next year on the employment of agency social workers, with opportunities before then for agency workers to gain permanent posts, and this should help reduce the changes and churn in social workers experienced by families.

ONE CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

But there is a bigger issue. It is now my clear view – and which having checked with many others I am not alone – that the endemic and systemic serious crisis in children's social care in Northern Ireland requires structural change. Rather than children's social care being a minor and may be marginal part of what are very busy and pressured Health and Social Care Trusts, there should be one children's social care body for Northern Ireland (one DOH Arms Length Body - ALB- within Northern Ireland's arrangements), albeit with local delivery of services through geographical divisions based on the HSCTs areas.

I have shared and explained this view and recommendation with the Minister of Health and Permanent Secretary but without an operational Executive it is not a decision which can be taken at this time. What has been initiated is an option appraisal, which includes the option of a new ALB, within the Department of Health to inform hopefully a decision to be taken in the New Year (and before the completion of this Review).

A region-wide children's social care ALB also offers the scope to push forward with increased focus and energy with partners on developing more multi-professional children and families frontline services and teams rather than professional silo working.

A region-wide children's social care ALB would also help progress to be made regarding regional children's services, such as implementing the outstanding review recommendations regarding Northern Ireland's Secure Care Centre (Lakewood) and Juvenile Justice Centre (Woodlands). I have met with the Ministers of Health and Justice and shared thoughts on how

to move forward more quickly on implementing the recommendations of the Regional Facilities Review, including the recommendation to establish a single Secure Care and Justice Centre in place of the current separate arrangements.

MORE TO DO

There are many other concerns which will be addressed through the Independent Review of Children's Social Services – how to get more practical help to families; how to value more and to utilise the expertise based on experience of young people and parents for the benefit of each other; how to give more security and certainty to the provision and funding of CVS services; how to stabilise the care of children; how to not only educate and train and recruit but also how to retain more social workers in children's services, but also within a wider skills mix; how to re-balance an overwhelming focus on the safety of children and child protection to a children's and families service; how to make it less likely that young people who are disabled or care experienced will feel and be stranded from services as they move into adulthood ... and other themes and issues.

I am aware this Review will have (rightly) raised expectations. I am also aware that there are no magic and quick solutions to every issue which needs to be addressed. But I do think there are some quicker fixes for some issues and that a solid and secure region-wide organisational platform and foundation can and should be put in place to allow progress on sorting the issues not amenable to quick fixes. This may need political will and action and I hope this is in place and decisions have been taken before this Review's final report is published next June.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ray Jones". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

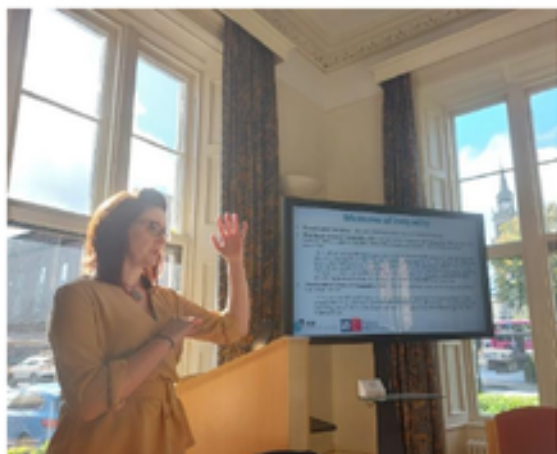
ENGAGEMENTS

Professor Jones, Lead Reviewer, continued his programme of meetings and visits over the month of October. The programme has included follow up meetings with Trust Chief Executives and Director's of Children's Services to discuss the progress of the Review to date. Professor Jones visited Hydebank Prison to meet with male prisoners to hear about their experiences of children's social care. He also visited Lakewood Secure Care and Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre to meet with young people and staff to observe services on the ground and to hear about their experiences. Meetings took place with the Minister of Health, Robin Swann and the Minister of Justice, Naomi Long along with Department of Health Permanent Secretary, Peter May to discuss his Interim Review Paper.



Health Minister Robin Swann met with Professor Ray Jones, lead reviewer and Justice Minister Naomi Long. Also pictured are members of the Review Secretariat Hugh O'Reilly, Shannon Keegan and Michael McArdle.

Professor Jones also met with the Deputy Secretary of Social Services Policy Group, Peter Toogood and Strategy Director for Social Work and Social Care Workforce, Jackie McIlroy. Discussions have also taken place with the chair of the Independent Review of Education, Keir Bloomer and the Advisory Panel to hear about the similarities in the two Reviews. Professor Jones met with the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice, Jacqui Durkin, engaged with representatives from NI Public Service Alliance (NISPA) and with the Commissioner of Northern Ireland Commissioners for Children and Young people, Koulla Yiasouma. Meetings were held with Queen's University Belfast, School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work academics to hear about their ongoing research on how social deprivation impacts children's social care.



Professor Jones also met with a range of community and voluntary children's social care stakeholders, facilitated by Children in Northern Ireland (CiNI). In addition, he has had a series of online meetings with Adoption NI and the Independent Fostering Providers Forum. Professor Jones also visited TUSLA at their headquarters in Dublin to hear how children's social care services are delivered in the Republic of Ireland.

WORKSHOP 2 – CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Our second workshop took place in Hazelwood Integrated College on 13 October 2022 with a key focus on children and young people with care experience and their families. 90 people participated, including young people, adoptive parents and foster carers, practitioners, policymakers, service managers, representatives from the community and voluntary sector as well as representatives from statutory agencies. The workshop provided a platform for delegates to share their thoughts, views and experiences on the current issues facing children and young people with care experience and most importantly how services could be improved. Engaging discussions took place from both an individual and group perspective through roundtable discussions.



Round table discussions underway with adoptive parents/carers and foster carers at the workshop for care experienced children and young people.

Thank you to the speakers for your thought-provoking presentations that highlighted the key issues impacting care experienced children and young people. Your input is highly valued and will help Professor Jones shape the Review to improve Children's Social Care Services.



Rhianna Brown spoke about the key issues within Children's Social Care from a care experienced young person's perspective.



Hugh Marcus spoke about his experiences from a foster carer perspective.



Dave Linton presenting the key issues from the perspective of an adoptive parent.



Eimear Rafferty, highlighted the experienced young

onsite school social worker perspectives of care people.

WORD OF THANKS TO HAZELWOOD INTEGRATED COLLEGE

Many thanks to Hazelwood Integrated College for hosting the second workshop for the Independent Review for your engagement and contributions on the day; it is much appreciated. A special word of thanks to Patricia and to the catering staff for all their care and commitment in making the event run seamlessly.

We were so pleased and proud to have "attended the best school in the UK" and also to have Head Girl, Adel co-chair the workshop. Thank you to the School Social Worker Eimear for her well-delivered presentation. The messages you gave were very powerful and helped to inform the workshop and the Review.



UPCOMING WORKSHOP

Our third Review Workshop will be held on 15th November 2022 in the Junction, Dungannon. This workshop will focus on Family Support Services. Invitations for this workshop will be issued shortly. We look forward to hearing more engaging discussions to help inform the Independent Review.

CONTACTING THE REVIEW

If you wish to get in touch with the Review, you can contact the Review Secretariat team through the Review's website, accessed [here](#). The website provides information about the Review, details on how to contact us, key documents and latest news. The Review website will serve as a platform to connect with you and to seek your views.

The Review has its own twitter account [@cscsreviewNI](#) where you can follow us and view our twitter feed for more updates on the work of the Review.