

February 23rd, 2024

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Wednesday, 28th February 2024** at **7:00 pm** in **Bangor Castle, Bangor.**

Agenda

Agenda

(Attached)

[📄 Agenda 28.02.24C.pdf](#)

Page 1

1. Prayer

2. Apologies

3. Declarations of Interest

4 Mayor's Business

5 Mayor and Deputy Mayor Engagements for the Month of February 2024 (Copy attached)

[📄 Mayoral Engagements February 2024.pdf](#)

Page 5

6 Minutes of Council Meeting held on 31 January 2024 (Copy attached)

Copy attached.

[📄 C 31.01.2024 Minutes.docx](#)

Not included

[📄 C 31.01.2024 Minutes PM.pdf](#)

Page 7

7. Minutes of Special Council Meeting dated 13 February 2024

[📄 SpC 13.02.2024 Minutes.pdf](#)

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8. Minutes of Committees

8.1 Planning Committee dated 6 February 2024 (Copy attached)

[📄 PC.06.02.24 Minutes.pdf](#)

Not included

[📄 PC.06.02.24 MinutesPM.pdf](#)

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8.2 Environment Committee dated 7 February 2024 (Copy attached)

[📄 EC 07.02.24 Minutes FULL.pdf](#)

Not included

8.3 Place and Prosperity Committee dated 8 February 2024

(Attached)

PP 08.02.2024 Minutes.pdf

Not included

PP 08.02.2024 MinutesPM.pdf

Page 110

8.4 Corporate Services Committee dated 13 February 2024

CS 13.02.2024 Minutes.pdf

Not included

CS 13.02.2024 MinutesPM.pdf

Page 128

8.5 Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 14 February 2024

Copy attached.

CWB Minutes 14.02.24.pdf

Not included

CWB Minutes 14.02.24 PM.pdf

Page 142

9. Response to Request for Information from Invest NI - Land and Property Services Questionnaire

(Attached)

9. INI Industrial land Response.pdf

Page 168

9.1 - Appendix 1 INI Letter ref Industrial Land Review.pdf

Page 170

9.2 - Appendix 2 INI Industrial Land Questionnaire ANDBC response.pdf

Page 172

10. Deputation Requests

10.1 Geodiversity Charter Northern Ireland

(Attached)

10.1 Deputation Request - Geological Survey of Northern Ireland.pdf

Page 176

10.1 Deputation Request Form - Geological Survey of NI.pdf

Page 177

10.2 Sustainable NI

(Attached)

📎 *10.2 Deputation Request - Sustainable Northern Ireland.pdf*

Page 182

📎 *10.2 Deputation Request Form_SNI.pdf*

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10.3 Newtownards Masonic Centre and Community Hub

(Attached)

📎 *10.3 Deputation Request - Newtownards Masonic Centre and Community Hub.pdf*

Page 187

📎 *10.3 Deputation Request Form - NMC.pdf*

Page 188

11. Resolutions

11.1 From Derry City and Strabane District Council - Ongoing Bombardment and Siege of Gaza

(Attached)

📎 *11.1 Derry City and Strabane District Council.pdf*

Page 194

12. Consultations

12.1 Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 - Draft Codes of Practice (Northern Ireland) - NI Direct - Citizen Space

(Attached)

📎 *12.1 Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 - Draft Codes of Practice (Northern Ireland) - NI Direct - Citizen Space.pdf*

Page 196

13. Nomination to Community Advice Ards and North Down (CAAND)

(Attached)

📎 *13. Nomination to Community Advice Ards and North Down (CAAND).pdf*

Page 198

14. Sealing Documents

15. Transfer of Rights of Burial

16. Notice of Motion Status Report (Report attached)

(Attached)

17. Notices of Motion

17.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Boyle and Alderman McAlpine

That this Council brings back a report with reference to projected costings associated with repairs and necessary requirements to Kircubbin Harbour, as identified as a priority within the Kircubbin Village Plan, that would create a functioning facility for the Kircubbin village, surrounding areas and a tourism destination for the boating and sailing fraternity; further that an annual projected maintenance costing be included.

17.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor W Irvine and Councillor S Irvine

That this Council in recognition of the 70 years of service rendered by the late her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II gives consideration to the erection of a permanent memorial to Queen Elizabeth II at the redeveloped marine gardens. A report to be brought back to the Council to include options on the commissioning and costings of the memorial.

17.3 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Edmund

That Council note the increasing growing population in the village of Ballyhalbert and the current lack of public open spaces in the village and task officers to bring forward a report on options to provide a public green open space to promote health and wellbeing of the local community and further tasks officers to engage with developer to ensure the new play park planned for Saint Andrews is delivered in line with our Council play strategy.

17.4 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor McKee, seconded by Councillor Kendall

This Council notes the importance of outdoor lighting on Council land and buildings for public safety, security, and tourism. Moreover, it acknowledges the benefits of energy efficient lighting in the Council's decarbonisation journey and the financial savings that are realised.

However, this Council also notes the negative consequences artificial lighting has on our wildlife despite the importance and benefits outdoor lighting can bring. As a Borough committed to improving biodiversity, this Council will ensure that all future installation or retrofitting of outdoor lighting is nature friendly and take cognisance of our obligations for protection of priority species in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. Furthermore, that the Council's current outdoor LED lighting is assessed for the potential for retrofitting.

Circulated for Information

a) NICON - Back on Track: Securing the Health and Wellbeing of our Population (Correspondence attached)

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

18. Extension of Contract for Provision of Cleaning Services

(Attached)

📎 *18 - Extension of Contract for Provision of Cleaning Services.pdf*

Not included

19. Extension to Contract for Insurance Brokerage Service

(Attached)

📎 *19. Extension to contract for Insurance Brokerage Services.pdf*

Not included

20. Contract for Office Supplies

(Attached)

📎 *20. Contract for Office Supplies.pdf*

Not included

21. Art Led Regeneration Project for Bangor City

(Attached)

📎 *21. Art lead Regeneration Project for Bangor City.pdf*

Not included

📎 *21. Appendix 1 Bangor Art Regeneration Outline Business Case.pdf*

Not included

📎 *21 Appendix 2 Bangor Art Lead Regeneration OBC Appendices 1, 2, 8, 9 & 11.pdf*

Not included

📎 *21. Appendix 2a NMNI Social Economic Impact Report Summary - Appendix 3.pdf*

Not included

📎 *21 Appendix 2b Arts Council Letter of Support - Appendix 4.pdf*

Not included

📎 *21. Appendix 2c Bangor proposal Final - Appendix 5.pdf*

Not included

📎 *21. Appendix 2d Colin Davidson Insurance - Appendix 6.pdf*

Not included

📎 *21. Appendix 2e CAST Insurance - Appendix 7.pdf*

Not included

22. Minutes of Special Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 20 February 2024

Copy attached

Minutes Sp.C&W 20.02.24.pdf

Not included

Presentation Sp C& W.pdf

Not included

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

22 February 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a hybrid Meeting (in person and via Zoom) of Ards and North Down Borough Council which will be held at the City Hall, The Castle, Bangor on **Wednesday, 28 February 2024 at 7.00pm.**

Yours faithfully

Stephen Reid
Chief Executive
Ards and North Down Borough Council

A G E N D A

1. Prayer
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
4. Mayor's Business
5. Mayor and Deputy Mayor Engagements for the Month of February 2024 (Copy to follow)
6. Minutes of Council meeting dated 31 January 2024 (Copy attached)
7. Minutes of Special Council Meeting dated 13 February 2024 (Copy attached)
8. Minutes of Committees (Minutes attached)
 - 8.1 Planning Committee dated 6 February 2024
 - 8.2 Environment Committee dated 7 February 2024
 - 8.3 Place and Prosperity Committee dated 8 February 2024
 - 8.4 Corporate Services Committee dated 13 February 2024
 - 8.5 Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 14 February 2024

9. Response to Request for Information from Invest NI – Land and Property Services Questionnaire (Report attached)
10. Deputation Requests (Report attached)
 - 10.1 Geodiversity Charter Northern Ireland
 - 10.2 Sustainable NI
 - 10.3 Newtownards Masonic Centre & Community Hub
11. Resolutions
 - 11.1 From Derry City and Strabane District Council – Ongoing Bombardment and Siege of Gaza (Correspondence attached)
12. Consultations
 - 12.1 Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 – Draft Codes of Practice (Northern Ireland) – NI Direct – Citizen Space (Correspondence attached)
13. Nomination to Community Advice Ards and North Down (CAAND) (Report attached)
14. Sealing Documents
15. Transfer of Rights of Burial
16. Notice of Motion Status Report (Report attached)
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*****IN CONFIDENCE*****

- 18. Extension of Contract for Provision of Cleaning Services (Report attached)
- 19. Extension to Contract for Insurance Brokerage Service (Report attached)
- 20. Contract for Office Supplies (Report attached)
- 21. Art lead Regeneration Project for Bangor City (Report attached)
- 22. Minutes of Special Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 20 February 2024 (Copy attached)

MEMBERSHIP OF ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

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

**LIST OF MAYOR'S/DEPUTY MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS
FOR FEBRUARY 2024**

Thursday 1st February

19:00 Launch of Exhibition - Real Lives that Art of Living with Dementia Ards Arts Centre, Sunburst Gallery

Tuesday 6 February

11:00 Visit to Abbey Primary School (P3) Abbey Primary School, Newtownards

Wednesday 7 February

09:30 Careers Convention Aurora Leisure Centre, Bangor

12:00 Launch of Oxfam Superstore Church Road, Holywood

14:00 Sir Samuel Kelly Lifeboat Visit

Tuesday 13th February 2023

10:00 Guitar Festival Launch Photo, Ards Arts Centre

11:00 Care Day Breakfast with the Mayor, Bangor Castle

Thursday 15 February 2024

18.00 Dance World – Team leaving for Competition in Prague, Bangor Castle

19.00 Royal Naval Association Visit, Bangor Castle

Friday 16th February 2024

10.00 Photo Call – Sports Awards City Hall, Bangor

12.30 Greyabbey & District Community Association Kings Award Presentation Orange Tree, Greyabbey

Saturday 17 February 2024

20.00 Peter Corry Concert, 2nd Comber Presbyterian, Killinchy Road

Monday 19th February 2024

11:30 Visit to Royal Irish Regiment Museum 28 Bedford Street, Belfast

Thursday 22 February 2024

14:30 Exhibition - Ireland and the Birth of Europe, Bangor Library

16:00 Meeting with Action Deaf Youth, Bangor Castle

Friday 23 February 2024

19:00 Mayor's Charity Pub Quiz Royal British Legion, Hamilton Road, Bangor

Saturday 24 February 2024

14:00 Active Youth NI - Schools Challenge Decathlon, Hollywood Exchange

19:30 Comber Brass Band Family Night Smith Hall, 2nd Comber Presbyterian Church, Killinchy Street

Monday 26th February 2024

11:00 Commemorative Tree Planting RNLI, Castle Park, Bangor

13:00 NICHS Cardiac Manifesto Launch, Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings, Stormont

Tuesday 27th February 2024

11:45 Royal Navy Cook & Serve Competition, SERC, Castle Park Road, Bangor

20:00 Visit to speak to Boys Brigade, Decorum NI, Balloo Industrial Estate

Wednesday 28th February 2024

Time TBC Disability support Awareness Day, Signal Resource Centre, Bangor (Event TBC at time of writing)

15:00 Experience PR Photoshoot with Alpaca (1 of 2 potential dates, weather dependent – Event TBC at time of writing), Walled Garden, Helen's Bay

Thursday 29th February 2024

12:30 ANDB BeeSafe, Ards Arena Youth Resource Centre, 62 South Street, Newtownards

14:00 National Disease Day Afternoon Tea, Bangor Castle

15:30 Experience PR Photoshoot with Alpaca (2 of 2 potential dates, weather dependent – Event TBC at time of writing), Walled Garden, Helen's Bay

18:45 2024 Live Here Love Here Community Awards, Harbour Commissioners Building, Corporation Square, Belfast.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting of the Ards and North Down Borough Council was held at the City Hall, The Castle, Bangor and via Zoom, on Wednesday 31 January 2024 commencing at 7.00pm.

In the Chair:	The Mayor (Councillor Gilmour)	
Aldermen:	Adair	McAlpine
	Armstrong -Cotter	McDowell
	Cummings	McIlveen
	Graham	Smith
Councillors:	Blaney	Kerr
	Cathcart	Martin
	Chambers (Zoom)	McCollum
	Creighton	McCracken
	Cochrane	McKee
	Douglas	McKimm (Zoom)
	Edmund	McLaren (Zoom)
	Harbinson	McRandal
	Hollywood	Moore
	S Irvine (Zoom)	Morgan
	Irwin	Smart (Zoom)
	Kendall	Wray
	Kennedy	

Officers: Chief Executive (S Reid), Director of Corporate Services (M Steele), Director of Place (S McCullough), Director of Prosperity (A McCullough - Zoom), Director of Environment (D Lindsay), Director of Community and Wellbeing (G Bannister), Democratic Services Manager (J Wilson) and Democratic Services Officer (R King)

1. PRAYER

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

NOTED.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Alderman Brooks and Councillors Ashe, Boyle, W Irvine, MacArthur and Rossiter.

NOTED.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor McCracken – Item 10.1 – Deputation Request from Business Improvement District.

NOTED.

4. MAYOR'S BUSINESS

The Mayor extended her congratulations and those of the Council to the nine people who were from or worked in the Ards and North Down Borough who received Honours in HM The King's New Year Honours 2024;

- CBE - Ciaran Michael Murphy
- OBE - Nicki Patterson
- MBE - James Kilpatrick, David Eccles, Clive O'Neill, and Kim Scott,
- BEM - Monica Johnston, Mrytle McIlveen, and Robin Mercer

The Mayor also extended her congratulations and those of the Council to Foy Vance on his recent Emmy award for the song "A Beautiful Game" which he co-wrote with Ed Sheeran.

Finally, the Mayor informed members that a charity quiz would be taking place on Friday 23rd February at the Royal British Legion in Bangor and proceeds would go towards this year's Mayor's Charity fund. She advised that tickets were now available.

NOTED.

5. MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR ENGAGEMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2024

(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Engagements for the month of January 2024.

The Mayor highlighted that on 22 January she had attended the annual Holocaust Commemoration Event in the Council Chamber at Bangor City Hall which was attended by Holocaust Survivor Dr Alfred Garwood who recounted his experience and that of his family. She would hold this firmly in her memory.

Earlier in the day the Mayor had attended Road Safe NI Road Safety quiz with schools competing for a place in the Northern Ireland finals. Glencraig Primary School had won the competition with Ballymagee Primary School finishing runner up.

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

6. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 20 DECEMBER 2023

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: - Copy of the above minutes.

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

7. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

7.1. Minutes of Audit Committee dated 14 December 2023

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

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

7.2 Minutes of Environment Committee dated 3 January 2024

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Morgan, seconded by Alderman Cummings, that the minutes be adopted.

7.3 Minutes of Place and Prosperity Committee dated 4 January 2024

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Blaney, seconded by Councillor McCracken, that the minutes be adopted with the exception of portion 5 of item 9 and portion 3.5 of item 10.

7.4 Minutes of Corporate Services Committee dated 9 January 2024

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Moore, seconded by Alderman Graham, that the minutes be adopted.

7.5 Minutes of Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 10 January 2024

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

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

Item 10.1 – Notice of Motion

Councillor Wray proposed an amendment, seconded by Alderman Smith, that:

- This Council is alarmed at the proposed 5% cut in funding to arts organisations funded by the Department for Communities through the Arts Council NI.
- Notes that Arts Council NI funding has decreased, in real terms, by 30% over the last decade, despite evidence that investment in the arts has a real terms economic benefit for Northern Ireland. With continued cuts our borough will see more initiatives end, more artists forced into seeking new careers, and more companies forced to close.
- Recognises that Stormont Permanent Secretaries are being forced to take, without mandate, difficult decisions that should be taken by locally elected Ministers and a devolved Executive and Assembly.
- Calls for a reversal in cuts to the arts and agrees to join as a signatory to Equity NI's latest open letter to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Communities.
- Further calls for the restoration of a reformed Executive and Assembly to take decisions which can future-proof the arts sector and protect funding in the future.

Proposing the amendment, Councillor Wray explained that it was not about calling for a functioning NI Executive, it was for action to be taken when the Executive was restored, and consequently a relevant Minister in place. Given the lack of clarity at the time when the Motion was first heard he had been content to make the change as shown in the minutes, but given the news over recent days, it looked like a Minister would soon be in place.

The seconder, Alderman Smith also pointed to the new and ongoing developments around the restoration of the Northern Ireland Executive and it was widely reported that the Executive would be in place in the coming week and therefore the Minister responsible would soon be in place. It was now important that an increased budget could be accessed and result in a reversal of the funding cuts to the arts sector. He was hopeful that the motion would be carried forward and the action included would happen. It was one of many decisions that he hoped the NI Executive would take forward.

Alderman McIlveen had difficulty with the use of the word 'reformed' and was concerned how that could be interpreted, suggesting that it could mean the blocking of a unionist veto, for example, which would be in breach of the Belfast Agreement. Given that reasoning, Alderman McIlveen asked the proposer to remove the word 'reformed' from the amendment and he would be able to back the motion.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Irwin, felt that some members had lost sight of the debate, explaining that its focus was on arts funding. She explained that the Alliance Party was supportive of the amendment just as it had been of the original motion at

the Committee and the amendment that was debated at that meeting, as she felt that the use of the wording did not take away from the thrust of the motion.

In response to the Deputy Mayor's comments, Alderman Armstrong-Cotter agreed that Council should be supporting the spirit of the motion and she was pleased that the Alliance Party had indicated that it could therefore support the motion without the word 'reformed' included. The Council's DUP grouping could not support something that was not understood and she hoped that the Alliance Party could therefore support the DUP's position.

Taking the same view, Alderman Adair recalled that the Committee had been united on this matter at its meeting so was disappointed to see it come back up again before the Council. It was unclear what 'a reformed Executive' actually meant and its proposed inclusion was only making the motion political when it didn't need to be.

On being put to the meeting with 19 voting FOR, 13 voting AGAINST and 8 ABSENT, the amendment was declared CARRIED.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Alderman Smith, that this council is alarmed at the proposed 5% cut in funding to arts organisations funded by the Department for Communities through the Arts Council NI.

Notes that Arts Council NI funding has decreased, in real terms, by 30% over the last decade, despite evidence that investment in the arts has a real terms economic benefit for Northern Ireland. With continued cuts our borough will see more initiatives end, more artists forced into seeking new careers, and more companies forced to close.

Recognises that Stormont Permanent Secretaries are being forced to take, without mandate, difficult decisions that should be taken by locally elected Ministers and a devolved Executive and Assembly.

Calls for a reversal in cuts to the arts and agrees to join as a signatory to Equity NI's latest open letter to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Communities.

Further calls for the restoration of a reformed Executive and Assembly to take decisions which can future-proof the arts sector and protect funding in the future.

Item 13 - Roundabout Sponsorship - Update

Councillor Cathcart wished to raise a query in relation to the above item which had been heard in Committee. This would be deferred until later in the meeting when the press and public had been excluded.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Martin, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the minutes be adopted, with the exception of Item 13.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1. Onshore Petroleum Licensing Policy – Notification Of Consultation (Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Correspondence notifying the consultation on the On shore Petroleum Licencing Policy had been launched and the deadline for responses was 12 April 2024.

Proposed by Councillor McKee, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the Council responds to the consultation and refers it to the Community and Wellbeing Committee.

Speaking to his proposal, Councillor McKee said that although the preferred policy option of the Department was a moratorium and legislative ban on exploration and production of oil and gas in Northern Ireland, he believed it was important that this Council completed this consultation, and that the response reflected the Council's support for a NOM on this same issue that he had brought forward on petroleum licensing back in November 2020.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McKee, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the Council responds to the consultation and refers this to the Community and Wellbeing Committee.

8.2. NIE response to Utility Regulator Utility Regulator's consultation on its Draft Determination on the NIE Networks' Business Plan for the six-year period (1 April 2025 – 31 March 2031) (Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Correspondence from Northern Ireland Electricity Networks dated 13 December 2023.

Proposed by Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter that the consultation be noted.

Proposing to note, Alderman McIlveen felt that members and political parties could respond separately if they wished to do so.

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

9. RESOLUTION

9.1. Cystic Fibrosis Medication (Appendix IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Correspondence from Newry, Mourne and Down District Council dated 13 December 2023 requesting that all other 10 Councils consider an agreed Notice of Motion in relation to Cystic Fibrosis medication. The letter was attached at Appendix IV.

Proposed by Alderman Adair, seconded by Alderman Smith, that Council supports the resolution.

Proposing, Alderman Adair felt this was an important health matter and he was aware that Cystic Fibrosis was a lifelong condition that affected a large number of people in the Borough. He felt that they should have a right to access this medication at the point of need and he clarified that by supporting the resolution he was asking for Council to write to the Prime Minister.

Explaining that he had friends who took the medication, Alderman Smith was aware of its transformational effects. While he appreciated the cost involved if the campaign was successful, he felt it would be a shame if the drug could not be made available to others.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Alderman Smith, that Council supports the resolution and writes to the Prime Minister.

(Councillor McCracken left the meeting having declared an interest in Item 10.1 – 7.30pm)

10. DEPUTATION REQUESTS

10.1. Deputation Request from the Business Improvement District (Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive detailing that the attached deputation request had been received from the Business Improvement District (BID) to present to the Place and Prosperity Committee.

RECOMMENDED that Council accepts the request for a deputation from the Business Improvement District (BID) and refers it to the Place and Prosperity Committee.

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

Councillor Harbinson was happy to support the recommendation and welcomed the potential benefits that the organisation could bring to the area.

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

(Councillor McCracken returned to the meeting – 7.32pm)

11. HEALTHY FUTURES – A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK TO PREVENT THE HARM CAUSED BY OBESITY, AND IMPROVE DIETS AND LEVELS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND – CONSULTATION RESPONSE

(Appendix VI – VII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive detailing that the Department of Health was seeking views on a range of proposals to enhance health and wellbeing in Northern Ireland by focusing on improving diets, increasing participation in physical activity, addressing the obesogenic environment, and preventing the harm caused by overweight and obesity. A proposed new strategic framework had been developed that sought to take a whole system approach to addressing obesity and supporting people to achieve healthy weight, recognising the wider environment.

A consultation was being undertaken to seek view on the development of the new strategy. The draft strategy was attached to this report. Ards and North Down Borough Council was mentioned in the draft strategy as, via our Community Planning Partnership, we were the first early adopter site to start implementing a whole system approach to obesity.

The new strategic framework would take a whole system approach to addressing obesity and supporting people to achieve healthy weight, it would be health led but not solely health owned. The Framework would focus on reducing food, physical activity and overweight and obesity related inequalities.

The Framework was centred on four themes:

- Healthy policies
- Healthy places
- Healthy people
- Collaboration and whole systems approach

Proposed responses to the consultation questions were attached to this report.

RECOMMENDED that Council agree the consultation response.

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

12. CHANGES TO CONDUCTING COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL MEETINGS AND CHANGES TO THE STANDING ORDERS

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive detailing that at recent meetings of the Party Group Leaders and the Independent and Small Member Party Group, a number of potential changes to address the length and frequency of Council, Committee and other meetings were discussed. As a result, a number of 'good practice' actions were agreed by Council on 20 December 2023. In addition, the following changes to the Standing Orders were recommended for consideration and stood down without debate for one month.

Stand Down Standing Orders

Under Standing Order 29 – Suspension and Amendment of Standing Orders - that any motion to, add to, vary or revoke the Standing Orders will, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned and be referred without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council and any resultant amendment would be ratified at the meeting.

Any motion under this Standing Order to suspend the Standing Orders should require the support of a qualified majority vote and suspension could only be for the duration of the meeting.

Changes to Standing Orders

The Standing Order as it was currently written (Standing Orders, version 9, December 2021) were outlined below, with changes to the text marked in red:

Standing Order 20.15, Duration of Speeches

- “Except with the permission of the Council, a Member, in introducing a Motion, shall not speak for more than ~~ten~~ **five** minutes and in replying, for more than **five three** minutes. Other speakers shall be allowed one interaction which last no longer than ~~five three~~ minutes. **The duration of speeches is not inclusive of the Officer’s response**”.

Standing Order 11, Attendance of Members at Committees

To address the number of questions raised at Council on reports previously taken to Committee, it was recommended that Members be given dispensation to request at Council that a report be taken back to the Committee where Members who were not members of the Committee will be, at the discretion of the Chair, permitted to speak but not vote. Members should note the risk of referring reports back to Committee which, if many, could impact the length of Committee meetings.

The changes are recommended as follows:

- “Any Elected Member may attend a Committee meeting of which he/she is not a Member, ~~but may not take a Council seat within the main meeting area and instead should sit in the public gallery if~~ and subject to permission of the Chairman of the Committee, shall be given dispensation to speak on a matter that has been referred back to the Committee for consideration, but shall not, unless he/she is a Member of the Committee, vote in any division or propose any resolution or amendment. A matter may only be referred back to the Committee once. Items considered by the Planning Committee may not be referred back by an Elected Member who is not a Member of the Planning Committee. If the public and press are excluded from the meeting the Member is not required to leave the room but rather be bound by the restrictions imposed at that part of the meeting.

Standing Order 17.1, Motions

The changes were proposed as follows:

- “Notice of every motion, other than a motion which under Standing Order 17.2 may be moved without notice, shall be given in writing, signed by at least two

Members of the Council giving the notice, to the Chief Executive not later than at least five working days before the next meeting of the Council. Each motion must have a proposer and seconder. The motion must be clear in meaning otherwise it shall be rejected until such time as it is resubmitted in clear language. **Prior to lodging a notice of motion, members should take the opportunity to engage with the relevant Director on current action being taken and options available to have the subject matter addressed. This may assist members in formulating the terms of notice of motion. The motion must be submitted and not later than five working days before the meeting.**"

Standing Order 17.1.7 –

- "If the subject matter of any motion of which notice has been properly given comes within the remit of any Committee it shall, upon being moved and seconded, stand referred without discussion to that Committee, or to such other Committee as the Council may determine, for consideration and report. The Presiding Chairperson may, if they consider it urgent and necessary to the dispatch of business, allow the motion to be dealt with at the meeting at which it is brought forward. **Where such a motion is deemed urgent, the Presiding Chairperson shall give notice of this decision to the Members at least one day in advance of the meeting at which that motion is to be heard.**"

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees to adopt the changes to the Standing Orders as set out in this report which will be required to be passed by a qualified majority.

The Mayor clarified as a matter of accuracy that the recommendation was only required to be passed by a simple majority and not a qualified majority which had been stated in the report. She confirmed in response to a query from Alderman McIlveen that each of the standing orders under review would be considered individually.

Alderman McIlveen proposed, seconded by Councillor McKee, that no changes be made to Standing Order 20.15.

Speaking to the alternative proposal, Alderman McIlveen appreciated there was a temptation to review the length of time members were allowed to speak given some of the meetings had been lasting for five and six hours. However, it was important, in the interests of scrutiny and holding to account, that there was enough time provided. Some items perhaps were straight forward and did not require lengthy debate, but others were more complex and required more time and he did not want the Council to restrict itself in those circumstances.

The seconder, Councillor McKee, agreed with that view while Councillor Morgan was slightly disappointed as the Alliance Party felt it was indeed possible to make a good argument in five minutes. It was positive that there had been so many motions coming through but the danger of having so many meant that motions held later in the meeting were not getting the attention they deserved. She appreciated it was important that all sides of the Chamber agreed to that approach but given that was not the case, the Alliance Party grouping was of the view that Members should make the 10-minute limit for a proposal as a maximum to be used in exceptional circumstances and not a target.

Councillor McKimm concurred with the wider points of avoiding long meetings into the early hours of the morning. He questioned the level of due diligence that Members were able to give at later stages of those meetings and warned of the risks in that respect. However, he could not agree with reducing the length of time that Members were given to represent their constituents.

While recognising the irony of the topic, Alderman Smith wished to add to the debate, quoting Churchill's approach 'to be sincere, be brief and be seated'. He felt that was good advice but he was hopeful that members could self-manage rather than be restricted by the standing order.

AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor McKee, that no changes be made to Standing Order 20.15.

Alderman McIlveen proposed, seconded Councillor Edmund, that Standing Order 11 be amended as follows:

Any Elected Member may attend a Committee meeting of which he/she is not a Member but may not take a Council seat within the main meeting area and instead should sit in the public gallery save where he/she wishes to speak on an item or items.

To register an interest to speak, a Member should submit a request in writing to the relevant Director at least one working day in advance of the date of the Committee meeting at which they wish to be heard.

Where such a written request has been submitted that member shall be given special dispensation, subject to permission of the Chair, to speak on the item or items requested but shall not (unless he/she is a Member of the Committee) vote in any division or propose or second any resolution or amendment.

Once the item for which the Member has been granted dispensation has been dealt with the Member shall return to the public gallery. If the public and press are excluded from the meeting the Member is not required to leave the room but rather be bound by the restrictions imposed at that part of the meeting.

This section does not apply to planning applications before the Planning Committee which are instead subject to the Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee.

Speaking to his proposal, Alderman McIlveen explained that over recent months he along with other Party group leaders on Council had been involved in working to try and make decision making more efficient following the excessive length of meetings compared with other local authorities.

Explaining the reasoning for his alternative proposal, he noted that current standing orders did not allow a non-sitting member to speak at a committee unless they were proposing or seconding a notice of motion. It was often the case that a follow up report to that motion would come back to the same committee and the non-sitting

proposer or seconder of the motion would not get the opportunity to speak again until the minutes of that meeting were brought to the full Council.

Alderman McIlveen felt this was a particular problem for smaller parties and independents as their colleagues had lesser representation so there was no opportunity for someone to speak on behalf of the non-sitting member.

Even with greater representation, Alderman McIlveen provided a recent example of where he had to ask his party colleague Councillor Cathcart to amend a recommendation in relation to a grit pile motion when it could have been dealt with more effectively if he'd had the opportunity to question the relevant officer at the Committee.

This had an impact on decision making at the full Council meeting where it had to be raised again when it could have been dealt with effectively at the Committee meeting.

While he didn't feel it would completely eliminate the issue, Alderman McIlveen believed that the amendment would help to improve those difficulties and aid better decision making, avoiding debates being rehashed at full Council meetings.

He was mindful of the process in which Council populated its committees and how that had led to an over representation of Green Party members on the Planning Committee and under representation of that party on other committees. This amendment could go some way to address that issue.

While he was aware of potential abuse of the proposed change, he argued that it was mitigated by the fact that the non-sitting members would have no voting rights or be able to propose or second. If there was any abuse, then he would be asking for a review of the standing order. An example of abuse could be someone indicating to speak on all items on an agenda and that was why the Chair would have the power to refuse. Notice was also required and items would have to be specified.

If the new protocol was unworkable in anyway though, he explained he would be happy to reconsider. He was also aware that legacy North Down Borough Council had a similar mechanism as two Committee meetings ran simultaneously.

The seconder, Councillor Edmund welcomed the proposal and felt that it allowed for a member with a specific interest to contribute and ask questions at the Committee rather than the matter being rehashed at Council.

Councillor McKimm sought clarification referring to a scenario of the North Down Coastal Path which had attracted a large amount of public objection to a recommendation agreed at a Committee meeting. He asked if the proposed approach would prevent a member from being able to speak on or amend that recommendation at the full Council meeting in that particular case where an issue had only come to light following a committee's recommendation.

He gave a further example which was hypothetical, where a contentious matter was returned to Committee, while those not on that Committee could give notice and

have speaking rights, they were still unable to vote so would then seek to change that at full Council, but he asked for clarity if that would only result in the item being returned to Committee again and potentially resulting in the same outcome and therefore creating a loop.

The Chief Executive explained his understanding of the proposal and it's time saving objective in the decision-making process but emphasised that it did not take away the full Council's role to consider a Committee's recommendation. He further clarified that it was not a mandatory requirement for every matter to be referred back to the committee for further consideration, but he appreciated that the loop scenario highlighted by Councillor McKimm was a possibility if that was the will of the Council on a particular matter although that situation applied under the current arrangements too.

The proposer, Alderman McIlveen clarified that his proposal did not stop any matter being raised at full Council so it would have no impact on recommendations for the North Down Coastal Path example if anything like that situation came up. This was just a pre-emptive measure to enable a member to speak on something at Committee before the recommendation was made. It may impact on Council meetings or anything going back and forth to a Committee as had always been the case.

Given the responses, Councillor McKimm had concerns that the proposal was not addressing the problem that the Council was trying to solve.

Councillor Chambers asked if there would be limits in place on the number of non-sitting Committee members that wanted to speak or if it would be a 'free for all'. He wondered how that situation would be managed and asked if the proposer would respond in his summing up.

Speaking on behalf of the Alliance Party grouping, Councillor Morgan welcomed the proposal and felt it would give members a controlled opportunity to speak on matters of specific interest. She felt that the alternative proposal was less chunky and more workable.

Councillor Cathcart added his support and explained that this proposed change would give him the opportunity to attend two different committees where follow up reports to his Notice of Motions would be issued. Under the current arrangements, he would have had to have brought them up at a full Council meeting and rehash previous discussions. It did not take away anyone's right to raise matters at full Council however.

Summing up on his alternative proposal, Alderman McIlveen believed that Councillor McKimm had been led incorrectly by an ex-Councillor whose social media comments had resulted in a number of letters of concern from the public. He clarified that the proposed change would in fact give more accountability and enable members to do their jobs better. He spoke of the importance of members being able to get involved at the earlier Committee stage. He took on board the comments from Councillor Chambers in terms of managing the number of speaking requests but he felt it was something that could be reviewed if needed.

AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that that Standing Order 11 be amended as follows:

Any Elected Member may attend a Committee meeting of which he/she is not a Member but may not take a Council seat within the main meeting area and instead should sit in the public gallery save where he/she wishes to speak on an item or items.

To register an interest to speak, a Member should submit a request in writing to the relevant Director at least one working day in advance of the date of the Committee meeting at which they wish to be heard.

Where such a written request has been submitted that member shall be given special dispensation, subject to permission of the Chair, to speak on the item or items requested but shall not (unless he/she is a Member of the Committee) vote in any division or propose or second any resolution or amendment.

Once the item for which the Member has been granted dispensation has been dealt with the Member shall return to the public gallery. If the public and press are excluded from the meeting the Member is not required to leave the room but rather be bound by the restrictions imposed at that part of the meeting.

This section does not apply to planning applications before the Planning Committee which are instead subject to the Protocol for the Operation of the Planning Committee.

Proposed by Councillor McCracken, seconded by Councillor Creighton, that Council agrees to adopt the changes to the Standing Order 17.1 as set out in the report.

Councillor McCracken welcomed the recommended changes but believed it should be a two-way street as it did require cooperation from officers to make time to meet with councillors and discuss ideas and provide input and support.

He provided a case study, referring to requests to meet with the Director of Community and Wellbeing about the refurbishment of Ward Park tennis courts which dated back to October 2023. His request was in line with the guidance set out and was to discuss the dynamics of the site and any strategic or operational considerations to help inform a future motion. He said he had been waiting four months for the director to arrange this meeting despite frequent interactions in that time and in the last contact he had been advised that the request had been delegated to an officer that was on long term sick leave. It had not given him confidence in terms of the priority of his request or the respect for the constituents that he was trying to represent.

He asked the Chief Executive if he could provide some comfort on the proposed amendment to the Standing Order and what his view and expectations were on timeframes and how requests should be dealt with by the Director and Head of Service concerned.

The Chief Executive did not want to discuss, in open Council, the details of the specific case raised as he was aware the Director had spoken to the Member. In terms of the proposed change to the Standing Order 17.1, he advised that it was aimed at member engagement with officers as there were often examples of members bringing something similar forward so if there had been knowledge readily available that could be shared if appropriate. It could also be that the member did not have the wider details on strategies and projects that already existed and that could help the member in determining if their motion was necessary. He added that it was about helping to manage the number of motions that came forward.

In relation to timeframes, he advised that this was not covered in Standing Orders and he believed it should not have to be as it was good practice for officers to respond to members when they made a request for support, information or meetings. There was no reason the request should not be responded to quickly, subject to resources, but if there were any issues, he encouraged members to report those directly to him.

Councillor McCracken felt that the response had not offered reassurance to his concerns around timeframes and felt there needed to be an agreed understanding around how that process should be conducted and in what timeframe. Councillor McCracken felt that in the example he had provided it was impossible for him to enact that Standing Order.

The Chief Executive clarified that the officer engagement was aimed at assisting the member before they considered submitting a Notice of Motion in line with the five working days' notice required. He expected officers to be responsive and answer as soon as reasonably practical, although each situation was different. He advised any member who was concerned about undue delay to contact himself or if it related to a Head of Service, then the relevant Director. He was happy to discuss this further with Councillor McCracken after the meeting.

In a further matter, Councillor McCracken explained that while he felt it sensible to work within the framework of existing strategies, he felt that any good strategy used information that was bottom-up as well as top-down, and a motion often brought grass roots information derived from constituents and that insight should be welcomed as informing a strategy, and a strategy or absence of a strategy should not be used to block or discourage a motion, and a motion that represented these grass roots ideas should be encouraged. He felt that there should not be a narrow top-down vision of what a strategy entailed. Therefore a strategy should be able to adapt and be responsive to what Councillors were trying to do on behalf of constituents.

The Mayor referred to the section which stated 'members should take the opportunity to engage with the relevant Director' and understood that the word 'should' did not mean 'must' so would therefore not preclude members from being able to submit a notice of motion. The Chief Executive confirmed that was correct but engagement with Officers was to be encouraged.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McCracken, seconded by Councillor Creighton, that Council agrees to adopt the changes to Standing Order 17.1 as set out in the report.

Proposed by Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that Council agrees to adopt the changes to Standing Order 17.1.7 as set out in the report.

Alderman McIlveen explained this had been a particular issue for him when Notices of Motions were allowed to be heard on the night of a Council meeting without any notice given to other members. Due to the one working day advance notice period required this prevented any member proposing an amendment to that motion. The only way around it was to suspend standing orders, but there had been a situation where members had been uncomfortable doing that and it had extended the meeting by considerable time. Notices of Motions were submitted five working days in advance so that did allow adequate time to give prior notice to the Council if there was an agreement for it to be heard on the night of the Council meeting. He felt therefore that this would allow the opportunity for an amendment in that particular case. He appreciated the existing Mayor had followed that guidance anyway but he welcomed the opportunity to have it formalised in the Standing Orders.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McIlveen, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that Council agrees to adopt the changes to Standing Order 17.1.7 as set out in the report.

13. SEALING DOCUMENTS

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

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

- (a) Grant of Rights of Burials: D40287-D40343
- (b) Deed of Surrender - ANDBC to Trustees of Bangor Amateur Football Club
- (c) Lease - ANDBC to Trustees of Bangor Amateur Football Club
- (d) Lease - ANDBC to Donaghadee Heritage Preservation Company
- (e) Tender for the Provision of an Integrated Consultant Team for Ards and North Down Borough Council Whitespots Country Park

14. TRANSFERS OF RIGHTS OF BURIAL

The following transfers were received:

Clandeboyne Cemetery

Elizabeth Porter -Raymond Porter section AP 5027

John Bell – Amanda Pawar section HX 3376

Comber Cemetery

Kathleen Presho- Joanne Veighey section 22 124

Nigel Moreland – Karen Gamble section 18 50

Karen Gamble -Nigel Moreland section 18 49

Duplicate:

John Brown Movilla Cemetery section 55 graves 384+385

Gary Roath Ballyvester Cemetery Section G grave 108

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor Martin, that the transfers be approved.

15. NOTICE OF MOTION STATUS REPORT

(Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- A Status Report in respect of Notices of Motion.

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

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the recommendation be adopted.

16. NOTICES OF MOTION**16.1 NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR W IRVINE AND COUNCILLOR MCKIMM**

That this Council writes to the Secretary of State to voice its objection to the NIO consultation on Water Charges and any attempt to introduce Water Charges to Northern Ireland.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McKimm, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Corporate Services Committee.

16.2 NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY ALDERMAN ADAIR AND COUNCILLOR EDMUND

That Council Note the closure of the training area at Portavogie Football Pitch due to health and safety concerns recognises the negative impact this has on local provision and sports development and tasks officers to bring forward a report on options to provide temporary training facilities in the village in the short term and repairs to the pitch in the long term as a matter of urgency further Council task officers to bring forward a bi-monthly progress report on the development of the Portavogie 3G Pitch Project to Council.

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

16.3 NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR WRAY AND ALDERMAN SMITH

That this Council writes to the Department of Infrastructure to once again express our deep concern at the poor state of roads across Ards and North Down.

Council further requests that DfI changes their policy in relation to the depth of potholes that are required to be repaired back to 20ml from the current 50ml in order to improve the quality and safety of our roads network.

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

16.4 NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BOYLE AND ALDERMAN MCALPINE

That this Council agrees to write to the Department for Infrastructure (DfI), seeking a meeting with elected members representing the Ards Peninsula DEA, to discuss the recent and ongoing interruptions to the Strangford Ferry Service.

WITHDRAWN.

16.5 NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MCCOLLUM AND COUNCILLOR MORGAN

That this Council acknowledges with concern the devastating impact of the planned closure of the Action Mental Health Promote Day Opportunities Service on its users, their families and the wider community throughout this borough and agrees to write urgently to the Chair and Chief Executive of South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust to call on the Trust to address funding pressures to secure the future of the service and centre at Enterprise Road, Conlig.

The Mayor advised that she had granted a request to hear the Notice of Motion due to the urgency of the matter.

Proposed by Councillor McCollum, seconded by Councillor Morgan, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

The proposer Councillor McCollum explained that 15 years ago, Action Mental Health opened the doors of its Promote Day Opportunities Centre in Bangor to an extremely grateful community of families throughout this borough who lived every day with learning disabilities. For very many of those families, coming to Promote had felt like coming home after a long journey of unsuccessful placements elsewhere in the community. For many users, their time at Promote had been the most

rewarding of their lives, emotionally, developmentally, and socially. One family whom she had known for many years would say that for their son, Promote represented his work, his life, his very identity.

Just over two weeks ago, those families of the 52 current service users received by email the devastating news that their centre was to close in a mere ten weeks. They were completely blindsided by the apparent suddenness of that decision and the perfunctory manner in which it was disclosed. Some families did not even receive the email and only found out by word of mouth some days later. Despite having received no prior warning, the families and Promote staff subsequently discovered that Action Mental Health had in fact terminated their contract with the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust back in the previous November. The brevity of the time period they were given to adjust to this seismic change was a major factor in the distress they had been experiencing and a source of understandable grievance.

The families were told in that email that they would be supported. They had not felt supported. They felt bereft, abandoned, marginalised and vulnerable. They found it inexplicable that a mental health charity could act with such apparent disregard for the mental health ramifications of their actions, not only on the users who had been healthy and happy during their time at Promote, but also their families, for whom Promote provided much needed security, peace of mind and respite from their caring responsibilities and also, in many cases, enabled them to earn a living. The uncertainty of the situation left many families feeling as if they were standing on a cliff edge.

She explained why Promote was special to those families, adding that it had a purpose built, state of the art premises, highly commended by everyone who used them.

The Promote staff, including its volunteers, was described by parents as “extraordinary” people with tremendous personal qualities, knowledge, skills and experience who were completely dedicated to their work.

The sheer variety of courses and training that was offered at Promote, from ASDAN and OCN accreditation in computers, cooking, independent living is simply not within the capacity of other providers to offer.

The breadth of the spectrum of complex needs and age ranges that Promote was able to cater for. Again, not within the capacity of other providers in the area.

This year the funding deficit which led to the decision to close Promote would amount to just under £100,000. Not an insignificant sum but a paltry amount when compared to the Trust’s budget of just under £1bn. And while no one could deny the enormous funding pressures the Trust was under, the potential of this short-term saving to be a truly false economy was significant when one considered the knock-on effects that this disruption would inevitably cause to the physical and mental health of its users and their families.

Families and carers who lived with learning disabilities were accustomed to having to fight for their loved ones. They had all been doing it for years and it was impossible

not to be moved by the Promote family's resilience and determination to keep the doors of this vital service open. She commended their dignity and the intelligence of their response to this crisis. They had galvanised support from within their communities and the sector but also politically and through all media platforms across Northern Ireland.

Councillor McCollum said that along with fellow representatives from the Alliance Party, including Stephen Farry, Andrew Muir, Nick Mathison and Connie Egan, had now met on several occasions with parents and with Action Mental Health and most recently yesterday at a joint meeting with the Trust.

She was able to report cause for optimism in that the Trust had today informed that another provider had been secured to take over the contract and contingency arrangements were in place.

Given the history in this case, it was now paramount that communication remained open, fluid and that regular updates were provided. These families needed reassurance that any transfer of services would be seamless and would ensure that their loved ones would have the structure, predictability and compassion which was essential to their wellbeing.

She said that it was the duty of elected representatives to continue to advocate for those families in pushing for the Promote Centre to remain open and she therefore asked for the Council's agreement to write to the Trust in those terms as a matter of urgency.

The seconder, Councillor Morgan added that she had been so disappointed that the situation at Promote had ever arisen and it should never have happened.

She urged members to think about the 50 adults and their families who used this extremely valuable, and much-loved service. They were being put in an extremely difficult and worrying situation. These were the very people who should be receiving help and support and be treated with great care and sensitivity. They were receiving the exact opposite and she felt that people appeared to be an afterthought and had certainly come well below any financial consideration. Council must not allow this to go unnoticed and the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust must do better.

Earlier in the day there had been word of a solution. This was great news and she hoped this worked out for all concerned. But surely a solution should have been found first and well before any closure announcements. Council needed to keep the pressure on.

Continuing, she urged Council to support the motion. Firstly, because a solution and excellent facilities and services must be provided for these adults, their families, and the Borough. Secondly because users of this service, and indeed any other service user needed to be shown proper respect and consideration at all times. Council needed to show our anger at this thoughtless treatment of a particularly vulnerable group of adults.

Councillor McKee rose to support this Notice of Motion, pointing to a similar notice of motion he had submitted along with Councillor Kendall seeking the Council's support for those affected by this crisis in Learning Disability Services in the Borough.

Although it appeared that there had been a reprieve for the services at Promote, with the hope that a new provider was stepping in to take over from Action Mental Health. That being said, it remained disgraceful that vital day opportunity placements for 52 residents of this Borough had been under threat.

Councillor McKee continued, explaining that having worked in Learning Disability Day Opportunity Services for over a decade, he knew how important places like Promote were to those who attended. The distress and uncertainty caused to all including families, staff and volunteers was shameful. That hard-working staff had been at risk of redundancy after providing such valuable opportunities for those who attended, was appalling.

Action Mental Health had been left in a difficult position, unable to continue to cover the increasing costs to provide this service when uplifts from the Trusts and Department were not forthcoming.

Although the focus of this issue was local, we could not lose sight of the crisis in public financing and the punishment budget introduced by the Tory Secretary for State for Northern Ireland, that had led to services like this one, to be at risk.

This was a prime example of why Northern Ireland needed a return of the Executive at Stormont and he welcomed the positive mood music on that front.

With a potential return of Government here, he hoped we could see the end to ransom holding of much needed pay rises for staff that had been a political choice. We needed to see work done to tackle unsustainable public finances that were causing crisis's affecting not just Learning Disability services in the Borough but so many others.

In fact in this example, the potential new provider for the Promote, would only initially be contracted for 12 months, so services like these, required multi-year service provision and the certainty that the clients deserved to avoid uncertainty returning this time next year.

From his conversations with families effected, Councillor McKee had learned that they were so grateful for the support they had been given from the public who had signed the petition and they had been encouraged by our Council's support for this cause.

In closing, he added that some of the most vulnerable in our society had found themselves in this position should have us all reflecting on how we can work together to ensure that others were not in this position future.

Adding his support to the motion, Councillor Wray had found it heartbreaking to hear from the families that had been affected and its knock-on effect went beyond their immediate family. He had found it disappointing that the Health Trust had known

about the situation in November and chosen to inform staff and families much later. It was important to recognise the fantastic work of the staff who had been tremendous. In a further point, he felt that the voluntary and community sector funding arrangements needed to be reviewed. It was not possible to change what had gone but Council could help to change the future and it was therefore important it got behind the campaign to show families that Ards and North Down Borough Council supported them.

Councillor McKimm had found it deeply refreshing to hear the compassion expressed and thanked the proposer and seconder for bringing the motion. It was important that those affected knew that Council had their back and was compassionately concerned. He suggested that the proposer consider adding that Council write to the Health who may be appointed over the next few days. In terms of funding arrangements going forward, it was important that staff and families were not sat with their fingers crossed.

Councillor Douglas rose to support the motion explaining that she had been contacted by a family from Ballygowan whose son attended twice per week. She had heard first hand the impacts of the closure and it had been a devastating blow that had come out of the blue. She had requested a meeting with the Trust which had provided assurances that it was onboard and committed to ensuring Promote was in place beyond 31st March. She encouraged members to watch a video of Promote on social media which illustrated its work in terms of protecting, teaching and caring for vulnerable adults.

Alderman Graham added his support, recalling that a young adult who attended the service had met the Mayor, highlighting the anxieties around the feared closure. It was important that members got behind the motion.

The Mayor added that one of her favourite events had been the Promote pantomime, the Wizard of Oz. She recalled how lovely it had been to see the great enthusiasm of those in the performance only to then experience the great sadness she had felt when she had heard news of the closure. She spoke of the importance of the service in terms of meeting local need for the young adults and their families.

The Mayor added that she had been amazed at the facilities it offered along with the variety of courses and classes and she praised the wider tie in it had with communities and businesses.

Promote was an integral part of community and the Mayor had met a number of people with family and friends who attended. It would have been a real blow if it was to close and the method undertaken to close it had been callous and heartless. Those that made the decision needed to have a long hard look at themselves and learn in future.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter explained that she too had met the families impacted through her work with the Strangford MP. While she appreciated the importance of the respite that the organisation provided she had been particularly struck by one parent's concern of how her son would meet his friend. She agreed with the Mayor

that taking away that social opportunity for that young man and many other services users had been callous.

It was not fair on parents who had fought hard and with integrity. She was pleased to hear things were moving forward now and while she said the DUP had secured extra funding, it was not sustainable and there needed to be a longer-term commitment. When it came to reviewing budgets, this was not something that should even be considered for cuts and it was right and proper for members to continue to press this and add its voice to what was a priority.

In summing up, Councillor McCollum confirmed that she would be happy to accept Councillor McKee's suggestion of writing to the Health Minister once they were appointed. She thanked members for their support and added that Councillor McKimm, along with Councillor McKee, had raised valid concerns around the 12-month funding arrangements and that had been raised to South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust representatives who had responded that it was a contractual agreement across all sectors and it could only be changed by the Northern Ireland Executive.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McCollum, seconded by Councillor Morgan, that the notice of motion be adopted and further that Council writes to the Northern Ireland Health Minister once appointed.

16.6 NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MCKEE AND COUNCILLOR KENDALL

That this Council notes the announcement on Monday 15th January of the closure of Promote Day Opportunities Service in Bangor; this Council notes the importance of this day opportunities service, relied upon by so many residents of this borough; acknowledges the public outcry and widespread support for retention of this vital service, demonstrated by the change.org petition; writes to SEHSCT for clarity on what support will be made available for those affected by this closure and writes to the Department of Health calling for sustainable public financing of much needed learning disability services in our Borough.

WITHDRAWN.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

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

7.5 Minutes of Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 10 January 2024 (continued)

****IN CONFIDENCE****

Item 13 - Roundabout Sponsorship – Update

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 3 – Exemption relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person

A query was raised in relation to the above item and that item of the minutes was agreed.

17. SUPPLEMENTARY REPORTS ARISING FROM PLACE & PROSPERITY COMMITTEE 4 JANUARY 2024 (Appendix V)

17 (a) SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT - ITEM 9 - MINUTES OF PLACE & PROSPERITY COMMITTEE ON 4 JANUARY 2024 – CHARGING AT EISENHOWER PIER CAR PARK (FILE RDP38)

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

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

This report contains a further update from Environmental Services on the operational considerations for potential changes to charging at Eisenhower Pier Car Park.

An alternative proposal was agreed to defer the item to the appropriate Committee for further discussion.

17 (b) SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT - ITEM 10 - MINUTES OF PLACE & PROSPERITY COMMITTEE ON 4 JANUARY 2024 – UPDATE ON BALLYHOLME YACHT CLUB WATERSPORTS CENTRE (FILE RDP 22/56)

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

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

The report provided an update on the current position of the project and recommended that the minutes were not agreed until the Operational Plan had been received and a further report was presented to Council.

18. AWARD OF TENDER FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE DESIGN AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT OF CATHODIC PROTECTION WORKS AT BANGOR MARINA AND HARBOUR

****IN CONFIDENCE****

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

This report covers the tendering process undertaken to appoint Consultants to design and project manage the undertaking of repair works to the cathodic protection at Bangor Marina and Harbour.

The report recommended that Council award the tender in line with the process.

The recommendation was adopted.

19. MINUTES OF SPECIAL PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING DATED 11TH JANUARY 2024

****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)**

Members discussed a report from the Director of Prosperity setting out 'policy in development' pertaining to options for Members' consideration and agreement in respect of the draft Plan that is not at public consultation stage.

The minutes were adopted.

READMITTANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Alderman Adair, that the public/press be readmitted to the meeting.

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 8.48pm.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid special meeting of the Ards and North Down Borough Council was held at the City Hall, The Castle, Bangor and via Zoom, on Tuesday, 13 February 2024 commencing at 7.00pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: The Mayor (Councillor Gilmour)

Aldermen:	Adair	Graham
	Armstrong-Cotter	McAlpine
	Brooks (Zoom)	McIlveen
	Cummings	Smith

Councillors:	Blaney	Kennedy (7.09pm)
	Boyle	Kendall (Zoom)
	Cathcart	Martin
	Chambers	McCracken
	Creighton	McKee (Zoom)
	Cochrane	McKimm (Zoom)
	Douglas (7.04pm)	McLaren
	Edmund	McRandal
	Harbinson	Moore
	Hollywood	Morgan
	S Irvine	Rossiter
	W Irvine	Smart
	Irwin	Wray

Officers: Chief Executive (S Reid), Director of Finance and Performance (S Christie), Director of Corporate Services (M Steele), Director of Community and Wellbeing (G Bannister), Director of Place (S McCullough), Director of Environment (D Lindsay – Zoom), Head of Finance (S Grieve), Head of Communications and Marketing (C Jackson), Democratic Services Manager (J Wilson) and Democratic Services Officer (P Foster)

1. PRAYER

The Mayor (Councillor Gilmour) welcomed everyone to the meeting and then invited the Chief Executive to read the Council prayer.

NOTED.

2. APOLOGIES

The Mayor sought apologies at this stage.

Apologies had been received from Alderman McDowell and Councillors Ashe, Kerr, MacArthur and McCollum.

NOTED.

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

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Mayor sought Declarations of Interest at this stage and none were declared.

NOTED.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

At this stage the Mayor noted that the Agenda indicated the recommendation that Item 4 – Minutes of Special Corporate Services Committee held on 25 January 2024 - should be heard 'In Committee'. However, she was aware that there would be particular public interest in the discussion of the minutes and as such would recommend that it was dealt with 'Out of Committee'. That however was assuming that members did not wish to raise any staffing, legal or commercially sensitive matters. If that was the case then it would be necessary to deal with those matters 'In Committee'.

Therefore, if any member wished to raise a staffing, legal or commercially sensitive matter, they were asked to indicate in order that the meeting could go 'Into Committee'.

As no indications were made the Mayor requested a proposer and seconder to take Item 4 'Out of Committee'.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor McRandal, that Item 4 be considered Out of Committee.

4. MINUTES OF SPEICAL MEETING OF CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2024

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copies of the above minutes.

The Mayor invited a proposer and seconder to adopt the minutes.

Councillor Moore proposed, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the minutes be adopted.

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

5. PRUDENTIAL CAPITAL FINANCING REGIME (FILE165)

(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services providing a Treasury and Investment Management Policy, Practices and Strategy Statement.

The Council was required to adopt the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition (the CIPFA Code), which required the Council to approve a Treasury and Investment Management Policy and Practices. The Council approved this strategy in February 2023, no updates to this policy were required this year.

In addition, the former Department of the Environment (DOE) issued Guidance on Local Council Investments in October 2011 that required the Council to approve a Treasury Management Strategy Statement before the start of each financial year. This was set out in Appendix 1.

Capital Strategy

The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 required the Council to have regard to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities 2018 Edition (the Prudential Code) when determining how much money it could afford to borrow. The objectives of the Prudential Code were to ensure, within a clear framework, that the capital investment plans of local authorities are affordable, prudent and sustainable, and that treasury management decisions were taken in accordance with good professional practice.

This capital strategy gave a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contributed to the provision of Council services along with an overview of how associated risk was managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

To demonstrate that the Council had fulfilled its objectives, the Capital Strategy set out the indicators that must be set and monitored each year.

This strategy was set out in Appendix 2 and the Prudential Code required that it was made available on the Council website.

Appendix 3 set out the capital budgets (net of any funding receivable) for the next three years on which the capital strategy had been based. Members should note that a number of projects on schedule had a delivery period that was greater than the three-year plan.

Appendix 4 set out the Council's minimum revenue provision policy as required by the Prudential Code.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the report and associated appendices.

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

6. ROBUSTNESS OF ESTIMATES AND ADEQUACY OF RESERVES (FILE FIN163) (APPENDIX II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services stating that Section 4 of the Local Government Finance Act 2011 required the Chief Financial Officer of a Council to submit a report on the robustness of the estimates and for the Council to have regard to this report when considering the estimates.

In addition, Section 6 required the Chief Financial Officer of a Council to submit a report on the adequacy of reserves and for the Council to have regard to this when considering the estimates.

Robustness of Estimates

The aim of the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was to give the Council a realistic and sustainable plan that reflected the Council's priorities and the policy of reasonable Council Rate increases as reflected in the Corporate Plan.

The detailed estimates had been formulated in the context of the budgeting strategy agreed in August 2023 and detailed work had been carried out with Directors, Heads of Service and Service Unit Managers for the various services. This work underpinned the MTFP, taking into account forecast outturn, current spending plans, the likely future demand level pressures for both revenue and capital expenditure and the risk environment. The major risks to the MTFP were:

Pay issues

- Pay budget significantly increasing (but workforce numbers staying largely static despite new demands)
- Significant pay issues, including outstanding pay claims need to be addressed in the short term.

Strategic savings

- Environment and Community & Wellbeing are the largest budgets and are the ones which have the most scope for savings to be derived from modifications to service delivery, operating models or estate rationalisation.

Financial resilience

- The Council's low reserves and high capital appetite leaves the Council exposed to interest rate fluctuation.

Prioritisation

- Work is required to align budget setting more coherently with the Corporate Plan.
- The non-domestic rate base is declining and presents a significant financial challenge to the Council now and into the long term.

- The budget is not sufficiently orientated towards resolving the non-domestic rate problem.

Climate change

- The Council is not resourced financially or operationally to deal with the challenges of the Climate Change Act and moving to net zero.

A number of iterations had been reported to special meetings of the Corporate Services Committee during the estimates process, before being agreed at the meeting on 25 January. As part of this process management had carried out some 'stress testing' of the budgets. The results were set out in the table below:

Category	Test	£'000
Payroll	24/25 pay increase 1% higher than budget	372
Capital Financing	Interest Rates 1% higher than budget	23
Waste Disposal	Landfill tonnage 5% higher than budget	208
Maintenance	Maintenance costs 15% higher than budget	345
Energy	Prices 10% higher than budget	352
Other Expenditure	5% increase	695
Service Income	5% reduction	628
Rates Income	Actual income 1% less than estimated	638
	Average	407

The Council had contingency amounts set aside in its Earmarked Fund to deal with both the energy and rates income risks. In addition, if two of the risks materialised that maximum exposure that Council would have would be in the region of £1M. The increased general fund balance would be adequate to absorb those costs in the short term, although would need replenished in the following years.

On the basis that:

1. the capital and revenue budget estimates for 2024/25 presented to this meeting, have been prepared in line with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code, Prudential Code and the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting;
2. the stress tests do not identify any substantial risks;
3. in the coming year the Council will commit to:
 - a. a review of the Reserves Policy to see how financial resilience could be further enhanced, to include the consideration of the merits of a Reserves strategy.
 - b. undertake a thorough review of the 10-year capital plan, given the significant impact on future rate setting and the risk exposure noted through this rate setting process.

- c. agreeing a budgeting strategy for the life of the next corporate plan in order to address the strategic risks already identified.

The Chief Executive was satisfied that the budgets set were robust.

Adequacy of Reserves

The Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 required the Chief Financial Officer of a Council to submit a report to council on the adequacy of any proposed level of financial reserves for a financial year.

In line with its budgeting strategy the Council had considered the adequacy of reserves throughout this Estimates process. The appendix set out the forecast year end reserves position for the current and next financial years and the Chief Executive was content with the adequacy of these. It was noted that the forecast General Fund balance was forecast meet the Reserve Policy target level of 7.5%.

Cognisance had also been taken of the CIPFA Local Authority Accounting Panel Bulletin 99 (issued July 2014), which gave guidance on the level of reserves and the financing of Council expenditure.

RECOMMENDED that Council note the report.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Moore, seconded by Alderman Graham, that the recommendation be adopted.

7. DISTRICT RATES 2024/25 (FILE FIN163) (Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services stating that the report was to present to members the proposed district rates for the 2024/25 financial year.

The Corporate Services Committee at its special meeting on 25 January recommended, subject to ratification, a district rate increase of 5.98% for the 2024/25 financial year. Appendix 1 set out the formal calculation. Appendix 2 set out 2024/25 Service budgets.

RECOMMENDED that Council sets for the 2024/25 financial year a non-domestic district rate of 27.8467p in the pound and a domestic district rate of 0.4095p in the pound. It is, further, recommended to approve 2024/25 Service budgets on Appendix 2.

At this stage the Chairman of the Corporate Services Committee, Councillor Moore, stated that she would like to propose the district rates for the 2024/25 financial year. The domestic rate of 0.4095p in the pound, an increase of 5.98%, and a non-domestic rate of 27.8467p in the pound, an increase of 5.98%.

Councillor Moore proposed, seconded by Alderman Graham, that the recommendation be adopted.

(Councillor Kennedy entered the meeting at this stage – 7.09pm)

The proposer, Councillor Moore, expressed her thanks to her colleagues for their hard work throughout the past few months which had seen the introduction of a new approach to the rate setting process. She also expressed her thanks to the Director of Corporate Services and his team for all their hard work throughout what had been a robust and detailed rate setting process. Continuing Councillor Moore acknowledged that the Council continued to operate in a challenging financial climate, while remaining ambitious to deliver excellent services and investments across the Borough. This budget she stated enabled the Council to meet those commitments, adding that spend would be monitored carefully along with progress. She did however express the view that the Council could be confident that it was moving forward from a stable base thanks to all the work and scrutiny which had taken place over recent months.

Alderman McIlveen also expressed his thanks to the Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services, the Finance team and all Heads of Service for their hard work and input throughout this year's rate setting process. He acknowledged the different approach which had been adopted to the process adding that it was refreshing how all had come on board with that and worked together. He reflected that decisions taken during last year's rate setting process had had an impact upon the decisions to be made for the incoming year. Continuing Alderman McIlveen stated that Councils generally were facing challenging conditions added to by staffing issues which he could not go into which had impacted the 5.98% rate increase. He also commented that inflation levels faced by Council were somewhat different to those faced by domestic properties. He acknowledged that all involved in the rate setting process had worked well together in challenging circumstances and as such he believed the rate which was being proposed was a balanced one under current circumstances.

At this stage Councillor McRandal concurred with the comments made by the previous speakers agreeing that last year's rate setting process had been difficult. The process this year was undoubtedly a more strategic approach which had been refreshing and seen all involved working well collaboratively. Councillor McRandal added that while no one wished to see a rate increase of 5.98% he stated that there were reasons for that and as such the Council had had to act. He added that those issues were being addressed along with other big ticket matters for the Council and he expressed his thanks to the Director of Corporate Services and his team for all of their hard work.

Echoing those comments Alderman Smith also took the opportunity to thank the officer team for their hard work throughout the rates setting process. He too welcomed the collaborative approach which had been adopted and supported across the entire Council Chamber. He commented on last year's rate increase adding that this year's had followed on from that, seeing the Council somewhere in the middle of other Council rate increases. The largest cost faced by the Council was staffing costs which made up almost 50% of the Council's budget and which had increased by 20% over the past two years. Continuing he also noted the Council's ambitious Capital Programme and suggested that the Council also needed to focus on generating more local businesses in order to increase its level of GDP. Alderman

Smith added that the Council could not continue to increase rates at this level going forwards.

At this stage Councillor Boyle commented on the good work which had taken place to date adding that that needed to continue. He also agreed that staffing issues along with those other fundamental issues also needed to be addressed and as such he was supportive of the recommendation and proposal which had been put forward. He welcomed the new approach to the rates setting process which had been adopted by the Director of Corporate Services and his team, adding that the Director had always been responsive to any calls or queries which he had and he thanked him for that. Referring to the proposed rate increase he implored members at this stage to adhere to the rate which had been struck and to not deviate from that, particularly as officers would keep members informed of any underspend. In summing up Councillor Boyle stated that he was prepared to support the proposed rate increase and commended the Corporate Committee for their hard work throughout the rate setting process.

The Mayor, Councillor Gilmour, thanked Councillor Moore, for proposing the rate tonight. She also expressed her thanks to the members of the Corporate Committee for their careful review of the financial situation to reach this point. As a member of that Committee for many years she knew it was a challenging process, with a significant amount of work put in by both Councillors and officers.

Striking the rate was always a balance between agreeing a figure that allowed the Council to deliver the quality of services and to make the investments residents wanted, while seeking to ensure the financial burden placed on ratepayers was as low as possible. She echoed Councillor Moore's thanks to the senior Council officers and the wider staff team who had worked hard to reduce the rate increase whilst ensuring the Council could continue to deliver services effectively.

For the 2024/25 year the Council had agreed an increase in the domestic and non-domestic rate of 5.98%. This would mean an increase of approximately £2.75 per month for the average household and £25 per month for the average business in the Borough.

Continuing Councillor Gilmour commented that alongside all the statutory local government duties members would be very familiar with, this budget would enable the Council to deliver on some very significant priorities that were critical to the future health and prosperity of the Borough. The decline in the non-domestic rate base in Ards and North Down was a significant challenge that needed to be addressed. As such more would be required, but the Council had taken the first steps in budgetary terms to support increased economic growth and prosperity.

The Council would continue to provide a wide range of support services for those seeking to enter employment or to start, grow or expand a business. Resources would also be targeted towards growing the social enterprise sector and working collaboratively on a regional basis to access funding in support of development priorities. Budget had also been allocated to develop plans for both urban and rural regeneration projects to a level where, should external funding become available, the Council could quickly capitalise on opportunities presented. Work had just been

completed on a review and update of the city and town masterplans, with discussion currently ongoing with local groups on the 16 Village Plans. Those frameworks for revitalisation would help inform which projects were worked up across the Borough. The Council had also established a fund for tackling the Council's declining non-domestic rate base.

Continuing Councillor Gilmour reported that work would continue with local and central government partners as part of the Belfast Region City Deal. Through this Deal the Council would move forward with the ambitious redevelopment plans for Bangor Waterfront, which would help re-establish Bangor as a thriving city and prime visitor attraction in Northern Ireland. The Deal was also supporting the development of an Innovation Hub which would provide a physical space for the growing creative industries sector in the Borough, which would ultimately help create better and higher paid jobs locally.

It was noted the budget set would enable the Council to maintain core programmes that made a difference across the community. While too numerous to mention, this included the extensive events and festivals programme for residents and visitors, youth programmes such as Youth Voice and summer schemes, the provision of a wider range of leisure and recreation services and the refurbishment of community assets such as Ward Arras, Abbey Road and Islandview Sports Pavilions. The budget would also ensure grant funding had been maintained at existing levels so that groups and communities could access money to deliver their own events, undertake environmental initiatives, support youth and community activities and following sporting pursuits, to name only a few examples.

Councillor Gilmour stated that the Council remained passionate about hitting the 2030 statutory recycling target of 70% and committed to delivering efficiencies in waste services. It would continue to educate and support households on the many options available for recycling. Dividends were already being seen in both in terms of increased recycling and reduced landfill costs following the introduction of the HRC booking system. The Council was committed to a review of kerbside collection service and looked forward to engaging with the public after the summer on ideas and options for this.

Turning to Digitisation opportunities, Councillor Gilmour noted those had also been prioritised as the Council sought to offer more efficient services to its ratepayers. It had invested in the development of a digital strategy and funding had been earmarked for projects including the redevelopment of the Council website and the introduction of a new finance system to improve internal efficiency.

While the Council was currently operating in difficult economic times, its citizens rightly expected it to look to the future. The Council had been successful in securing over £60M of external funding for a range of capital investment projects in recent years. It was focused on securing more and to increase the levels of capital investment across the Borough. This included progressing plans for the redevelopment of Whitespots Country Park, extending the network of greenways and delivering public realm improvement projects such as was currently in progress in Portaferry.

The Council would also be continuing work towards its vision for more sustainable civic and office accommodation. Currently, around 400 Council employees worked across more than 10 different buildings, the majority of which were inefficient to use, operate and maintain. It was estimated that the Council's future need for office space was 50% less than the current footprint of the estate generating significant opportunities for change and to drive efficiencies. To support regeneration, the Council had committed that any new building would be situated in the heart of either Bangor or Newtownards and issued an expression of interest for potential sites before Christmas. She added that it was early days on what would be a long-term project. But it was important that the Council had taken some key first steps on the journey to creating a Council estate that was more efficient and sustainable and ultimately less of a burden on ratepayers to maintain.

Continuing Councillor Gilmour commented that the new financial year would also see the Council embark in earnest to deliver on its new Corporate Plan running to 2028 – which committed it to working towards 'A Sustainable Borough'. In that context the Council was thinking of sustainability in its widest sense economic, social and environmental. The 2024-25 budget was the start in aligning itself more effectively towards delivering on that core vision. In the coming months the Council would also be considering changes to the organisation structure to better support its objectives. The Corporate Plan was out for public feedback at the moment and she encouraged residents to review it to better understand the vision for the Borough and provide comment on the priorities that have been proposed. She added that there was much to be done and much to look forward to in the year ahead.

In summing up, Councillor Gilmour thanked members, officers and in particular the Finance team, under the Director of Corporate Services, for all their work on the rates and budget setting. She acknowledged that it had been challenging but noted that all had learnt from the process and prioritised effectively for the year ahead. She added that any increase in bills was never a good news story for households and businesses, but she wished to reassure ratepayers that the Council would continue to scrutinise its spending. It remained committed to making further efficiency savings wherever possible, while maintaining and enhancing its services and continuing to invest in the Borough.

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Moore, seconded by Alderman Graham, that the recommendation be adopted.

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 7.31pm

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Planning Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards on Tuesday 6 February 2024 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Alderman McIlveen

Alderman: Graham
McDowell
Smith

Councillors:	Cathcart	McRandal
	Creighton	McKee (zoom)
	Harbinson (zoom)	McCollum
	Kerr (7.59 pm)	McLaren
	Kendall	Morgan
	Martin	Wray

Officers: Director of Prosperity (A McCullough), Principal Professional & Technical Officer (C Blair), Senior Professional & Technical Officers (C Rodgers & A Todd) and Democratic Services Officer (J Glasgow)

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for lateness was received from Councillor Kerr.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor McCollum declared an interest in Item 4.2 - LA06/2021/1438/F - Land adjacent to 11-33 Cannyreagh Road, Donaghadee.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE 5 DECEMBER 2023

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

NOTED.

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

4.1 LA06/2021/0419/F - Lands adjacent to Seacourt, Maxwell Drive, 33m East of 3-6 Seacourt, 39m South of 4 Seacourt Garden, 24m West of 1-2 Seacourt Garden, and 8m North of 2A Maxwell Road, Bangor - Development of 7no. mansion apartments within a two and half storey building (Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's Report.

DEA: Bangor West

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

Proposal: Development of 7no. mansion apartments within a two and half storey building

Site Location: Lands adjacent to Seacourt, Maxwell Drive, 33m East of 3-6 Seacourt, 39m South of 4 Seacourt Garden, 24m West of 1-2 Seacourt Garden, and 8m North of 2A Maxwell Road, Bangor

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

The Senior Professional and Technical Officer (A Todd) outlined the detail of the application which was seeking full planning permission for 7no. apartments within a two and a half storey building at lands 33m East of 3-6 Seacourt, 39m South of 4 Seacourt Garden, 24m West of 1-2 Seacourt Garden and 8m North of 2A Maxwell Road, Bangor.

The site was located within the development limit of Bangor in an established residential area north-west of the city centre and approximately 100m from the coastline. The immediate context of the site consisted of a wide variety of house types and plot sizes including apartments, terraced dwellings, semi-detached and detached dwellings. Some examples of those were shown along with the listed building, Seacourt House, located opposite the site which was occupied by apartments.

In terms of the Development Plan context, the site was located within the proposed Bangor West Area of Townscape Character in the Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (dBMAP).

The Officer displayed visuals of views of the site. The first showed from Maxwell Road where the site was located behind mature trees. The next view was from the entrance to Seacourt with the site on the right behind the trees and the listed building Seacourt House opposite and then the view from the end of the Seacourt Cul de Sac looking into the site. The view of the site from Seacourt Garden and the view from within the site looking out towards Seacourt Garden were also shown. The topography of the site dropped approximately 4m from south-west to north-east and there were a significant number of mature trees in the southern and western parts of the site which were protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

There was previous planning history associated with the site including an extant planning permission for 5no. dwellings under reference W/1993/0680/F. Three of those dwellings had already been completed to the east and north of the application site. The two remaining dwellings yet to be constructed under this extant permission would be located on the current application site. This permission represented a fall-back position for the development of the site and was therefore a material consideration in the assessment of the proposal, having established the principle of residential development on the site.

The proposed apartment building would occupy a central position in the site, outside of the root protection area of the protected trees. The two existing accesses onto the site from Seacourt would be used to serve the development. The main access would be at the northern end of the site where the majority of parking for the apartments would be located. A secondary access to the south would lead to two parking spaces and also provide pedestrian access to the block. Bin storage would be located in the north-eastern corner and an extensive landscaping scheme was also proposed for throughout the site.

The proposed building itself would be 2 ½ storey with a ridge height of 10.3m. Materials and finishes would consist of painted render and zinc cladding to walls, natural slate to the roof and hardwood painted sliding sash windows. The proposed design of the building was amended during the processing of the application at the request of DfC's Historic Environment Division. The slide showed the original submission and the final amended design which reduced the number of units proposed from 8no. to 7no. The main changes included the overall reduction in the massing of the roof and removal of the larger bay windows within the roof. While the ground and first floor remained largely the same, the reduction in the floor area of the second floor roof level was apparent.

As could be seen in sections AA and BB from the slides, the height of the building would sit well below that of the adjacent listed building Seacourt House which was at the far right of the images. The overall scale and massing of the building would also be comparable to other existing buildings.

The Officer displayed computer generated images to further demonstrate how the development would appear within its context. The first showed the existing and proposed views from Maxwell Road where the building was viewed set down from the road among the existing trees and therefore would not appear dominant from this viewpoint. The next slide showed the existing and proposed views from Seacourt. Again, from here the building would appear set down from the road and partially screened by the existing trees.

Having assessed the proposal against the relevant planning policies contained within Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 7 and PPS7 Addendum, the Planning Service was content that the development would create a quality residential environment and would not cause any unacceptable harm to either the character of the Established Residential Area or the overall appearance of the proposed Area of Townscape Character. The building had been carefully positioned on the site to ensure that the protected trees would not be adversely affected, and Historic Environment Division was content that the development would cause no harm to the setting of the adjacent listed building. Adequate amenity space and parking in line with the recommended standards were also provided.

A total of 67 objections from 26 separate addresses had, however, been received during the processing of the application. 45 of those from 19 separate addresses were received following the submission of the amended scheme.

The main concerns raised included:

- Overdevelopment of the site and visual impact of the scale and massing on the character of the area

- Setting of a negative precedent for similar apartment developments in the area
- Removal of trees and vegetation
- Loss of privacy to existing dwellings
- Traffic impact and road safety
- Inadequacy of bin collection arrangements

All of these have been considered in detail in the planning report.

In terms of the potential impact of the development on residential amenity, the visual showed the relationship of the development with existing properties. The closest dwellings most likely to be affected by the development were those at Nos. 1 and 2 Seacourt Gardens. As demonstrated on the slide, the separation distances between the proposed building and the existing dwellings are 22m and 32m. Creating Places recommends a minimum separation distance of 20m between rear opposing elevations; however, in this case the rear of the apartment building would face the front public aspect of Nos. 1 and 2 rather than their rear private garden areas. Regardless of that, it was recommended that a condition was imposed on the first and second floor windows at the northern end of the apartment building's elevation to require obscure glazing to be fitted prior to occupation and retained. That would ensure that the privacy to the first floor terrace located to the front of No. 2 would be maintained.

A lot of objections raised concerns regarding the removal of trees and vegetation within the site. As already outlined, the proposed development had been carefully positioned within the site to ensure that the existing protected trees would be retained, and that appropriate separation distances and protective measures would be put in place to ensure no harm would occur. As shown on the development impact plan, only one dying tree was to be removed.

Some trees had been removed from the site in recent years, mainly in the eastern and south-eastern areas of the site, as could be seen on the aerial views from 2014 and 2023. However, those works were carried out following the submission and approval of applications for works to the protected trees in 2019 and 2020.

In summary, the Officer detailed that the proposal was considered to comply with the development plan and all the relevant policy requirements of PPS7 Quality Residential Environments. The proposal would cause no demonstrable harm to the character or appearance of the area, the density of development and the height scale and massing of the building would be similar to the established built form in the area, adequate private amenity space and parking would be provided, existing protected trees would be retained and there would be no unacceptable adverse impact on the amenity of adjacent properties. On that basis it was recommended that full planning permission should be granted.

The Chair invited questions from members.

Councillor Cathcart raised a question regarding one of the visuals referring to the balconies and the conditioning of those windows only with obscure glazing. Discussion ensued and the Planning Officer provided clarification regarding the windows that were due to be obscured. There was also a condition that the flat roof would not be used for balcony or as roof terraces.

Councillor Martin asked if there were figures available of the massing of the area. The Planning Officer highlighted that page 20 of the Case Officer's Report provided the density per hectare as follows:

- The proposed density on this site – 20 dwellings per hectare
- Maxwell Gardens – 21 dwellings per hectare
- Seacourt Lane and Glenbank – 24 dwellings per hectare

Councillor Martin noted that over the years there had been quite a bit of development in the Princetown area. He expressed concern that if development was continually allowed in such area the density figures would continually increase and not provide accurate comparable data.

Referring to the question asked by Councillor Cathcart, regarding the obscure glass, the Chair questioned the separation distances and the need to obscure the glass to protect the amenity space.

Referring to the visual, the Planning Officer explained that the 22m separation distance shown was to the main elevation with the sizeable terrace sitting closer to that. The windows that were required to be obscured were either secondary windows or non-habitable rooms. A large terrace to a front location was not often seen.

Diana Thompson (Planning Agent), Noel Orr (Architect) and Brendan McLernon (Landscape Architect), were in attendance to speak in support of the application and the Chair invited those representatives to come forward.

Ms Thompson commenced her address with introductions, noting the architects were well known for their high-quality residential design evidenced across many sites in Northern Ireland. The architects were selected by the applicant because he recognised the sensitivities of the site, and it required a careful assessment of context and a design response that integrated and respected the natural and historic features of the site. Ms Thompson outlined that the application represented the culmination of a significant amount of work between the design team and the Council's Planning Officers. It had taken almost three years to get to this stage, but that length of time had been very well spent. There had been substantial input from specialists on the discrete matters of trees and the historic environment. It meant every issue and every sub-issue had been exhaustively identified, investigated and responded to. On behalf of the applicant, Ms Thompson thanked the planning officers involved in this scheme for their positive approach to the development and their proactive engagement with the design team both before the application was lodged and while it was being processed. Their helpful interventions and constructive criticisms of the scheme had positively contributed to the evolution of this attractive scheme that would enhance the townscape and urban design in the area. Ms Thompson believed the proposal was good design. Having read the Case Officer's Report, she fully endorsed its analysis and supported its recommendation that planning approval should be granted.

Ms Thompson wished to draw out two significant points: firstly, the setting of Seacourt House had for many years several residential properties within its grounds.

Those houses were part and parcel of its setting now – that could not be changed; and secondly, the Area of Townscape Character designation was a draft proposal only – it had not been adopted and so did not apply. The issue for consideration was whether the scheme, when considered in the context of the entire area that was proposed to be included as the Area of Townscape Character, did it harm its character or appearance. Ms Thompson felt that the proposal did not cause harm to the character and appearance, the planning officers were in agreement, and she asked Members to bear in mind:

- The sensitive location of the building used topography to nestle into that reducing its scale and massing, ensuring it was in no way dominant and remained subservient to Seacourt House;
- The building's simple design and its use of high quality, expensive materials;
- The retention and incorporation of the existing mature trees as a design feature of the scheme;
- The supplementing and enhancement of those existing trees by the substantial landscaping scheme that had been designed by Park Hood – significant amounts of new trees would be planted at a cost of around £80,000. That would significantly and beneficially enhance the visual appearance of the site.

There were no other planning or environmental constraints to the development of this site and that was confirmed by the various consultees who had contributed to the planning application. They were the competent authority on those matters.

Furthermore, Ms Thompson outlined that the proposal brought with it, the following benefits:

- Employment of 50 construction workers over its 18-month development period;
- A total investment of £2.75million;
- Diversification of housing type in the area with the provision of 7no. apartments which would be attractive to small households and particularly established residents who wished to stay within Bangor West area but needed to downsize their living accommodation;
- Utilisation of sustainable building technologies in the construction of the units to create energy efficient apartments with ratings far in excess of the average for Northern Ireland;
- A long-term solution for an otherwise vacant piece of land that had been severed from its original host property with a scheme that would considerably enhance the character and amenity of the area.

For the reasons outlined, Ms Thompson commended the scheme to the Committee, endorsed the conclusions and analysis of the Case Officer's Report and invited the Committee to support the recommendation.

The Chair invited questions from Members for the representatives.

Councillor McCollum referred to the topography of the area, outlining that as one approached the Maxwell Road roundabout the houses to the right enjoyed a certain amount of elevation and she expressed concern from the visuals that the proposal was not as subservient and nestling as suggested by Ms Thompson. Councillor McCollum asked for comment in that regard. Mr Orr explained that the finished floor

level of the proposal was 2.4m below the Seacourt cul-de-sac. Therefore, in essence there would be a storey and a half above existing ground level.

Following on Councillor McCollum referred to the raised terrace and questioned why the windows to the left had not been considered to infringe on the privacy. Mr Orr stated that was a condition recommended by Planning Officers. There was a small window to the left which was an ensuite window and would therefore be obscured. As could be seen the separation distance increased to 32m.

Alderman Graham referred to the extent of the landscaping. Mr Orr advised that there had been extensive discussions between the Landscape Architect and the Council's Tree Officer on how to protect the trees and that supplementary planting was included at the Client's request.

Mr McLernon advised that overall the scheme contained 22no. specimen trees. Furthermore, there would be supplementary hedge, boundary and shrub planting along with a full landscape framework throughout the site. All the existing trees would be retained, with Ms Thompson adding that those trees would be protected via a planning condition.

In response to a question from Councillor Creighton, Mr McLernon advised that there would be a mix of native and ornamental trees.

Councillor Creighton noted that NI Water had not provided consent to a sewage disposal scheme in the area. Mr Orr advised that was a separate negotiation outside the planning process. Any approval would be subject to a negative condition, that the satisfactory discharge would have to be achieved with NI Water. If the matter was unresolved and a water treatment plant on site was required that would be subject to a separate planning application.

As there were no further questions, the representatives returned to the public gallery.

The Chair invited questions from members for the Planning Officer.

Councillor Martin referred back to the area of density and the average figure and questioned if Policy QD1 of PPS 7 applied in this instance.

The Planning Officer clarified that it was the aspect of Policy QD1 that related to the designation of ATCs that did not apply. However, that was still a material planning consideration looking at the impact on the overall appearance of the ATC. The opinion in this instance was that an apartment proposal sat better within the site rather than being sub-divided.

Councillor Martin noted that the density of this area was higher than the other areas. He highlighted the cumulative effect if the sites per hectare were continually raised. He sought an opinion on the density vs the average density.

The Planning Officer stated that those densities quoted were a variety within the immediate area and from her professional experience the Planning Appeals Commission would consider a much wider area. The entire proposed ATC offered a

very diverse range of densities. The overarching requirement was that the development did not cause harm, and on balance, the professional planning judgement was that the proposal was acceptable.

Councillor Cathcart referred to the previous permission for 5no. dwellings, 3no. of which had been completed. He therefore questioned if there was a fall-back position as that permission had been commenced. The Planning Officer clarified that Nos 1 & 3 Seacourt Gardens were two of those properties previously approved with the third dwelling to the north of site. As that permission had been implemented, that permission remained live and therefore there was a fall-back position.

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

Alderman Smith highlighted the extant permission on the site. The application had been considered in good detail and the proposal was described as a quality residential development. He appreciated the number of objections, however, from the debate he felt those had been mitigated with the appropriate conditions attached.

As Members were not all in agreement, a recorded vote was undertaken which resulted as follows;

FOR (12)	AGAINST (0)	ABSTAINED (3)	ABSENT (1)
Aldermen			
Graham			
McDowell			
McIlveen			
Smith			
Councillors		Councillors	Councillor
Cathcart		Kendall	Kerr
Creighton		Martin	
Harbinson		McKee	
Morgan			
McCollum			
McLaren			
McRandal			
Wray			

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

4.2 LA06/2021/1438/F - Land adjacent to 11-33 Cannyreagh Road, Donaghadee - Amendment to approved realignment of Cannyreagh Road and provision of new link section to ensure retention of vehicular and pedestrian access for existing residential properties
(Appendices II -IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer’s report and two addendums.

DEA: Bangor East and Donaghadee

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

Proposal: Amendment to approved realignment of Cannyreagh Road and provision of new link section to ensure retention of vehicular and pedestrian access for existing residential properties

Site Location: Land adjacent to 11-33 Cannyreagh Road, Donaghadee

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

(Having previously declared an interest, Councillor McCollum withdrew from the meeting)

The Senior Professional and Technical Officer (C Rodgers) outlined the details of the application. The application site comprised a section of the existing Cannyreagh Road on the western periphery of the town settlement of Donaghadee. Members would note that a number of properties front directly onto this Road. Most of the properties did not have in-curtilage parking. Existing residents availed of informal parking within courtyards to the rear and along Cannyreagh Road and Ashfield Drive to the east.

The land to the north of the application site was zoned for housing in the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015. A key design requirement established the need for a link between the Cannyreagh Road and the Newtownards Road.

Outline planning permission to develop this zoning was first granted in 2012 and then renewed in 2015. The detailed design of the Cannyreagh Road realignment was approved by the Council's Planning Committee in 2018 as part of the Reserved Matters. Construction was on-going. Many of the houses were now occupied and the development was known as High Trees. The principle of residential development for 390 dwellings on the zoned lands and the linkage to the Cannyreagh Road had therefore clearly been established.

The Officer showed the indicative plan approved as part of the outline planning permission showing a link to the Cannyreagh Road. She highlighted the detailed design approved at reserved matters stage including the realignment of the Cannyreagh Road and communal parking.

The Applicant's Agent advised that the application was submitted in response to concerns that the approved layout would restrict vehicular access and on-street parking along this section of the Cannyreagh Road.

The proposed layout maintained the Cannyreagh Road largely as it was at present, with a short link road to connect it to the approved new distributor road. Members would note that the proposal closely reflected the illustrative plan agreed as part of the original outline planning permission. The proposal involved the creation of a cul de sac along Cannyreagh Road with a landscaped area immediately adjacent to No.22.

Letters of objection from 10 addresses had been received and concerns related to

roads safety, parking, residential amenity and trees. Those matters had been considered in detail in the main Case Officer Report and Addendums.

A Roads engineer acting for the applicant had prepared a comparison of on-street parking capacity. It showed there was currently space to accommodate approximately 12 on-street spaces in front of 22-33 Cannyreagh Road and that the proposed amendment would still allow the same number of spaces to be accommodated in close proximity to existing homes. Whilst on-street parking would not be available immediately adjacent to No.22 due to the formation of a cul de sac, the Road engineer had identified other potential opportunities for on-street parking.

A number of site visits had been carried out both during the day and in the evening at approximately 6.30pm when most residents would likely to be home. At both times capacity for on-street parking was observed. The Officer displayed a number of visuals showing capacity in the area.

The Planning Service asked DfI Roads to review all objection letters to ensure careful consideration of matters raised. DfI Roads advised that the proposed on-street parking availability was similar to that which currently existed.

In response to concerns regarding the proximity of existing driveways to the new link road, DfI Roads stated that the road width in the vicinity of the junction was adequate to deal with traffic movements and that residents were expected to exit their driveways in forward gear in accordance with the High Way Code. DfI Roads also advised that as the road leads to a cul de sac where a turning head was provided, it would mainly be used by local residents, and there was enough room to manoeuvre vehicles safely with the use of the turning area. DfI Roads had also confirmed that the proposed anti-dazzle fencing was adequate to protect drivers from headlight glare. Having reviewed all objector concerns DfI Roads had confirmed it has no objection in terms of road safety or car parking.

The main traffic route serving the new residential dwellings would be along the previously approved distributor road. In contrast this part of the Cannyreagh Road leads to an unclassified rural road which would attract lower volumes of traffic.

Environmental Health noted the proposal would not alter the number of approved dwellings and that the existing dwellings currently front a road that was subject to passing traffic. Environmental Health stated that there would be no overall perceptible change in noise levels at the closest receptors caused by the road realignment.

The site contained a number of trees protected by a TPO. The proposal allowed more trees and landscaping to be retained than that previously approved.

The Council's Tree Officer was content that the proposal would have less impact on trees than the previously approved application and had provided no objection subject to a condition to prevent harm to protected trees during construction. Any future works to protected trees would be subject to consent from the Council.

To conclude, the principle of residential development on the zoned lands and linkage between the Newtownards Road and the Cannyreagh Road had already been established through the development plan zoning and the planning history of the site. The proposal would ensure the retention of the existing road for most of its length and the developer had been made aware of the need to ensure consistency between this application and the original planning permission.

Having considered all material considerations, it was recommended that this application was approved subject to conditions.

The Chair invited questions from members for the Planning Officer.

Councillor Morgan questioned the issue with the previous permission. The Planning Officer explained that there were 3 dwellings along the Cannyreagh Road that had a driveway and the realignment would have caused issue with access to those driveways. Residents had highlighted concern regarding the loss of on-street car parking. This application had then been lodged to amend and facilitate that pedestrian and vehicular access for existing residents.

Councillor Morgan sought clarity on the advantage of the change. The Planning Officer explained the change to the cul-de-sac arrangement allowed residents to access their driveways. The application had been submitted to address the concerns.

Councillor Cathcart was confused as to why this matter had not been raised at reserved matters stage. He also questioned if the reserved matters application was still active providing a fall-back position.

The Planning Officer was unsure of that reasoning. DfI Roads were consulted and provided no objections. In terms of road abandonment that was separate issue outside the planning process. The Planning Officer confirmed that development was ongoing and there was fall-back position.

The Chair invited Yvonne Goggins to come forward who was speaking in opposition to the application.

Mrs Goggins outlined that during the planning permission for the High Trees site there appeared to be complete disregard for the residents living on the affected section of Cannyreagh Road. Even though site inspections took place during the reserved matters stage with visuals showing dropped kerbs and off-street car parking, the application was approved, denying residents their entitlement to access their property directly from the road and land locking the frontage of those homes affected. DfI Roads had advised that it would not have granted the abandonment order therefore the section of the Cannyreagh Road had to be redesigned. While the revised road layout now allowed access to the driveways, there were still issues for the existing residents. The area in question sat on the periphery of the new High Trees housing development. The area was quiet, peaceful and overlooked natural habitat. There was mix of social and affordable housing, some of the residents were house owners, some were tenants but for everyone that was their home. The new T-junction should still provide access for larger vehicles including emergency and

agricultural vehicles. However, the layout proposed and measurements did not provide safe access to manoeuvre. That would be made worse if on-street car parking was reduced as intended, as vehicles would park on both sides of the road causing road safety issues. The T-junction design revisited the outline approval layout, DfI Roads had no objection in principle at that stage however declined the proposal at reserved matters due to start/stop vehicle noise and headlight issues. Mrs Goggins stated that residents did not see how moving the T-junction further along the road would counteract any of the previous concerns that were raised.

Mrs Goggins wished to highlight that the land to the west of Ashfield Drive was now deemed suitable for development. Erindee Gardens cul-de-sac was noted in the PAC report relating to the 2015 Area Plan as having scope to provide access to the future development site which may create a by-pass scenario to avoid town congestion. Therefore, this road layout would determine the future direction of traffic increase in the area. As proposed it would contribute to more road vehicle noise and generally reduce enjoyment of the area.

The proposed layout would reduce on-street car parking by 8 frontage car parking spaces. The area was already under pressure for car parking with the rear courtyard parking areas and immediate streets already at capacity. Residents would like to see the parking retained that they had been afforded with for many years. Any reduction in spaces would have a negative impact most notably for residents with mobility issues. The outline landscape drawings regarding the development mention that the tree planting along the Cannyreagh Road should be enhanced with the provision of mature trees. However, this application would instead cause the removal of several trees from a protected area, the hedgerow would be depleted and there would be disruption to wildlife habitat. The area referred to was a protected area and residents believed it should remain that way.

Mrs Goggins stated that residents have been made to feel that because their homes were social and affordable that their concerns and anxieties did not count and were dismissed. Residents had submitted objections previously and were told to remove them.

(Councillor Kerr entered the meeting 7.59 pm)

The residents wished for the error made during the planning process to be fixed properly. Raising objections had never been about attributing blame or in opposition to the housing development, it was about seeking a solution. Suggestions had been made previously and each time they had been deflected. The residents felt the current proposal was not a solution. Residents had patiently waited for 5 years and they hoped that when the residents brought the error to the attention of the DfI Roads, the agent and the planners, there would have been a shared effort to achieve a solution for all residents. If the issue was not dealt with now the development infrastructure including the new distributor road would be in place and would diminish any chance of getting the design layout right for everyone. The planning application process promoted fairness, transparency, accountable decision making and that all interests were taken into account.

Mrs Goggins stated that residents would ask for a deferral to allow members to visit the site and in context per paragraph 67 of the Planning Protocol (for Operation of the planning Committee) which they believed to be a valid reason for a deferral. It would appear from the consultation responses that the statutory bodies were somewhat aligned in approving the application and were also previously aligned when the land lock situation was presented. The consequences from the planning process should not continue to create distress and adversity for existing residents and therefore she appealed for the application to be further evaluated.

The Chair invited questions from members for Mrs Goggins.

Councillor Cathcart questioned how Mrs Goggins would foresee a solution. Mrs Goggins advised that residents had submitted various ideas previously which she briefly outlined.

Councillor Morgan questioned how the proposal would impact walker and cyclists. Mrs Goggins did not see the new proposal being any improvement.

Councillor Wray referred to the school in the area and the parking problems that existed. Mrs Goggins highlighted that there was not capacity in the area for additional parking.

Councillor Wray questioned if other social housing providers had been consulted. Mrs Goggins explained that the flats were owned by the NIHE, those provided on-street car parking for the tenants and that parking was utilised. She was unsure if there had been communication with the NIHE.

Councillor Wray asked if there had been contact between the residents and the developer. Mrs Goggins advised that the agent and the site foreman visited their home when it was realised that there was going to a land lock situation. The drawings at outline stage were unclear. It had been discussed that there was hope to reach an agreement however since that there had been no contact from the agent. Objections had been raised and residents had been asked to remove those.

Councillor McRandal asked why Mrs Goggins felt the current proposal provided no improvement. The outline proposal was of no benefit to any of the residents as there would be no in-curtilage parking. In terms of the current proposal, she referred to the reasoning outlined and Mrs Goggins stated that she was trying to achieve a solution for all residents along the road.

Councillor McRandal asked what a site visit would achieve. Mrs Goggins hoped a site visit would provide context and that the other options suggested may be better options. From a safety perspective, she reiterated her concerns.

Councillor McLaren noted that the area was busy at school times however she questioned the traffic movement outside those times. Mrs Goggins explained that there was comings and goings at Ashfield Drive and the area was busy in the evening. She stated that she had submitted photographic evidence.

As there were no further questions from Members, Mrs Goggins returned to the public gallery.

The Chair then invited David Donaldson, Brian Pope and David Wilson, to speak in support of the application.

Mr Donaldson outlined that Strand Homes acquired the 'High Trees' development site with planning permission for 390 houses in 2019. The Company had committed heavily to this site and had already contributed over 100 new homes for the town. The development had been in receipt of multiple awards, including 'Green Development of the Year 2023'. In accordance with the planning permission, Strand Homes was committed to provision of a new road through the site to connect Newtownards Road to the north with Cannyreagh Road to the south.

The provision of this road was not a new proposal – it had been planned and programmed for Donaghadee for in excess of 20 years. The Draft Ards and Down Area Plan was published in 2002 – this proposed the High Trees site for housing and stipulated the need for the connection from Newtownards Road to Cannyreagh Road. The Plan also referred to 'construction of a linkage to Cannyreagh Road.' There were no objections to the draft plan proposals and the Plan was adopted in 2009. The current application was simply seeking to deliver a development plan proposal.

The site also had the benefit of two outline planning permissions, granted in 2012 and 2015. The local distributor road, including the proposed link to Cannyreagh Road, was clearly shown in the approved Concept Plans. In 2018, 'reserved matters' for the overall site was granted. The permission included the complete realignment of Cannyreagh Road and a new communal parking area.

Mr Donaldson explained that when development commenced at the Newtownards Road end of the site in 2019, Mr and Mrs Goggins and other residents expressed a concern that their access to off-street car parking and garaging would be impacted by the Cannyreagh Road proposals. Mr and Mrs King (No 24) who also had a dropped kerb expressed a similar concern, with their suggestion being that the road should be left as it was. It was accepted that those concerns were legitimate and the current proposal was designed to specifically address them. Cannyreagh Road would be retained in its existing alignment and the previously approved car park would be removed. The new short link would link Cannyreagh Road to the distributor.

This new proposal would not alter the number of approved houses, nor would it change the approved alignment of the local distributor road. It would not result in any increase in traffic to or from the development site.

The proposed amendment in this part of the site would deliver betterment over the existing permission. In particular:

- It would retain almost the entire length of Cannyreagh Road, except for a small section (about 20 metres) where it has to abut the new distributor road;
- All residents with driveways and garages would retain the ability to safely use their driveways;

- Residents would retain the ability to park along almost the entire Cannyreagh Road frontage;
- Through traffic would be removed from the front of Nos 22-27 Cannyreagh Road and Nos 2A-2F Elmfield Walk;
- Pedestrian movement along Cannyreagh Road would be unhindered; and
- It would allow more hedges and trees to be retained than in the approved arrangement.

In relation to the concerns raised, it was not for the Applicant to determine whether the latest representations had merit – it was for the decision makers. In that respect the Council's Planning Officers, DfI Roads, Environmental Health and the Tree Officer had all reviewed the proposal in detail and considered the additional representations. They had all determined that the proposals were compliant with policy and guidance and that permission should be granted. Their independent assessments must be given substantial weight in the decision-making process.

Mr Donaldson advised that in 2019, Mr and Mrs Goggins referred back to the outline permission and themselves had stated 'that if Cannyreagh Road was retained in its present state, the new spine roads could still be accessed and many more trees would remain in situ'. They also suggested some form of exit point for Cannyreagh Road residents onto the re-aligned linkage which might necessitate removal of the proposed car park.

Mr Donaldson acknowledged that the proposal would bring change for some residents; however, the residents had certainly not been ignored by the development team. This application was lodged to ensure access to existing driveways and retention of Cannyreagh Road as requested. The proposal met DfI requirements.

This proposal related to development which had been planned and programmed for development in Donaghadee for many years. Several permissions had already been granted and remained extant. Mr Donaldson asked the Committee to support the independent assessment by the Planning Officers and grant permission for the proposed amendments to the development.

The Chair invited questions from members for the representatives.

Councillor Cathcart questioned if there was a fall-back position if the roads abandonment order was to be refused. Mr Donaldson explained that the roads abandonment process was completely separate from the planning process. There was an extant planning permission that could be implemented. The previous proposal caused difficulties for the residents and their driveways which was why the proposal had been amended and redesigned. The current application addressed the concerns raised by the residents and brought the most practicable and deliverable solution.

Councillor Cathcart questioned if the abandonment could be achieved if the application was to be refused. Mr Donaldson was unsure if the abandonment order would be achieved as that was a separate process. Anyone had the right to make representations to an abandonment process. Mr Donaldson highlighted the wish to secure planning permission that addressed the concerns that were raised in 2019. By way of background, the reserved matters application was approved in 2018 and

that time there was no representations from residents. Mr Donaldson clarified that residents were not instructed or asked to withdraw their objections. Residents lodged objections at the time related to the Newtownards Road end and residents were advised those did not relate to Cannyreagh Road.

Councillor Cathcart felt the application was a betterment of what had originally been proposed however he was trying to ascertain if the previous application was a viable fall-back. Councillor Cathcart asked if Mr Donaldson felt more could be done to improve road safety at the junction.

Mr Donaldson did not feel more could be done as the proposal had been carefully designed by chartered engineers. The proposal had been discussed a number of times by DfI Roads. The proposal had footpaths, crossing points, adequate road widths etc. which all complied with all the requirements. The proposal was entirely acceptable and a compliant arrangement in terms of road safety and design,

Councillor Kendall asked if the alternatives as alluded to by Mrs Goggins were considered. If the application was to be deferred to re-look at the alternatives how much of an impact would that have on the development.

Mr Donaldson explained that a lot of the frustration came from 2019 when the concerns were lodged regarding the driveways and residents wanting Cannyreagh Road retained which was what the amendment sought to do. The roads engineers had explored a number of alternatives which he expanded upon, though those were deemed not feasible or practical. The room was not available for roundabout. He reassured the Committee that the proposal had been given careful consideration. Although there would be change, the amended proposal brought the minimum impact.

There were no further questions for the representatives and they returned to the public gallery.

The Chair invited questions from members for the Planning Officer.

In relation to the alternatives suggested, Councillor McRandal sought the Planning Officers view in that regard. The Planning Officer stated that the Planning Service having consulted with DfI Roads considered that the current application was acceptable in its current form and therefore could not ask for alternatives.

Councillor McRandal asked if the consideration of road safety was based solely on the consultation with DfI Roads. The Planning Officer stated that there had been no evidence to demonstrate that the proposal would cause a road safety issue. She advised that she had asked DfI Roads to look at each objection that had been submitted and she was content that it had provided due consideration of those.

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

Alderman Smith empathised with Mrs Goggins perspective. He wondered if the current proposal was an improvement and noted the Council's flexibility to respond

to the matter. The developer had stated that the current proposal was a betterment and the Council was limited on its ability with DfI Roads stating it was content.

Councillor McRandal recognised the difficulties, however, he felt the current proposal was a betterment. The car parking issue had been dealt with and was not a compelling argument with alternatives available. He was concerned in respect of road safety however felt everything had been done in that regard.

Councillor Cathcart stated that the current proposal was undoubtedly a betterment however he wondered how the original proposal was approved as reserved matters. Although a betterment he was not convinced that the proposal was the best that it could be. However, given the issues were outside the remit of the Planning Committee he reluctantly supported the proposal.

The Chair noted the constraints of the Committee. Mrs Goggins highlighted some good points however the application met policy and had been cleared by DfI Roads.

Alderman Graham understood the objectors' lack of confidence in the process given that the reserved matters had been approved.

As members were not all in agreement a recorded vote was undertaken which resulted as follows:

<p>FOR (6) Aldermen Smith McIlveen</p>	<p>AGAINST (0)</p>	<p>ABSTAINED (8) Aldermen Graham McDowell</p>	<p>ABSENT (0)</p>
<p>Councillors Cathcart Harbinson Morgan McRandal</p>		<p>Councillors Creighton Kendall Martin McKee McLaren Wray</p>	

**Councillor Kerr was unable to vote as he entered the meeting during the consideration of the application.*

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

(Councillor McCollum re-entered the meeting)

4.3 LA06/2021/0627/O - Land adjacent to and approximately 17m east of 6a Ballykeigle Road, Comber - Farm Dwelling and Garage
(Appendices V, VI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's Report and Addendum.

DEA: Comber

Committee Interest: A local development application "called-in" to the Planning Committee by a member of that Committee (Councillor Morgan)

Proposal: Farm dwelling and garage

Site Location: Land adjacent to and approximately 17m east of 6a Ballykeigle Road, Comber

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

The Principal Professional & Technical Officer (C Blair) outlined the detail of the application noting that as the application was for outline permission, it was the principle of development that was being considered with the detail of the proposal to be submitted at any reserved matters stage should Members agree with the officers' recommendation to approve the application.

Members should further note that there were no objections to the proposal from Statutory Consultees and no representations had been submitted, either in support of or objecting to the proposed farm dwelling.

The site was located on the south side of Ballykeigle Road to the east of No.6a, which was a single storey detached dwelling and domestic garage, both which front onto Ballykeigle Road. The site consisted of an agricultural field and was bounded by a hedgerow along the road frontage. It was relatively flat in topography with open views of the surrounding countryside and trees located to the south. A 1.2m ranch fence defined the western boundary with No.6a. The surrounding land was rural in character with agricultural fields.

In terms of the policy consideration for the application, the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 was the current local development plan for the area. The site was located in the countryside and was compliant with the Plan.

Policy CTY1 of Planning Policy Statement 21 'Sustainable Development in the Countryside' sets out the types of development which were considered to be acceptable in the countryside. More specifically, CTY1 made provision for 'a dwelling on a farm in accordance with Policy CTY10'. CTY 10 was therefore the main policy consideration for this application and in particular paragraph (a) which was – "the farm business is currently active and has been established for at least 6 years." However, for completeness, the Planning Officer advised that the Planning Service was content that paragraphs (b) and (c) were met in that there had been no development opportunities sold off within 10 years of the date of the application, and the new building was visually linked or sited to cluster with an established group of buildings on the farm. It however had not been practicable to access the site from an existing lane. The Planning Service considered that the proposed siting to the rear of site enabled it to meet the requirements of policies CTY 13 (Integration) and CTY 14 (Rural Character).

In terms of this application the agricultural activity related to a small field to the rear of the house and a larger field adjacent and east of the house.

There were two key elements of CTY 10(a). Firstly, whether the farm business was currently active, and secondly, had it been established for at least six years. The business was not currently engaged with DAERA and did not have a business ID No (confirmed by DAERA). The applicant had submitted other evidence in support of the application to demonstrate that the business was currently active and that it had been established for at least 6 years. To not have a Farm ID was not fatal to the policy test as the ID was there to indicate whether an applicant claimed the single farm payment subsidy. On this occasion, the applicant did not. Therefore, the applicant must demonstrate through other means and the submitted receipts as set out in the Case Officer's Report demonstrated that the farm business was currently active business therefore meeting the first test of criterion (a).

As set out in the case officer's report, the Planning Appeals Commission underlined the period of relevance to be the preceding six years from the date of the application, and to an extent the information prior to this date was not as relevant. The Officer alluded to an example of PAC decision.

The Planning Department must be mindful of the Strategic Planning Policy Statement which outlined agricultural activity as per Article 4 of the European Council's Regulations (EC) No.1307/2013.

In terms of the second test of criterion (a) that was to show that the business had been established for at least six years. The receipts also submitted go some way to supporting this however they do not cover the entire six-year period. The applicant had also relied upon letters from third parties regarding the sale of produce to them, Google Earth images and Google Street View images. The agricultural activity was on the small field to the rear and the field adjacent and east of No.6A Ballykeigle Road, as displayed on the google earth images.

The Planning Officer also referred Members to a decision taken by a previous Planning Committee in 2018, where it was accepted that the bar for this test within CTY 10 was low. CTY 10 did not list the type and level of evidence required and therefore the Planning Service could not demand that an applicant produced such levels for example, accounts information. In relation to LA06/2017/1072/O for a "Site for dwelling on a farm" at lands approximately 15m North of 48 Ballydorn Road, Killinchy - whilst the applicant had a business number this applicant too was not claiming single farm payment and relied solely upon other information. Whilst material policy considerations were assessed on a site-by-site basis, the Planning Service recommended that members accept this application as the information demonstrated that agricultural activity had been ongoing for at least six years and was therefore established. The Planning Service recommended that planning permission was granted.

The Chair invited questions from Members for the Planning Officer.

Councillor Cathcart noted that the application had been in system for some time and questioned the reasoning for the delay. The Planning Officer stated that the evidence was built up over time although there was an issue with NI Water regarding sewage disposal.

Alderman Smith noted the fundamental question was – was the site a farm. He highlighted that the land was 0.24h with the definition of a farm being 3h for single farm payments. The evidence would suggest there had some degree of cultivation. Alderman Smith questioned the wriggle room noting that the bar for the definition of a farm was very low. He questioned the start and stop point for such proposals. The Planning Officer highlighted that officers had to consider the information that was put before them. The proposal had a farm number with a farm map. The area was small however CTY10 did not differentiate in terms of the overall size and therefore there was a need to take on board previous PAC decisions from similar schemes across Northern Ireland. The PAC had indicated that a level of agricultural activity was acceptable and from the evidence put forward there was a level of agricultural activity having taken place.

The Chair referred to the European Legislation (paragraph b) which provided the minimal level. The Planning Officer stated that legislation did state that maintaining an agricultural area making an estate suitable for grazing. The google earth images showed that there was grazing occurring within the site.

The Director recalled that the Committee had refused an application on the Greengraves Road, Newtownards, on the basis of not providing substantial evidence on what constituted a farm and that appeal had been overturned. Therefore, that needed to be taken into consideration. It was the minimum activity suitable for grazing or cultivation and there was nothing further in the policy detailing what extent a farm was required to be active. The Director appreciated the members concerns in that regard and highlighted that as a matter that members may wish to further review within the LDP process in the future.

In response to a question from Councillor Martin, the Planning Officer reiterated that there had been no objections lodged against the application.

Councillor Morgan asked a number of questions of the Planning Officer. She referred to the receipts provided as evidence, only three of those receipts had a name and address detailed which related to this farm and the PAC decisions noted the importance of a name and address. The invoices provided related to fruit and vegetables and she questioned how that related to the farm. Councillor Morgan asked was the site a farm business.

Responding to those questions, the Planning Officer confirmed that there was only a small number of receipts that had a name and address detailed however there was nothing within CTY10 to detail that there must be a name and address on a receipt. There was an indication that there was agricultural activity on the land which had been taken in account.

RECESS

The meeting went into recess at 9 pm and resumed at 9.15 pm.

Referring to the evidence provided, Councillor Kendall asked how that compared to the evidence provided in the previous PAC decision.

(Councillors McCollum and Martin re-entered the meeting – 9.16 pm)

The Planning Officer stated that the evidence was reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The previous appeal decisions were taken into account in relation to the assessment of CTY10.

Councillor Kendall further questioned the level of information that was provided and she wondered if there was more evidence provided in the appeal decision for testing against CTY10 than what was provided in this instance. The Chair felt that was difficult question to answer. The Officer had detailed what they felt was satisfactory.

The Director stated that the application that she had referred to was slightly different as the applicant had rented out the land in conacre and therefore only had to demonstrate that the fences and hedging were maintained in good order appropriately for farming.

Councillor McRandal highlighted that there was already a house on the site and questioned why it would be permissible to build a second house. The Director stated that policy CTY10 permitted a new dwelling on a farm every 10 years. As detailed in the Officer's address there was another dwelling which the proposal could cluster and visually link with.

Referring to the plan, Councillor McRandal questioned if the proposal did form a cluster given that the site sat away from the current buildings. The Planning Officer stated that when assessed from the various visual view points it was considered that the site did visually interlink with the existing buildings at the site.

The Chair invited Andy Stephens, the agent for the applicant, to the meeting who was in attendance via Zoom and was speaking in favour of the application.

Mr Stephens noted that the application had been in the system since 14 May 2021, and there had been significant discussion, engagement and deliberation with Planning Officers. He thanked those involved in the Planning section for their positive engagement and efforts on this application to reach the approval recommendation. The Case Officer's Report provided an excellent chronology and process history of this case, as it referenced both the observational and physical evidence provided in support of the case spanning from 2005 to 2023. The Case Officer's Report considered notable Planning Appeal Commission (PAC) decisions in the application and interpretation of Policy CTY 10, and specifically the "active and established" test. There were no objections from any of the statutory consultees to the proposal on traffic/parking, environmental impact, flooding, built heritage or residential amenity grounds. There were also no 3rd party objections to the application over the 36 months of processing.

The word 'active', did not require a particular level of agricultural activity and considered as the production, rearing or growing of agricultural products including harvesting, milking, breeding animals and keeping animals for farming purposes, or maintaining the land in good agricultural and environmental condition". This was identical to the provisions of Section 250 of The Planning (Northern Ireland) Act 2011 and the referred EU guidance.

The purpose of the duration of time (6year period), applied was to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to agriculture and to deter the speculative formation or subdivision of a farm business. It was not fatal not to have a farm business identification number. Likewise, there was no requirement to be in receipt of subsidies if sufficient alternative evidence existed. The Policy did not apply any specified standard of how evidence of agricultural activity was demonstrated. It was a very low bar test and if there was any ambiguity, then the applicant was entitled to have the proposal assessed on the policy interpretation most favourable to them.

The Commission's interpretation had adapted since the policies' inception in the finalised version of PPS21 on 1st June 2010. Whilst each site and circumstance was considered on its own merits there was five notable appeal decisions which established the interpretation of the "active and established" policy test in CTY10 indicate the following notable points:-

- The farm did not have to be economically viable, and a 'hobby' farmer or a small holding could meet the test.
- The definition adopted set a very low bar threshold for active farming and it accepted that agricultural activity could fluctuate over a period of time.
- It also accepted that invoices and paperwork could be submitted to demonstrate.
- Referring to the PAC decision as alluded to by the Director, Mr Stephens highlighted that the policy did not indicate any standards, the type of evidence or that an address was required.
- The frequency of activity did not need to be considered at a basis level it was about keeping the ground in a good agricultural condition.

Mr Stephen's viewed the Case Officer's Report as fair and balanced and applied the legal principles in the Northern Ireland High Court in ABO Wind NI Limited and Energia Renewables Company 1 Limited's Judicial Review [2021] – where Humphreys J referenced the precedent value of PAC decisions at paragraphs 34 – 38 & 100, reaffirming the Commission's decisions must either be accepted and respected or challenged through the courts. The Case Officer's Report confirmed the proposal was compliant with all aspects of the local development plan, regional planning policy and that all material considerations had been considered. Policy CTY10 applied a low bar threshold with the PAC accepting there was no prescribed evidential standard. The applicant's evidence had been considered on the balance of probabilities. It was an accepted planning principle, that if matters were finely balanced, the decision would go in favour of the applicant. That was set out in the overarching presumption in favour of development in the absence of demonstratable harm. Likewise, the Planning Act required the consistent application of planning policy and as alluded to there was previous applications.

Mr Stephens fully supported the positive recommendation before members, and he respectfully asked the Committee to endorse the granting of planning permission.

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

The Chair invited questions from members for the Planning Officer.

Proposed by Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor Kerr, that the recommendation be adopted.

Speaking to his proposal, Alderman Graham felt that it was significant point that there had been no third party objections to the proposal.

Councillor Kerr was content that the application met all the required credentials.

Alderman Smith accepted that the proposal did meet the policy although noted that the bar was too low in that policy and that was something which should be reviewed as part of the LDP.

Councillor Morgan stating that she would be voting against the proposal as she could not see how the application met the policy. She questioned how low the evidence needed to be with only three receipts having been submitted with the name and address. Councillor Morgan felt the Committee should not be pre-empting planning appeals decisions and it was for the Committee to determine the application against the planning policies.

The Chair highlighted that previous PAC decisions needed to be taken into account and guidance was being yearned from those. It was recognised that the policy set a low bar of what determined agricultural activity.

The Director stated that whilst the justification and amplification sets out the requirement for a farm ID number, that was not in the policy headline box and therefore not set as a policy requirement. Consistent planning appeal decisions stated that it was not fatal to the consideration of the application.

As all the Committee were not in agreement, a recorded vote was undertaken which resulted as follows;

FOR (13)	AGAINST (3)	ABSTAINED (0)	ABSENT (0)
Aldermen			
Graham			
McDowell			
McIlveen			
Smith			
Councillors	Councillors		
Cathcart	Creighton		
Harbinson	McRandal		
Kerr	Morgan		
Kendall			
McKee			
McCollum			
McLaren			
Wray			

Councillor Martin did not vote on the application as he was absent for part of the consideration

RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor Kerr, that the recommendation be adopted.

4.4 LA06/2019/1295/F - Site of the former Bangor Leisure Centre, Castle Park Avenue, Bangor - 19 apartments (4 storey) with on-site parking and amenity space
(Appendix VII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's Report.

DEA: Bangor Central

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

Proposal: 19 apartments (4 storey) with on-site parking and amenity space

Site Location: Site of the former Bangor Leisure Centre, Castle Park Avenue, Bangor

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

The Principal Planning and Technical Officer (C Blair) outlined the detail of the application.

Members should note that eight letters of representation from six separate addresses had been submitted, all of which were fully considered within the Case Officer's report. However the issues raised include road safety – impact of the access and increased traffic in area, potential overlooking of the hotel and adjacent primary school, noise nuisance, and design and massing of proposed building out of keeping in the area.

Members should further note that a previous planning application, LA06/2016/0279/F, was granted full permission on 7 September 2017 for "Demolition of the vacant leisure centre and erection of 14 No. Apartments and associated car parking, access and ancillary works."

The site was located adjacent to the Castle Park Avenue and Castle Park Road junction. The site was vacant and was at a lower level than the adjacent road. The front part of the site contains green open space with trees and a pedestrian path. An existing access onto Castle Park Road served the site. The western and southern site boundaries comprised mature trees. The four-storey Premier Inn hotel was located in the northern half of the former Bangor Leisure Centre site with this adjoining boundary consisting of palisade fencing. Bangor Central Integrated Primary School was situated to the northeast at a lower ground level. To the south and southeast of the site was Castle Park with the listed Bangor Castle and its Historic Parks and Gardens beyond.

This slide showed the site layout of the current application and it was noted that the layout was similar to the originally approved.

The North Down and Ards Area Plan 1984-1995 (NDAAP) was the current statutory plan for the area however the draft BMAP Plan 2015 remained a material consideration.

The site was located within the Town Centre and an Area of Parking Restraint as designated in draft BMAP 2015. The town centre area comprised a number of uses including retail, offices, residential and recreational.

Taking account of the previously approved apartment development on the site and other residential uses within the Town Centre area the principle of development on the site was considered acceptable.

In terms of parking within the site, the proposal included 20 parking spaces for 19 apartments. DfI Roads considered that low with the standard of 1.5 spaces per unit, however, within draft BMAP the Area of Parking Restraint identified one space per residential unit. Although BMAP has been quashed the Area of Parking Restraint was assessed during the public inquiry of draft BMAP and considered an acceptable level. If and when draft BMAP was lawfully adopted this area of parking restraint would remain.

The site was in close proximity to public transport (rail and bus serviced) and a bicycle storage area has been included in the proposal. It was considered that alternative modes of transport were also available. Taking account of these points it was considered that the parking space provision within the site was acceptable. DfI Roads had not raised any objection in relation to the proposed access or that the proposal would prejudice road safety or significantly inconvenience the flow of traffic. In terms of design, the proposed building was four storey in height with the 4th floor set back from the façade and finished in contrasting materials, which reduced the visual impact of the proposal in terms of its scale, overall appearance and dominance. The plans indicated that the apartment building height would be lower than the adjacent hotel.

The proposal would be sited on lower ground level than the adjacent roads with the roadside trees retained to ensure continued screening with the area of undeveloped open space at the front of the site retained.

The building would be sited on lower ground level than the adjacent roads with the roadside trees being retained to ensure continued screening.

In terms of amenity space the proposal was acceptable with 10 square metres being exceeded per apartment. There was no impact on the adjoining hotel with no windows on the adjacent gable facing towards the hotel.

The proposed apartment building had been designed with a walkway on each floor along the elevations facing the hotel and school. Those walkways would be screened by fixed louvre panels which would limit views out of and into the walkways to protect the proposed residential amenity and prevent overlooking into the hotel and school.

Additionally, there was sufficient separation distance to the northeast facing the school with no windows on the adjacent side elevation. The mature band of trees along the adjoining shared boundary were to be retained. There would also be no adverse loss of natural light or overshadowing of school buildings given the significant separation distance.

Given the proximity of the proposal to the road network, hotel and school a Noise Impact Assessment was submitted. Environmental Health was content with the mitigation measures proposed within the design and conditions would be added to ensure specific glazing, ventilation and wall & ceiling material to provide noise attenuation.

The proposal complied with the relevant criteria of Policy QD1 of PPS 7. In terms of the site's close proximity to City Hall, a Grade A listed building and Bangor Castle Stable Yard, the Visitors Centre, Grade B+ listed, HED were consulted and were content with the proposal given the use of sympathetic, high quality materials including the contrasting materials to the 4th floor, planting of more trees, and the use of the natural gradient of the site all of which help to limit any impact and respect the setting of the listed buildings. HED had proposed the use of a number of materials in any proposed landscaping scheme which would be conditioned.

The scheme complied with the requirements of the SPPS and policy BH11 of PPS 6 (Development affecting the setting of a listed building).

A Drainage Assessment Addendum submitted in September 2022 demonstrated that the proposed construction of a suitable drainage network was feasible. DfI Rivers had no objection subject to condition in terms of any potential flood risk from exceedance of the network. A negative condition would be attached to any decision notice to ensure that the method of sewage disposal had been agreed in writing with NI Water. The Planning Department recommended that the application was granted.

The Chair invited questions from members.

Councillor McRandal expressed concern regarding car parking, he noted the parking guidelines and sought clarity that the appropriate test was one space per apartment. The Planning Officer confirmed that within the area of parking restraint the rule was one car parking space per residential unit.

Councillor Cathcart noted that the application was submitted in 2019 and he questioned if it was the NI Water issue that caused the delay. To the best of his knowledge, the Planning Officer stated that issue had caused a significant delay.

Councillor Cathcart referred to the boundaries and asked what was proposed. The Planning Officer stated that a condition would be placed on an approval to ensure submission of a suitable landscaping scheme. In terms of the existing boundaries, the trees would be maintained and augmented with hedging.

The Chair asked if the previous planning application had expired for 14 apartments. The Planning Officer confirmed that had expired.

The Chair invited Mr Donaldson and Ms Whyte (Agent/Architect) to come forward who were speaking in support of the application.

On behalf of the applicant, Ms Whyte welcomed the Case Officer's comprehensive report and the recommendation of approval. Since lodging the application in 2019 the department, applicant and agent had worked consistently to ensure a design that fulfilled planning requirements and addressed relevant concerns raised. The applicant was local who had a portfolio of quality residential "build to let" developments and this was a continuation of same. In response to the concerns raised Ms Whyte outlined the following:-

- Increase in numbers apartments and material - was a choice:- from 14 to 19 units was economic, added to the sharp increase in the cost of building materials, was the overriding determination to deliver a building and associated landscaping with a high quality material finish. The additional units made that feasible. Samples and exemplars had been provided that would elevate the quality of finish and complement the existing historic as well as neighbouring buildings.
- Noise – The applicant provided a noise impact assessment. The applicant would take all reasonable steps to minimise disturbance during construction (e.g. discussions with Environmental Health and neighbours - piling was proposed during the school holidays & within working hours or otherwise agreed) with the department.
- Overlooking – the walkways would be permanently screened and existing mature evergreen trees would be retained.
- Landscaping – McIlwaine Landscape Architects had been involved from the start of the application and consultation had occurred with HED regarding the quality and style of landscaping.
- The Applicant was content to engage with the school going forward with all reasonable steps taken to ensure considerate contractors' practice.
- Bin storage – that would be in a "landscape covered" location, separate from the living accommodation that would be easily serviced and accessed by tenants and operatives.

In finishing, Ms Whyte trusted her remarks served as a reassurance to those who voiced concerns and she look forward to receiving the planning approval that would allow the regeneration of the former diving pool site to at last commence.

The Chair invited questions from members.

Councillor Cathcart welcomed work occurring with the school to minimise any disruption. He referred to his earlier question regarding landscaping and sought confirmation that there was DfI approval for visibility splays. He also questioned the material of the boundaries. Ms Whyte advised that the boundaries would be a combination of a fence and native hedging, that was to be kept at a certain height. In terms of the visibility splays those were good along with a wide footpath and green belt.

Noting the historical importance of the area, Councillor Cathcart was glad to hear that the trees were going to be retained. He also welcomed the HED conditioning of

some of the materials and the design noting the deliberations that had previously occurred during the approval of the Premier Inn application with this proposal sitting alongside that.

Councillor Morgan asked how the increase in apartment from 14 to 19 apartments had been achieved. Ms Whyte advised that had been achieved by reducing the size of the apartments and a slight reconfiguration of the layout. The apartments would be a combination of 1-bed and 2-bed apartments.

Councillor Creighton referred to the temporary fence that was at the site presently and questioned if that was the site boundary. Ms Whyte explained that the site boundary that was around the inside of the current footpath.

Councillor Creighton was pleased to see the green space approaching the City Hall.

In relation to the concerns raised regarding the safety of access to the school, Councillor McCollum noted that Dfl had not raised any concerns in that regard however questioned the distance between the entrance to the school and the entrance to the proposed development. Ms Whyte referred to the car park and lay-by and explained that the entrance to the school was off-set considerably.

As there were no further questions, Mr Donaldson and Ms Whyte returned to the public gallery.

The Chair invited questioned for the Planning Officer.

Councillor Morgan expressed concern regarding the reduction in size of the apartments and questioned the size of those. The Planning Officer stated that the proposal met the space standards required under policy. The proposal was within an area where there was presumption of favour of development.

Councillor Creighton asked if the apartments were to be used as AirBnBs. The Planning Officer stated that the planning office could not provide comment in that regard and that the application was 19 apartments.

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

Speaking to his proposal, Councillor Cathcart welcomed the design and the conditions were appropriate. Parking in the City had been debated at length, applications with less car parking spaces had been approved and he therefore did not feel that was a valid reason to refuse. As previously stated, he welcomed the applicant working with the school to address any concerns regarding disruption.

Councillor Kendall was content the application met the necessary requirements.

The Chair was not satisfied with the car parking, he felt the parking was restricted in the surrounding area and noted the potential impacts on the car park at Castle Park.

As members not all in agreement, a vote was undertaken which resulted as follows:

FOR (14) Aldermen Graham McDowell Smith	AGAINST (2) Alderman McIlveen Councillor Harbinson	ABSTAINED (0)	ABSENT (0)
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Councillors

- Cathcart
- Creighton
- Kerr
- Kendall
- Martin
- McKee
- McCollum
- McLaren
- McRandal
- Morgan
- Wray

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

4.5 LA06/2021/118/F - West of Nos. 39 and 80 St Andrews Avenue, Ballyhalbert, immediately West of 45 Longfield Way and North of Nos.72 and 84 Longfield Way, Ballyhalbert - Housing development of 98 units, detached garages (site nos. 175 to 272 inclusive), extension to footpath on Shore Road and playpark
(Appendix VIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's Report.

DEA: Ards Peninsula

Committee Interest: An application in the major category of development – approved by Planning Committee at its meeting of 07 November 2023, but further amendments received to include extension to footpath on Shore Road and installation of a playpark

Proposal: Housing development of 98 units, detached garages (site nos. 175 to 272 inclusive), extension to footpath on Shore Road and playpark

Site Location: West of Nos. 39 and 80 St Andrews Avenue, Ballyhalbert, immediately West of 45 Longfield Way and North of Nos.72 and 84 Longfield Way, Ballyhalbert

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

The Senior Professional and Technical Officer (C Rodgers) outlined the detail of the application.

The application seeks full planning permission for 98 dwellings in Ballyhalbert. The proposal would form an extension to the existing St. Andrew's development located to the north of village.

Members would recall that this application was approved at the November Planning Committee meeting. Prior to the decision notice being issued further amendments were received to include an extension to the footpath on Shore Road and the installation of a playpark. The application had therefore been brought back to Planning Committee for determination.

It was important to remind members that the principle of residential development on this site had clearly been established. The site formed part of the designated housing policy area in the Ards and Down Area Plan and there was a long history of planning approvals associated with the wider designation. Many of the houses in the St. Andrew's development had been constructed and were now occupied.

Outline planning permission for the wider designation was originally granted in the year 2000 and was followed by approval of the reserved matters. The permission pre-dated the introduction of the PPS8 policy requirement to provide a playpark as part of residential developments of 100 units or more. Numerous applications to amend house types within the zoning had since been granted planning permission.

The Planning Service had advised the Applicant of concerns expressed by members of the Planning Committee regarding the lack of playpark provision in this part of the village. In response, the Applicant now proposed to provide a playpark within the site to ensure the layout included adequate provision for children's play.

The visual showed the location of the playpark within a central area of open space which would be well overlooked by the proposed dwellings. This central location would promote user accessibility and safety. That was a welcome addition to the scheme and would assist the creation of a quality residential environment.

A wide range of playground equipment would be provided including a climbing frame, standard swing, a pod swing, a seesaw, springer, and rotating equipment. Safety surfacing would be installed as per safety standards, a 1.2m fence and single gate would enclose the play park in the interests of child safety. A condition was recommended to ensure that the playpark would be provided prior to the occupation of 25 dwellings and would be subsequently managed and maintained by a management company on behalf of the residents.

Subsequent to further advertisement and neighbour notification, seven additional objections were received. Matters raised had been considered in detail in the addendum to the report and related primarily to road and pedestrian safety, provision of safe areas for children's play and impact on existing infrastructure.

The existing footpath would be extended along the existing verge to the driveways of 94 and 95D Shore Road. It was considered that provision of this playpark, in addition to the proposed areas of space would go some way towards reducing the need for pedestrian travel from the development to the existing playpark within the

centre of Ballyhalbert. DfI Roads provided no objection to the current application in terms of roads safety subject to the provision of the proposed footpath extension.

The speed humps within the development would aid the regulation of speed within the development and there would also be footpaths for pedestrians to use within the development.

To conclude the application site formed part of a wider area of land that was deemed suitable for housing through the Development Plan. The site also had a long planning history for similar residential development. The layout closely reflected the layout for the change of house type application approved in 2012 under the same policy context but with the addition of a playpark and extension of the existing footpath to enhance the scheme.

No objection had been received from any statutory consultee. Having weighed all the material planning considerations it was recommended that this application proceed by way of an approval of planning permission subject to conditions listed in the addendum.

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

Councillor Kerr welcomed the addition of the playground and the extension to the footpath.

Councillor Wray felt it was fantastic news and noted that a lot of the concerns discussed when considering the previous application had been addressed. He thanked the Planning Officer for detailing the concerns of the Committee to the applicant. Councillor Wray questioned where the traffic calming measures would be placed.

The Planning Officer stated that those traffic calming measures were proposed for within the development itself. The private street determination drawings showed a number of speed humps to slow traffic within the development. The Officer referred the Member to the plans on the planning portal.

Councillor Cathcart was pleased with the application, he knew the people of Ballyhalbert and elected representatives had campaigned for a play park for the area for some time. The proposal brought a positive development and was great news for the village of Ballyhalbert.

Councillor McRandal viewed it as refreshing that the feedback of members had been listened to. He noted the application also brought the addition of a new house along with the playpark and questioned the location of those. The Planning Officer highlighted using the visual, that the playpark would be positioned on what was previously approved as a landscaped area of open space. She was of the view that the additional house was a detached house changed to semi-detached houses. The layout remained essentially the same.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked the Planning Officer for her action in this regard.

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

4.6 LA06/2023/1910/F – Cloughey Pavilion, Main Road, Cloughey - Proposed two storey extension and existing Pavilion to include a balcony and associated alterations as well as other works including a paladin fence and disabled parking (renewal of approval LA/2017/1256/F)
(Appendix IX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's Report.

DEA: Ards Peninsula

Committee Interest: An application relating to land in which the Council has an interest

Proposal: Proposed two storey extension to existing Pavilion to include a balcony and associated alternations as well as other works including a paladin fence and disabled parking (renewal of approval LA06/2017/1256/F

Site Location: Cloughey Pavilion, Main Road, Cloughey

Recommendation: Grant Planning Permission

The Principal Planning and Technical Officer (C Blair) outlined the detail of the application.

The site comprised a single storey building, which was used for community/sports activities, was accessed via an existing lane. The site lay within an enclosed area which contained a bowling green and three tennis courts.

The site's northern, eastern and southern boundaries were defined by a combination of steel mesh security fencing and close board fencing. The western boundary was undefined as the site formed part of a larger sports complex. The topography of the site was level with undulating sands and grass area to the east. The surrounding area was predominantly residential with properties assuming a variety of styles and scales. The Warren and Cloughey Beach was located southeast of the site.

Members should note that there are no objections from consultees subject to conditions. There had been no letters of representation, either objecting to or in support of the application.

The Planning Officer highlighted that the application was a renewal application at the site for previous approval under LA06/2017/1256/F – "Proposed two storey extension to existing Pavilion to include a balcony and associated alterations as well as other works including a paladin fence and disabled parking", which was granted on 5 September 2018.

As such, the principle of the development had already been considered and deemed acceptable during the processing of this application. It should be noted that there

had been no change in the development plan or policy context since this original approval.

Moving now to the Plan and Policy consideration. The site was located in the countryside and therefore out with Cloughey Settlement Limit.

The site was located within a Local Landscape Policy Area and was immediately adjacent to the Outer Ards Area of Special Scientific Interest, Outer Ards Ramsar site, North Channel Special Area of Conservation, and the Outer Ards Special Protected Area. The proposed extension to the existing pavilion including balcony has no detrimental impact to the existing beach to the southeast.

This site was found within LLPA 4 of ADAP 2015, which was entitled "Caravan Park and adjoining lands". The proposal was on an area of existing development and given the surrounding topography there would be limited views with no material impact on the LLPA. The proposal did not extend beyond the existing site boundary into the undeveloped headland area.

The SPPS referenced the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) and outlined that coastal areas need to be protected from coastal squeeze, to safeguard against loss of distinctive habitats, and to help adaptation to climate change, and states the landscape setting of features should also be conserved. The proposed development to extend the existing building, erect fencing and provide disabled parking does not have an adverse impact on the surrounding coastal area, does not alter existing access arrangement (including to the beach) and does not lie within the 1 in 100 year fluvial or 1 in 200 year coastal flood plain.

The proposed development could be visually integrated into the surrounding landscape, was of appropriate design and did not cause a detrimental change to, or further erode the rural character of the area. Therefore, it was compliant with policies CTY 1, CTY 13 and CTY 14 of PPS 21 'Sustainable Development in the Countryside'.

Finally, in terms of Policy OS3 [Outdoor Recreation in the Countryside] of PPS 8 for Open Space, the proposed development was of a high standard design and was sympathetic to the surrounding environment due to its siting, layout and landscape treatment. As such it met the requirements of this policy.

The Planning Service recommended that the proposed development was granted full planning permission subject to any condition required.

There were no questions from members.

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

Councillor Wray expressed his delight with the application for the community of Cloughey.

Councillor Kerr agreed and stated that the pavilion was a great asset for the community.

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

5. UPDATE ON PLANNING APPEALS

(Appendices X)

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

Appeal Decisions

- 1. The Planning Appeals Commission found, on 29 November 2023, that there was no valid appeal in relation to the refusal of planning permission below.

PAC Ref	2022/A0204
Application ref	LA06/2018/0996/F
Appellant	Cedarville Ltd
Subject of Appeal	Erection of 8 dwellings with associated car parking and landscaping
Location	Lands to the West of 7 Main Street and South of 6a Ballyrawer Avenue, Carrowdore

The Council refused the application on 13 January 2023 for the following reasons:

- The proposal is contrary to the SPPS in that it had not been demonstrated that the adjacent minerals development is not likely to compromise safety or to significantly impair the amenity of people living in the proposed dwellings;
- The proposal is contrary to Policy QD1 of PPS 7: Quality Residential Environments in that it had not been demonstrated that residents of the proposed dwellings will not be adversely affected by noise and dust arising from activities of the adjacent quarry.

The application form submitted to the Council described the location of the site as “Lands to the West of 7 Main Street and South of 6a Ballyrawer Avenue, Carrowdore”. However, the site was in fact located to the east of 7 Main Street and to the south west of 6a Ballyrawer Avenue.

The Commissioner stated that the description of the site location relied upon by the Council was seriously misleading. It may have led interested members of the public to believe that the proposal related to land on the opposite side of Main Street and they may therefore have assumed that the proposal would not affect them and may not have followed the matter up. The misleading address could therefore have prejudiced their ability to comment on the proposal.

While the inaccuracy in the relationship to 6a Ballyrawer Road was of less consequence, the confusing of east and west in relation to 7 Main Street was fatal. The published address failed to inform people living in the locality of the proposal

and could prejudice their ability to follow the matter up by making representations if they wish. Failure to publish a proper notice defeats the purpose of publication and renders the Council’s decision on the application invalid. Accordingly, it was found that there could be no valid appeal.

The Council had contacted the agent for the applicant and was awaiting amended application forms but had re-advertised and neighbour notified on the basis of the correct address. Staff had been reminded of the importance of checking addresses at validation stage accordingly.

2. The following appeal was upheld on 27 November 2023.

PAC Ref	2022/A0193
Application ref	LA06/2020/1008/O
Appellant	Ashton Fraser Investments
Subject of Appeal	The refusal of outline planning permission for the erection of 9 dwellings with access off Messines Road
Location	Lands immediately north of 10-18 Cambourne View and 17 Cambourne Park, Newtownards

The above application had been called-in to Planning Committee and was heard on 18 January 2022 when members were advised by DfI Roads that the protected route onto which the proposed development would access was a ‘Category 2’ meaning that it fell within Policy AMP 3 of PPS 3 – ‘Other Dual Carriageways, Ring Roads, Through-Passes and ByPasses – All locations’. That was disputed by the applicant’s barrister as the road was not categorised as such on the DfI Roads website and that further to a decision by the Planning Appeals Commission in 2005, any ambiguity should be settled in favour of the applicant.

Members voted to defer the matter for legal advice; however, the applicant sought the application be refused without be referred back to Planning Committee in order that an appeal could be lodged as soon as possible. The refusal decision issued on 02 February 2023 with the following reasons:

- The proposal is contrary to PPS 3 , Policy AMP 3 in that it would, if permitted, result in the creation of a new vehicular access onto a Protected Route, thereby prejudicing the free flow of traffic and conditions of general safety;
- The proposal is contrary to PPS 3, Policy AMP 2 in that it would, if permitted, prejudice the safety and convenience of road users since it would lead to an unacceptable level of conflict by reason of the increased number of vehicles entering and leaving the proposed access including the unacceptable provision of a Right Turning Pocket.

Further to legal advice, the Council liaised with the applicant prior to the hearing and subject to provision of a traffic island to enable left-turn in, left-turn out only, withdrew its reasons for refusal. DfI Roads confirmed that while it no longer had any road safety concerns, it still had concerns regarding the principle of taking access from the Messines Road due to its Protected Route designation; however, DfI Roads was

a consultee, whilst the Council was the statutory decision maker. The Commissioner upheld the appeal on the basis of the revised road arrangements.

New Appeals Lodged – as of the date of this report there have been no new appeals received.

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

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report and attachments.

The Principal Planning and Technical Officer spoke to the report.

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

6. NIW FENCE AT SEACOURT WASTEWATER PUMPING STATION

(Appendices XI, XII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity attaching letter to NIW and Open letter from NIW. The report detailed that members would be familiar with the background to this matter, but for ease of reference the following information was provided.

A planning application under reference LA06/2019/1007/F was submitted to the Council by Northern Ireland Water (NIW) for retrospective development comprising 'Fence and gate surrounding an existing pumping station' at Seacourt WsPS, Lands 20m north of 1 Seacourt Lane, Bangor, further to seeking to remedy a breach of planning control as identified by the Council.

That application was refused planning permission on 20 July 2022 for reasons relating to its detrimental visual impact on, and demonstrable harm to, the coastal environment/North Down coastal path. NIW subsequently appealed the refusal to the Planning Appeals Commission; however, prior to the appeal being heard, NIW submitted two separate applications seeking a Certificate of Lawfulness for both the existing development, and in respect of proposed increase in height of the development.

Given that applications seeking Certificates of Lawfulness of Existing or Proposed Use or Development ("CLEUDs / CLOPUDs) are not required to be neighbour notified or advertised (as they are not planning applications, rather, inter alia, certification of compliance with permitted development rights), and the significant public and Member interest around this matter, the submissions and subsequent assessments and determinations were brought to the attention of members of Planning Committee as Item 6 of 04 April 2023 meeting and Item 11 of 22 June 2023 meeting.

It was determined that the development fell within the permitted development rights afforded to NIW as a statutory undertaken under The Planning (General Permitted

Development) Order (Northern Ireland) 2015 (“the GPDO”), and the Certificates were issued on 13 June 2023. Those determinations were not challenged by way of application for judicial review on a point of law. The appeal was withdrawn further to determination of the Certificates of Lawfulness.

NIW had its submissions certified in respect of meeting Part 14 – Development by Statutory and Other Undertakers, Class H – Water and sewerage undertakings, part (h) - any other development in, on, over or under operational land, other than the provision of a building but including the extension or alteration of a building.

Article 2 of the GPDO sets out interpretation of the terms used within the Order with the extract pertaining to “operational land” set out below

“operational land” in relation to the undertakers specified in Parts 14, 15, 25 and 29 of the Schedule means—

- (a) land which is used for the purpose of carrying on their undertakings; and
- (b) land in which an interest is held for that purpose;

not being land which, in respect of its nature and situation, is comparable rather with land in general than with land which is used, or in which interests are held, for the purpose of carrying on those undertakings:

Provided that where an interest in land is held by such undertakers for the purpose of carrying on their undertaking and—

- (a) the interest was acquired by them on or after 1st October 1973; or
- (b) it was held by them immediately before that date but the circumstances at that date were such that the land did not fall to be treated as operational land had this Order applied to it, that land shall not be treated as operational land unless there is in force with respect to the land a planning permission granted on an application made in that behalf under Part 3 of the 2011 Act for its development and that development, if carried out, would involve the use of the land for the purpose of the carrying on of the undertaking;

Further to the issuance of the Certificates of Lawfulness, the Council was approached informally by a member of the public raising a complaint concerning the Council's application of the GPDO to the assessment of the submissions for Certification. This was premised on the fact that the complainant had obtained evidence from NIW concerning a transfer of part of the site, subject of the Certificates, in or around 2016. The point being raised was that this conveyance in 2016 was long after the 1973 date relied upon by NIW in its submission, and thus the site could not fall within the definition of ‘operational land’ for the purposes of the GPDO.

The Council took legal advice from its planning lawyers and the letter at in the appendix was issued to NIW's lawyers. NIW responded via its solicitors setting out its responses to the questions posed by the Council, which was received shortly before Christmas 2023, and marked legally privileged. That response was reviewed by the Council's planning lawyers who subsequently confirmed that NIW did have the requisite interest in the land as ‘operational land’ prior to 01 October 1973, and as such was entitled to rely on Part 14, Class H (h).

NIW had not waived legal privilege but had provided an open letter which was attached to the report.

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

The Director spoke to the report noting the extensive history to the issue.

Councillor Cathcart sought clarity if the legal advice was in the public domain. The Director stated that legal advice remained legally privileged and an open letter had been provided and was attached to the report.

Councillor Cathcart thanked the Planning Officers for taking the matter forward. The issue had been explored and it was unfortunate that the Council had no grounds to explore that matter further. He believed there was scope in terms of what the Council could do, and he hoped the Council's Parks team could try to engage with NI Water. He had discussed the matter with the Parks section regarding doing something to lessen the impact of the fence on the area.

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

7. PLANNING SERVICE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT – DECEMBER 2023

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity detailing that the Planning Service's Budgetary Control Report covered the 9-month period 1 April to 31 December 2023. The net cost of the Service was showing an overspend of £28k (2.4%).

Explanation of Variance

The Planning Service's budget performance was further analysed into 3 key areas:

Report	Type	Variance
Report 2	Payroll Expenditure	£174k favourable
Report 3	Goods & Services Expenditure	£4k adverse
Report 4	Income	£197k adverse

Explanation of Variance

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

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Payroll	(174)	Vacant posts during the year include Manager's post and Administration posts.
Goods & Services	4	There are a small number of goods & services overspends and underspends which basically offset each other.

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Income	197	Mainly Planning application fees. No major applications received. General slowdown in applications in NI this year.

REPORT 1 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT						
Period 9 - December 2023						
	Year to Date Actual £	Year to Date Budget £	Variance £	Annual Budget £	Variance %	
Planning						
730 Planning	1,159,654	1,132,100	27,554	1,541,500	2.4	
Total	1,159,654	1,132,100	A 27,554	1,541,500	2.4	
REPORT 2 PAYROLL REPORT						
	£	£	£	£	%	
Planning - Payroll						
730 Planning	1,613,581	1,787,400	(173,819)	2,383,000	(9.7)	
Total	1,613,581	1,787,400	(173,819)	2,383,000	(9.7)	
REPORT 3 GOODS & SERVICES REPORT						
	£	£	£	£	%	
Planning - Goods & Services						
730 Planning	196,316	191,900	4,416	308,100	2.3	
Total	196,316	191,900	4,416	308,100	2.3	
REPORT 4 INCOME REPORT						
	£	£	£	£	%	
Planning - Income						
730 Planning	(650,243)	(847,200)	196,957	(1,149,600)	23.2	
Totals	(650,243)	(847,200)	196,957	(1,149,600)	23.2	

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

The Director briefly spoke to the report.

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 10.27 pm.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Environment Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards and via Zoom, on Wednesday, 7 February 2024 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor Morgan

Aldermen: Armstrong-Cotter
Cummings
McAlpine

Councillors:

	Kerr
Boyle	McKee (Zoom)
Cathcart	McKimm (Zoom)
Douglas	Rossiter
Edmund	Wray
Harbinson	

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 (Temporary) (R McCracken), and Democratic Services Officer (Richard King)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Smart and Councillor Blaney and an apology for lateness was received from Councillor Kerr.

NOTED.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

NOTED.

3. GRANT OF ENTERTAINMENT LICENSES (Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that applications had been received for the Grant of Entertainment Licences as follows:

The Greedy Gorb, 40 High Street, Bangor

Applicant: 79 Bellevue, Bangor

Days and Hours: Monday – Sunday 7.00pm -10.30pm

Type of entertainment: Dancing, Singing or Music or any other entertainment of a like kind.

Craigantlet Orange Hall, 71 Holywood Road, Newtownards

Applicant: Mr Ivan Thompson, 16 Knightsbridge Court, Bangor

Days and Hours: Occasional Licence 9am - Midnight

Type of entertainment: A Theatrical Performance
Dancing, Singing or Music or any other entertainment of a like kind.

There are no objections to these applications.

RECOMMENDED that the Council grants the applications.

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

4. PROPOSED CAR PARKING ORDER 2024 (Appendix)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that it was proposed to enact an Off-Street Car Parking Order under the Road Traffic Regulations (NI) Order 1997, in respect of certain Council owned car parks. A copy of the Proposed Draft Order was attached at Appendix 1, and a list of the included car parks is listed in Schedule 1 to that Order.

The public car parks covered by this Order were legacy car parks owned by the Council pre-RPA and not included in an existing Off-Street Parking Order made by the Department for Environment to regulate the management of public car parks that transferred to the Council in 2015. This existing Order would remain in force for the time being due to a current legislative impediment which meant that it could not be repealed until enabling legislation was passed by a functioning Assembly.

It would have been preferable to make a new Order covering regulation of all the car parks, for example those that transferred to the Council from the DfI in 2015 as well as legacy Council owned car parks. However, pending the legislative 'fix' to the repealing of the existing Order covering legacy DfI car parks, the Council was able to make a separate Order to facilitate better regulation and control of its own legacy car parks.

2. Car Parking Order

A Car Parking Order set out the powers and regulations that applied within each of the car parks, that could be enforced by the Council normally through the action of Parking Attendants. The regulations could include management control issues such

as time of use, driving within the car park, use by caravans (mobile homes), displaying of parking tickets and the setting of Tariffs.

Included in the list of benefits that would be realised through the making of an Order by the Council:

1. Bring most of the legacy council owned car parks under the Order. This would allow the Parking Attendants to enforce within them as required. Some car parks attached to Council buildings or community halls were not included in the Order.
2. Introduce parking charging at Eisenhower Pier Car Park. This would help to reduce the potential for displacement of all day parkers from Marine Gardens to the nearby Eisenhower Pier car park and improve turnover of car parking spaces in the area once the redevelopment of the Seafront began and there was an associated loss of car parking spaces at Marine Gardens. The measure was agreed by the Council at its meeting in January 2024.
3. The Tariffs to be charged were stated in Schedule 2 of the Order and were in accordance with the Council's agreed Car Park Strategy.
4. Enable the Council to take more effective action in relation to misuse of car parks, for example by caravans (motorhomes), through the use of FPNs.

3. Enactment Process

The process to enact an Order was specified in the Road Traffic Regulations (NI) Order 1997, and was as follows:

1. The Council agrees the draft Order.
2. The Council must then consult with such persons as the Council considers appropriate. It is proposed that the Town and City Steering Groups are consulted (there was a public consultation in 2019 with regards to the Car Parking Strategy and the issues within the Order were debated at that time).
3. Place a Public Notice in a newspaper(s) circulating in the area advising that any objections to the making of the Order must be received within 21 days of the Notice.
4. Consider any objections and confirm the Order (with amendments if required).
5. Advertise in the local press that the Order has been made and the date of implementation.

RECOMMENDED that the Council agrees the proposed Draft Ards and North Down Off-Street Parking (Public Car Parks) Order 2024 and commences the public consultation process as outlined in this report, with a further report in relation to the making of a final Order to be brought back to a future meeting for approval.

Proposed by Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that this Council agrees to the proposed draft Ards and North Down off-Street Parking (Public Car Parks) Order 2024 and commences the public consultation process as outlined in this report with the amendment of the Eisenhower Pier Car Park to no charge, with a further report in relation to the making of a final order to be brought back to a future meeting for approval. Furthermore, a further detailed report will be brought back to

committee on the option of allowing one-hour free parking at the Eisenhower Pier car park, the report will also include consultation with the Bangor Chamber of Commerce on potential car park operation options.

Speaking to his alternative proposal, Councillor Cathcart explained that the issue at the Eisenhower Pier car park was a unique circumstance as a result of the Queen's Parade development. He of course welcomed that development but that would mean losing a car park at Bangor seafront with the only other alternative car park in that immediate area introducing charges. He was concerned about the message that would send to residents, visitors and traders in the city centre.

While the reasoning for the charges had been to prevent all day parking in the city and increase turnover of car park users, he argued that all day parking was no longer an issue at the Marina car park and it was not full before 9am. He was of the view that the matter could be reviewed if all day parking ever became an issue in the future.

Councillor Cathcart understood that the concerns around all day parking had been based on pre-Covid-19 pandemic trends, and while it had been proposed at the Place and Prosperity Committee for the Eisenhower Pier car park to follow the on-street model with the first hour of parking free and charges thereafter, officers in the current directorate had warned that approach was not technically feasible.

If there was no such compromise available, he would therefore opt for free parking to remain there rather than see charges introduced, and he felt that the Council should not proceed with the recommended charges. His proposal included a separate consultation to seek wider opinion.

In relation to the car park at Banks Lane, separate to his proposal, Councillor Cathcart queried if the previous decision taken by this Committee to close it at night affected the consultation and if there needed to be an agreement on operating hours first. The Director of Environment explained that he did not believe this would not impact the consultation and he thought that minor amendments such as changes to car park operating hours would be permitted through a simpler Change Control Order process which would be checked with officers.

Councillor Cathcart felt content to proceed with the wider consultation with Eisenhower Pier car park listed without any charges at this stage - but as proposed, he would like to see a report looking into the option of having one hour free parking with charging thereafter. He was aware that his Bangor Central DEA colleagues were in agreement with that approach.

The seconder, Alderman Armstrong-Cotter reserved her right to speak at this stage.

Councillor Harbinson was broadly supportive of the proposal and felt that more information would be beneficial. He asked what the anticipated impact would be of existing users moving from the car park at the Marina, following its closure, to the Eisenhower Pier car park. He explained that he parked at the Marina car park regularly and had observed two to three dozen cars parked there all day, so

suggested it was probably a more substantial number than what the proposer was indicating.

The Director advised that the closure of the Queen's Parade car park would mean the loss of around 200 spaces and his colleagues in the Place and Prosperity Directorate were concerned that any all-day parking pattern would move to the Eisenhower Pier car park. A key principle behind the proposed tariff was to ensure a turnover of cars in order to promote economic activity in the town.

Councillor Boyle had been content with the officer's report but asked for some clarity around the proposal and how the two issues would be kept separate and be reported back to the Committee. It was clarified that the Eisenhower Pier would remain within the existing draft schedule, but as a free of charge car park rather than charged as originally proposed. The proposer felt that it was widely supported for that to be reviewed at a later date if necessary. The other proposal in relation to the Eisenhower Pier car park was to explore options for introducing a free element of parking with charging after the first hour, with consultation to be carried out with the City Chamber of commerce. This would be reported separately.

Councillor Boyle was content with that approach, but queried how a free one-hour parking model would be operated and the Director referred to previous discussion and a report that was issued at January's full Council meeting, which explained the view of officers that it would not be feasible to operate such a model.

Councillor Wray advised that his Bangor Central party colleague, Councillor Blaney was broadly supportive of the proposal. In a further general observation, Councillor Wray felt that some of the terms and wording in the draft document appeared to be unclear and outdated. He highlighted the restriction from using a car park as a meeting point and how it could be interpreted as just two people meeting.

In a further observation, he questioned the use of 'intoxicating liquor' and if that was still felt an appropriate term for alcohol. He also felt it was now normal practice to include drugs alongside that. He felt that the wording appeared to have been copied and pasted from previous documents and some of the language was no longer appropriate for use in 2024.

In response to the first query, the Director explained that the meeting point element was to prevent use of car parks by large congregations such as an organisation taking over a car park for example. That situation could occur legitimately however as organisations were able to apply to the Council for temporary use of land but it was in the order to prevent that happening without permission, causing unauthorised restriction of car parking capacity. The wording around intoxicating liquor, he explained, was used for consistency with other legislation/bylaws.

In a final comment, Councillor Wray recalled antisocial behaviour issues in car parks, such as loud music, that he felt were not covered in the draft and he asked that they be reviewed and included.

Alderman McAlpine asked if the ongoing motorhome and caravan lobby had been considered, pointing to opposing arguments in terms of those who saw motorhomes

as a tourism opportunity and those who were against. She asked if officers had dealt with both of those views and the Director advised that those were dealt with under the conditions and restrictions set out in the Caravans Act, and use of motorhomes for habitation in the Council's car parks would be prohibited under the proposed Car Park Order. Given the tourism value, Council had been lobbying for a new legislative regime, but it was not be able to facilitate habitation use of motorhomes and caravans in its car parks currently. In terms of regulating existing use, he explained that changes to enforcement powers would enable officers to issue fixed penalty notices for this contravention. He felt the use of fixed penalty notice enforcement would give the Council more options in terms of targeting particular car parks at the right times.

Councillor Edmund spoke of the tourism benefits of providing parking for motorhomes and suggested that a highly suitable location would be where the busses parked in Donaghadee. He felt that the Council should allocate 10 spaces there for the use of motorhomes which were now, in this age, self-sustainable vehicles and would not require any major infrastructure.

Councillor McKee welcomed the introduction of measures to target engine idling and asked what enforcement and education options were available to the Council. The Director advised that enforcement resources could be directed towards any identified hotspot car parks.

Returning to the Eisenhower Pier car park, Councillor McKimm was supportive of the approach set out in the proposal and requested data on parking trends pre-pandemic versus parking trends post-pandemic. He felt uncomfortable for Council to make decisions on the basis of outdated and inaccurate evidence and usage patterns. He also felt that PR was a key challenge around the planned Queen's Parade development and he felt that introducing car parking charges would not have helped that. He therefore felt that the proposal was helpful and hoped that further data could be provided for guidance on this.

The Director advised that this type of updated analysis of car parking patterns was planned would be reported in due course. He noted that in some other Council areas, occupancy and car parking trends had bounced back to pre-pandemic levels. The bounce back in Ards and North Down was proving to be slower and that was reflected in the income generated from its car parks. A further review could take place in the future but any amendment would flow from the Council's car parking strategy.

In relation to the Eisenhower Pier car park, the Chair asked how long the process would take if the Council decided it wanted to introduce charges at a later date and the Director advised it would take a number of months to go through the legal process and install necessary charging infrastructure.

The seconder, Alderman Armstrong-Cotter felt that the proposal made sense on this occasion and welcomed that it included forward thinking and planning if parking occupancy trends were to change. It was right and proper that Council reviewed the situation in future and it needed this mechanism in place if there was an issue that needed to be addressed. She added that a blanket approach did not always work

and that it was important to encourage people to come and do their business in the town centre.

In a separate matter, Alderman Armstrong-Cotter referred to complaints she had received around the online payment process through use of an app and the Director provided reassurance that while some people preferred being able to pay using the app, there would always be dual payment facilities in place which provided both cash and online payment options.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Cathcart, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, that this Council agrees to the proposed draft Ards and North Down off-Street Parking (Public Car Parks) Order 2024 and commences the public consultation process as outlined in this report with the amendment of the Eisenhower Pier Car Park to no charge, with a further report in relation to the making of a final order to be brought back to a future meeting for approval. Furthermore, a further detailed report will be brought back to Committee on the option of allowing one hour free parking at the a Eisenhower Pier, the report will also include consultation with the Bangor Chamber of Commerce on potential car park operation options.

5. BYELAW TO PROHIBIT THE FEEDING OF PIGEONS AT CONWAY SQUARE, NEWTOWNARDS

(Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that a notice of motion was agreed as follows:

“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.”

Since the NOM was agreed, signage had been erected in Conway Square, advising the public that feeding of pigeons in the Square is prohibited. The potential for humane pest control measures to deal with the pigeons was also being addressed by the Environmental Health Service.

Notwithstanding the concerns raised at Council about this issue, since 2016 the Neighbourhood Environment Team had received one complaint from the public - although the Environmental Health Service had received complaints concerning persons feeding feral pigeons in Conway Square and thereby encouraging them to remain. The Cleansing section did receive occasional requests to clean pigeon droppings or remove dead birds from the area.

Feral pigeons were common in the urban environment and although they were mostly considered to be no more than a nuisance, they could potentially pose a health risk with concerns around transmission of diseases. Council officers had not received any evidence of such issues in this instance. Pigeons and their droppings

could also cause damage to the buildings where they perched due to the corrosive nature of pigeon droppings.

Feral Pigeons

Feral pigeons were descendants of domestic homing pigeons. Increased urban development had resulted in an increase in the number of feral pigeons due to the large number of accessible nesting spaces and readily available supply of food and water. Pigeons were capable of breeding throughout the year and did not migrate far from their birthplace; this could make it difficult to remove them from their location.

Identifying Feral Pigeons

Feral pigeons could be grey, brown or white, but were usually grey in colour with two black bars across each wing and iridescent feathers around the neck. There were no visible differences between males and females.

Domestic pigeons, such as those kept as pets or for racing, were essentially the same birds as feral pigeons; however, domestic pigeons could be identified by the presence of a tag around one of their legs.

Control Techniques

There were several techniques that could be used to reduce or remove the population. Implementing non-lethal control techniques were thought to provide the most effective long-term results. One way to minimise or prevent the nuisance caused by feral pigeons was to control where they roosted, nested and fed.

Removing Food Sources

A seemingly effective way of discouraging feral pigeons from infesting buildings and public areas was to not feed them and remove any potential food source. The number of pigeons in an area appeared to be determined by the availability of a sustainable food supply. A plentiful food supply encouraged year-round breeding.

Council Bye Laws in NI

Byelaws were created under powers conferred on Councils by Part 6 of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972.

The specified procedure for creating a byelaw to assist with good rule and government and for the prevention and suppression of nuisances in a district was as follows:

91 Procedure, etc., for making byelaws

(1) Byelaws should be made under the common seal of the Council and should not have effect until they were confirmed by the Ministry (Government Department) concerned.

- (2) At least one month before application for confirmation of byelaws was made, notice of the intention to apply for confirmation should be given in at least two newspapers circulating in the locality in which the area to which the byelaws were to apply was situated.
- (3) For at least one month before application for confirmation was made, a copy of the byelaws should be deposited at the offices of the Council by which the byelaws were made and should at all reasonable hours be open to public inspection without payment.
- (4) The Council by which the byelaws were made shall, on application, furnish to any person a copy of the byelaws, or of any part thereof, on payment of such reasonable sum as the council determined.
- (5) The Ministry concerned may have confirmed any byelaw submitted under this section for confirmation, subject to the consents (if any) required by section 9(2) of the Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1932 [1932 c.11] or may refuse to confirm any such byelaw.
- (6) Where a byelaw is to have effect in the district of a council other than the Council by which it is made, the Ministry concerned shall consult that other council before confirming the byelaw.
- (7) The Ministry concerned may fix the date on which a byelaw is to come into operation, and if no date is so fixed the byelaw shall come into operation at the expiration of one month from the date of its confirmation.
- (8) A copy of the byelaws, when confirmed, shall be printed, and deposited at the offices of the Council by which the byelaws are made, and shall at all reasonable hours be open to public inspection without payment, and a copy thereof shall, on application, be furnished to any person on payment of such reasonable sum as the council determines.

Obstacles to Effective Enforcement

The use of byelaws does not afford a fixed penalty notice enforcement option. Each alleged incident of breaching the byelaw would require a witness statement and an alleged offender to be interviewed. A full case file and court prosecution would be required in cases where the incident meets both the evidential and public interest tests and satisfies the Council's solicitor that there is a reasonable chance of success for a prosecution. The matter would be determined in the Magistrates Court and legal costs may or may not be awarded. Maximum fine on summary conviction is Level 2 (currently £500).

Land Ownership

Although Conway Square appears to be one complete pedestrian zone, three sides of it are technically roadways. The Council understands this perimeter strip of land to be an adopted road which remains in the ownership of the Department of Finance and Industry (DfI). Any byelaw created by the Council would only be actionable in the Council owned section of the square (approximately 60%) at this time. Application of a byelaw for the entire Square would be subject to agreement with DfI.

Existing Byelaw Trafalgar Square

The following wording is used for Greater London Authority Trafalgar Square byelaws:

Feeding of birds

- (1) No person other than a person acting at the direction of the Mayor shall within the Square– (a) feed any bird (which shall include dropping or casting feeding stuff for birds); or (b) distribute any feeding stuff for birds.

Subject to solicitor's advice, similar wording (substituting Council for Mayor) may be suitable.

Council's solicitors have already carried out a scoping exercise for the review of all Council bye laws, as currently the Borough has a range of byelaws created by the two legacy Councils dating back in many instances a long period of time ago. These byelaws generally cover issues that are either now covered by other substantive legislation (and are therefore unenforceable) or address issues that are liable to longer be issues of significant concern in the present era (or are relatively trivial matters that are highly unlikely to attract enforcement attention). Given that the value of the byelaw process set out in legislation over 50 years ago, as an effective control and enforcement mechanism for issues of significant concern to Council is debatable, resources (manpower and financial) have not been prioritised to take the byelaws review process further forward at this stage.

In the context of the above, Council was asked to consider the following options:

1. Instruct the Council's solicitor to draft a byelaw to control the feeding of pigeons in Conway Square, with reference to wording as outlined earlier in this report as deemed appropriate. Thereafter, proceed with the byelaw approval and implementation process as set out under the Local Government Act 1972.
2. Wait to include this issue (feeding of pigeons in Conway Square) as part of the wider review of Council byelaws in due course.

Some further points to note in weighing up the options are as follows:

- Bye-law enforcement considerations.
- Evidence gathering issues.
- Court prosecution the only byelaw enforcement remedy.
- Creation of new byelaw process and associated legal costs.
- Timescale for byelaw finalisation is very dependent on the Departmental consultation process. The norm was around 3 years in the past.
- Conway Square is only partially under Council control.

RECOMMENDED that Council decide which option to proceed with in relation to this matter.

Proposed by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that Council proceeds with Option 1.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter highlighted the issues that had been ongoing with pigeons and people feeding them in Conway Square, in Newtownards town centre. This had led to her party colleague, Alderman McIlveen bringing the Notice of Motion to Council which had called for humane ways to address the problem with inclusion of a byelaw. She added that Newtownards, as the premier shopping town, had a lot to offer with many great businesses, so for the square to be marred by pigeons was unacceptable.

Continuing, the proposer felt that Option 1 made sense and given the length of time it took to create a byelaw it was also important to encourage the Neighbourhood Environment team to step up monitoring at certain times of the day. She felt this would send a message that Council was serious about addressing the issue and she hoped that those who fed the pigeons would understand too. She also advised that her colleague, Alderman McIlveen who had brought the motion was also supportive of Option 1.

The seconder, Councillor Edmund, said he worked in the town centre and was well aware of the pigeon issues. He spoke of the requirement to have enforcement officers available to enforce the proposed bylaw, but he appreciated its implementation would take time. Councillor Cathcart added his support to the proposal referring to a wider review of bylaws and a Notice of Motion he had brought previously which sought to review and modernise Council bylaws. He offered an example of a byelaw which prevented disturbance of somebody's day at the seaside. This and many others were no longer enforceable.

The Director advised that officers had done a preliminary internal sifting of existing byelaws and there was nothing identified as being significant or urgent in terms of prohibiting good governance of the Borough. Therefore, given the legal costs that would be involved in progressing the wider byelaws review further, this has not been prioritised in budgets at this stage.

Councillor McKimm welcomed that the motion had sought a humane resolution, which in itself represented a step forward, but he queried the costs involved in creating a byelaw. He also asked for costs in relation to enforcement of the byelaw and bringing a defendant before a magistrate.

The Director advised that there would be no option of issuing a fixed penalty notice under the proposed byelaw and there would need to be a court summons issued to effect enforcement. The court would rarely award full costs to be repaid to the Council, so there would be a net cost of enforcement which could involve hundreds of pounds. He was unsure of the legal costs of creating the byelaw, but advised that an estimate could be provided to the Member in due course.

Councillor Boyle felt that Council could embarrass itself enough without the publicity of bringing someone to Court for feeding a pigeon. He acknowledged the work of Alderman McIlveen in raising this and he appreciated the issues it caused for people's enjoyment of the town centre although he recalled seeing children chasing

pigeons around the square and he had not seen it as a major issue and he felt that the report reflected that. While the situation could be improved, he felt that the byelaw would have little effect and it would not be enforceable on 40% of the square which the Council did not own.

In a final query, Alderman McAlpine asked if any information was available from the Greater London Authority in relation to its enforcement of the Trafalgar Square byelaw. She was concerned that despite this well-intentioned work by Alderman McIlveen, the Council could end up paying for making of a byelaw that it never used. The Director advised that information on the Trafalgar Square byelaw could be requested.

Summing up on her proposal, Alderman Armstrong-Cotter had been struck by the hesitancy towards the introduction and enforcement of the proposed byelaw. It sent the wrong message that antisocial behaviour was fine because the Council wasn't prepared to pay the money to prosecute anybody, or antisocial behaviour was fine if it occurred in an area that the Council only owned 60% of.

She added that the Court process was used to send a message to prevent the problem and that byelaws were implemented because something was a major problem and she referred to the large number of complaints she received through her work at the Strangford MP constituency office in the town. She felt that for Council to cop out of this due to the enforcement costs, it was not sending the right message.

The Chair asked if Members were all in agreement and Councillor McKimm asked to be recorded against the proposal.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the Council proceeds with Option 1.

6. REQUIRED WORKS TO ROLLO GILLESPIE MONUMENT, COMBER (FILE 65383)
(Appendix **)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment attaching Condition Survey by Alastair Coey Architect. The report detailed that the Gillespie Monument was a free-standing sandstone square shaft column on a square stepped podium. The monument was erected under the oversight of John Fraser, the first county surveyor for Down and unveiled on 24 June 1845 (St. John's Day) 1844-5. It stood approximately twelve metres tall and was located in Comber town centre within landscaped gardens with brick paviour paths. It was erected to the memory of local military hero Sir Robert Rollo Gillespie. Gillespie was born in Comber in 1766 in a house which stood on the south side of The Square, now demolished.

The Gillespie Monument was designated by the Department for the Communities, Historic Environment Division, as a grade B1 listed structure Ref no: HB24/15/011. The significance of the designation was that any alterations to a listed structure, require Listed Building Consent.

Current Condition

Following a number of representations and a subsequent procurement exercise, Alistair Coey Architects were commissioned to undertake a condition report on the monument. Alastair Coey Architects specialises exclusively in the conservation of historic buildings and places. The company was accredited by the Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland as a Grade One Conservation Practice.

The survey was carried out by visual observation with upper reaches inspected from an access boom. No opening up was carried out and therefore it was not possible to inspect voids etc. Alastair Coey Architects was therefore unable to report that such parts, and other hidden aspects of the monument, were free from defect.

The condition survey of the monument had revealed that a number of issues need to be addressed to prevent further deterioration of the fabric.

The full report was attached, and pertinent points were extracted below.



Works Required

The following recommendations were prioritised into three categories:

Category 1 - Urgent Health and Safety Risks (Immediate action)

1. Remove all dangerously loose stone as highlighted throughout the report.
2. Undermined and heavily delaminated step to plinth should be replaced with a suitable stone replacement and any displaced stonework eased back into position.

Category 2 - Essential repairs within 1-3 years

1. All vegetation should be sprayed with a systemic weedkiller during the active growth period in order to fully kill off the plant at root level. This work should ideally be carried out in advance of any stonework repair project.
2. Spalled and fractured stonework – urgent attention was required to high level work which exhibits spalling and fracturing.
3. All delaminated stone should be lightly scraped to remove delaminated layers of stone. All delaminated stone should be lightly trowel scraped and surfaces cleaned with suitable bristle brushes (not wire brushes) or carborundum blocks.

Category 3 - Recommended repairs over 4-10 year period

1. Stone cleaning – Algae and moss should be removed using an environmentally friendly biocide coupled with a light steam low pressure wash to remove staining.
2. Material analysis – Samples of existing stone and mortars should be sent to a laboratory for full analysis. This would inform of compatible stone type for replacement repairs and replication of original mortars.
3. Cementitious render repairs – Those should be removed and underlying stone accessed individually by a suitably qualified conservation professional for indentation repair or full replacement using a compatible stone type.
4. Delaminated stonework – All delaminated stonework should be individually assessed by a suitably qualified conservation professional for possible retention in order to retain as much of the original fabric, through consolidation, stabilisation or full replacement. Heavily delaminated ashlar stone beyond repair should be replaced using a compatible stone type.
5. The fixing to the statue should be examined by a structural engineer to ensure that it was intact and fit for purpose. Some cracking around the base and surface corrosion on the exposed ferrous metal bar may indicate possible movement. It may be necessary to remove the statue and replace the fixing with 304 marine grade stainless steel threaded bar and bolt.
6. The previously repaired right hand of the statue and sword should be re-examined to determine if it was secure and fixings used were of non-ferrous metal.
7. Limestone tablets – Relief carvings and incised lettering should be lightly cleaned and all fixings carefully removed and refixed with stainless steel fixings. Fractured panel should be repaired with epoxy resin. A low pressure lime based grout should be used to fill voids behind each tablet.
8. All defective and inappropriate cement-based pointing should be raked-out using non-mechanical means and repointed using lime-based mortar. This would entail full repointing of the entire monument.
9. Further inspection of the core using minimal invasive means by boring into the structure and inspecting the core with a borescope to determine of the central

core of the column shaft and that behind inscribed panels was hollow or solid. This would inform the decision on grouting and the consistency and aggregate size required for injectability and flow rate. A metal detector survey would also confirm if the column shaft stonework was tied with metal cramps.

10. A low pressure lime based grout should follow the repointing exercise and be carried out in stages commencing at the bottom and working upwards.
11. All fractures and open voids should be grout injected. The grouting material should be compatible with the existing material and not impose any additional loading or change in composition due to thermal variations which may put stress on the structure.
12. Missing raised lettering inscription could be addressed with new indentation lettering or left alone. Fissured and remnants of raised or incised lettering and relief carvings should be preserved by consolidation treatment in order to stem the weathering process. It was essential this work was carried out by a qualified specialist stone conservator.

Next Steps

Officers believe that a two-stage approach is appropriate. Stage 1 will address all issues highlighted in Category 1 and Category 2. It will also involve the investigative works described in item 5 within Category 3, in order to gather as much information as possible so that Stage 2 can be accurately costed.

Costs

The estimated costs for Stage 1 outlined above, is £15,000. This could be funded from within existing maintenance budgets for the incoming year. Once the investigative works were complete, it was proposed that the costs for Stage 2 would be included in a business case for Council's review as part of the rates setting process for 2025/26. Officers would also seek out any potential external funding opportunities for inclusion within the business case.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees to proceed with Stage 1, as outlined above, at an approximate cost of £15k, from existing budgets.

Proposed by Alderman Cummings, seconded by Councillor Douglas, that Council adopts the recommendation and: Further agrees that Council authorises Council officers to correspond with the Ulster Architectural Heritage, Centre for Community Archaeology QUB and Masonic Grand Lodge Ireland, Dublin in order to assist with an understanding of the internal ironworks, original foundations and where possible access original design documents.

Alderman Cummings thanked officers for progressing the matter to this stage. They had been working very closely on the issue alongside himself for the last two years and had been approached by many members of the public who had been equally concerned. Being able to proceed with immediate effect was extremely welcome and he looked forward to the next stage.

The monument was cherished dearly by residents and visitors. Its disrepair attracted much concern and health and safety concerns were raised during the recent adverse weather conditions and many were concerned that the deterioration was getting to the stage where it was going to be beyond repair. He was thankful to local residents who had been updating him with photographic evidence which he was able to pass on to officers.

The reason for the additional wording focusing on the Ulster Architectural Heritage and Centre for Community Archaeology QUB was to examine more closely the internal iron works and the involvement of the Masonic Grand Lodge Ireland, Dublin was in hope to gain access to the original design documents as it was that body that was responsible for the erection of the monument.

QUB was to access as much expertise as possible and explore, in a less invasive way, with infrared technology, the internal ironworks which as highlighted in the report, could be cause for concern. He queried if there would be updated reports in relation to the progress.

The Head of Assets and Property Services advised that once ratified by Council the initial works as outlined in the report would begin and reports would be issued to update Members as each stage progressed. He also advised that a business case would be completed over the following six to eight months in anticipation of completing all of the remaining works listed in the report.

Councillor Douglas found the report from the architect extremely detailed and informative and she understood that there were areas that could not be accessed which were to be included in this report, so she understood the reasoning for the addition to contact the other organisations as outlined by the proposer.

The monument was one of the town's main features and had survived remarkably well since it was put in place for what she believed was 179 years. She referred to a calendar of Comber and surrounding areas and the aerial view of the statue did show improvement works were required to the statue but she understood that firstly there needed to be urgent safety works carried out. She appreciated a complete overhaul would take time so it was welcomed that the initial works could start as soon as possible.

The Chair spoke to welcome the proposal and felt that the works were much needed, and she looked forward to seeing Rollo looking shiny, bright and safe.

Adding his support, Councillor Wray appreciated the amendment and felt it made a lot of sense and welcomed that there would be further reports updating the Committee on works. He was aware of the incredible history of the monument and that part of the Borough's cultural heritage needed to be protected. He welcomed the involvement of the organisations included in the proposal and he looked forward to the day when all of the works were completed and hoped that schools and young people could learn about the monument's history.

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

Council authorises Council officers to correspond with the Ulster Architectural Heritage, Centre for Community Archaeology QUB and Masonic Grand Lodge Ireland, Dublin to, in order to assist with an understanding of the internal ironworks, original foundations and where possible access original design documents.

7. AMENDMENT TO MEMORIAL BENCH POLICY

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that the Council implemented the Policy for Provision of Memorial Benches in March 2016, reviewing it in 2018 and again in 2021.

Officers believed the current policy was working well, however rising construction industry costs meant that the installation costs need to be amended to ensure cost recovery.

Proposed Amendment

Rather than having a fixed price within the policy, it was proposed that wording was adopted to enable general cost recovery, so that any future cost increases could be reflected in prevailing published charges for this service without the need for further amendments to the policy.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve to amend the policy to include the change outlined above.

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

8. PROPOSED CONSULTATION RESPONSE ON REFORMING THE PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY SYSTEM FOR WASTE ELECTRICAL AND ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT (WEEE)

(Appendix VI)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that the Government had announced reforms intended to make it easier for people and businesses to reuse and recycle their waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE).

Despite local authorities providing designated collection facilities (DCFs) mainly at HRCs for WEEE since 2007, and some larger producers/distributors operating take-back schemes, statistics reveal that an estimated 155,000 tonnes of smaller household electricals such as cables, toasters, kettles, and power tools were wrongly thrown in the bin each year and UK homes were thought to hoard a further 527 million unwanted electrical items containing valuable materials such as gold, silver, and platinum.

A range of measures had been proposed within the joint UK Government, Scottish Government, Welsh Government and Northern Ireland Executive Consultation for introduction from 2026, including UK-wide collections of waste electricals directly from households – saving the public from having to travel to electrical disposal points. The collections would be financed by producers of electrical items, not the taxpayer, and would not necessarily require the provision of any further bins.

Large retailers could roll out collection drop points for electrical items in-store, free of charge, without the need to buy a replacement product and retailers and online sellers would take on responsibility for collecting unwanted or broken large electrical items such as fridges or cookers when delivering a replacement.

Most of the questions offered three response choices (agree, disagree or unsure and yes, no and unsure). In some cases, while the Council may agree in principle, this needed to be qualified by an assurance that the producers met the full financial costs if local authorities were to provide dedicated collection arrangements.

The full Consultation document can be found at [WEEE Review Final Consultation Document 2023.pdf \(defra.gov.uk\)](#)

The Impact Assessment Report can be accessed on [Impact Assessment template \(defra.gov.uk\)](#)

RECOMMENDED that the Council agrees the attached response to the consultation questions as detailed in Appendix 1.

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

9. ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT - DECEMBER 2023 (Appendices VII - XII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that the Environment Directorate's Budgetary Control Report covered the 9-month period 1 April to 31 December 2023. The net cost of the Directorate was showing an underspend of £1,008k (4.8%) – box A on page 4.

Explanation of Variance

The Environment Directorate's budget performance was further analysed on page 3 into three key areas:

Report	Type	Variance	Page
Report 2	Payroll Expenditure	£68k favourable	4
Report 3	Goods & Services Expenditure	£1,205k favourable	4
Report 4	Income	£265k adverse	4

Explanation of Variance

The Environment Directorate's overall variance could be summarised by the following table (variances over £50k): -

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Payroll	(68)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waste and Cleansing £290k – mixture of overtime £104k and HRC agency staff £259k. The agency staff relate to the HRC recycling scheme, and this overspend is offset by savings in waste disposal costs - see below. Assets and Property (£196k) and Regulatory Services (£160k) have a number of vacant posts.
Goods & Services		
Waste & Cleansing	(306)	<p>Waste disposal costs for main waste streams (£319k): -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landfill down 1,146T plus lower gate fee than budget (£8.01 per tonne). Blue bin waste up 57T plus lower gate fee than budget (£1.46 per tonne). Garden waste down 57T plus gate fee higher than budget (£3.00 per tonne). Food waste up 739T plus gate fee higher than budget (£3.74). Main HRC waste streams – (£91k) – timber, paint and rubble. <p>This underspend (£319k) more than offsets the cost of the agency staff and other costs for the HRC Recycling scheme – see above.</p>
Assets & Property	(928)	<p>Utility budgets now include the former tariff budgets for NCLT run facilities. The impact of this is to significantly increase utility budget underspends.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electricity – (£750k) – Significantly lower cost per kwh against budget. Gas – (£341k). Other utilities – (£64k). Vehicle fuel – (£223k) price per litre fallen since end of 2022.

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property Maintenance - £100k. Increased reactive work. Technical Services – £426k – statutory work and other work £348k (unplanned essential remedial works Aurora, Balloo ERC, North Rd Depot, Ards Blair Mayne, Bangor Castle); legal fees Aurora issues £43k .
Income		
Waste & Cleansing	83	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trade waste income £63k. Special collections income £27k.
Assets & Property	(67)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wind Turbine (£38k). Harbours (£8k).
Regulatory Services	249	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Car Park income £131k. Licensing income £16k. NET – fine income £71k.

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REPORT 1 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT					
Period 9 - December 2023					
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance
	£	£	£	£	%
Environment					
200 Environment HQ	152,355	152,800	(445)	203,300	(0.3)
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	12,876,868	12,809,200	67,668	16,707,500	0.5
220 Assets and Property Services	6,681,503	7,872,600	(1,191,097)	10,967,800	(15.1)
230 Regulatory Services	291,024	174,700	116,324	256,500	66.6
Total	20,001,751	21,009,300	A (1,007,549)	28,135,100	(4.8)
REPORT 2 PAYROLL REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Environment - Payroll					
200 Environment HQ	124,480	126,300	(1,820)	168,400	(1.4)
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	6,926,290	6,636,450	289,840	8,840,300	4.4
220 Assets and Property Services	1,540,360	1,736,200	(195,840)	2,308,700	(11.3)
230 Regulatory Services	1,491,695	1,651,900	(160,205)	2,202,600	(9.7)
Total	10,082,825	10,150,850	B (68,025)	13,520,000	(0.7)
REPORT 3 GOODS & SERVICES REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Environment - Goods & Services					
200 Environment HQ	27,876	26,500	1,376	34,900	5.2
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	6,884,721	7,190,250	(305,529)	9,333,000	(4.2)
220 Assets and Property Services	5,387,030	6,315,400	(928,370)	8,913,000	(14.7)
230 Regulatory Services	451,558	423,900	27,658	565,700	6.5
Total	12,751,184	13,956,050	C (1,204,866)	18,846,600	(8.6)
REPORT 4 INCOME REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Environment - Income					
200 Environment HQ	-	-	-	-	-
210 Waste and Cleansing Services	(934,142)	(1,017,500)	83,358	(1,465,800)	8.2
220 Assets and Property Services	(245,887)	(179,000)	(66,887)	(253,900)	(37.4)
230 Regulatory Services	(1,652,229)	(1,901,100)	248,871	(2,511,800)	13.1
Totals	(2,832,258)	(3,097,600)	D 265,342	(4,231,500)	8.6

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter queried if the variance (£289,840) which related to staffing under waste and cleansing services had been expected, given the introduction of the new booking policy at the HRCs. She wondered if this would be built into the budget for the forthcoming year and if the reliance on agency staff would lessen.

The Director advised that in the estimates process last year £300,000 was taken out of the waste disposal costs based upon anticipated savings accruing from the planned HRC booking system. The additional HRC agency staff costs had not been included in this year's budgets but were more than covered by the additional in year waste disposal savings accruing in excess of the already budgeted £300K savings. The staff cost variance had therefore been expected, but was covered by extra in year waste disposal cost savings.

He explained that officers had reviewed staffing for the forthcoming financial year with plans to scale back on the use of agency staff and have a larger focus on using inhouse staff to meet any additional staffing requirements. That was reflected in the estimates process for the forthcoming year.

Alderman Armstrong- Cotter emphasised the importance of demonstrating a very clear benefit to residents given the extra demands and the mental load that had been placed on them in terms of recycling and more recently asking them to book a slot at the HRC. She recognised that the HRC booking system had now been in place for six months and it was important to show that it had been beneficial to people in terms of cost savings. The Director confirmed that this was the case.

The Director added that a DAERA report covering Q2 statistics had been published recently and a report on that would be coming to the Committee next month, with a section that would illustrate the point about cost savings compared to the baseline period before the new booking system was introduced.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter spoke further about the burden of recycling and the additional tasks it created for people including herself as a working mum. It was therefore important that while it was not always clear in the rates, it was important to show that there was a benefit to be reaped for all of our efforts as ratepayers and for the environment.

Councillor Edmund appreciated the difficulties in estimating the budget given the external influences such as varying gate prices and energy costs but to be sitting with what he calculated as £300,000 of net savings was a good sign going forward.

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

10. BUILDING CONTROL QUARTERLY ACTIVITY REPORT Q4 (JAN - MAR 2023)

(Appendix XIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that the information provided in this report covered, unless otherwise stated, the period 1 January 2023 to 31 March 2023 (Q4 1 January 2023 – 31 March 2023). 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. This report format had been introduced across Regulatory Services.

2.0 Applications

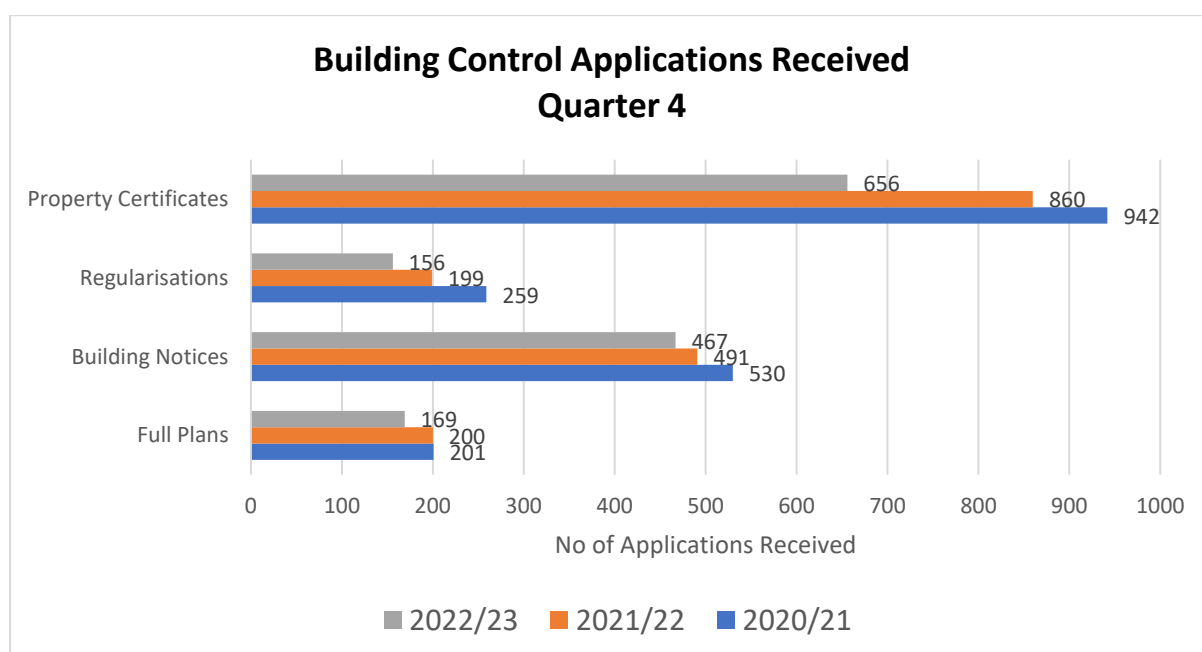
Full Plan applications were made to Building Control for building works to any commercial building, or for larger schemes in relation to residential dwellings.

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 commences. 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 provide information on Building Control history and Council held data.

	Period of Report 01/01/2023 – 31/03/2023	01/01/2022- 31/03/2022	01/01/2021 – 31/03/2021
Full Plan Applications	169	200	201
Building Notice Applications	467	491	530
Regularisation Applications	156	199	259
Property Certificate Applications	656	860	942



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 were no internal means to control the number of applications received.

3.0 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 reflects on the turnaround of plans timescale.

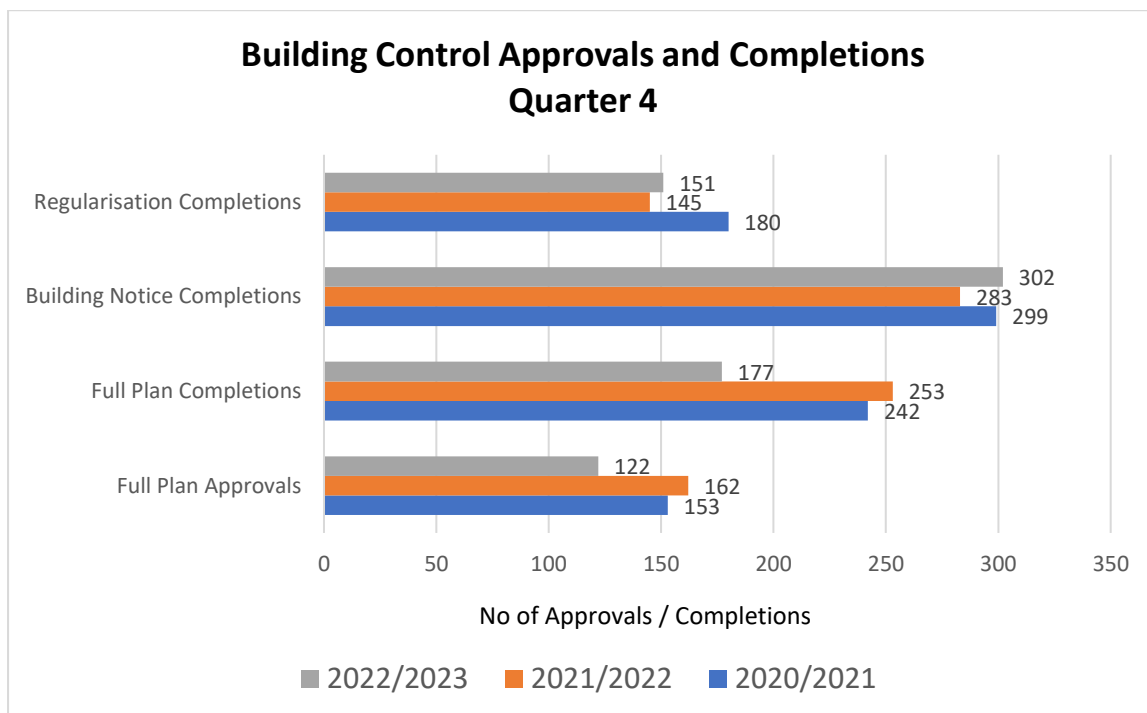
	Period of Report 01/01/2023 – 31/03/2023	Same quarter last year	Comparison	Average number of days to turnaround plan
Domestic Full Plan Turnarounds within target (21 calendar days)	58.31%	46%	↑	26.9 days
Non-Domestic Full Plan Turnarounds within target (35 calendar days)	62.00%	72%	↓	39.3 days

4.0 Regulatory Approvals and Completions

The issuing of Building Control Completion Certificates indicated that works were carried out to a satisfactory level and meet 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.

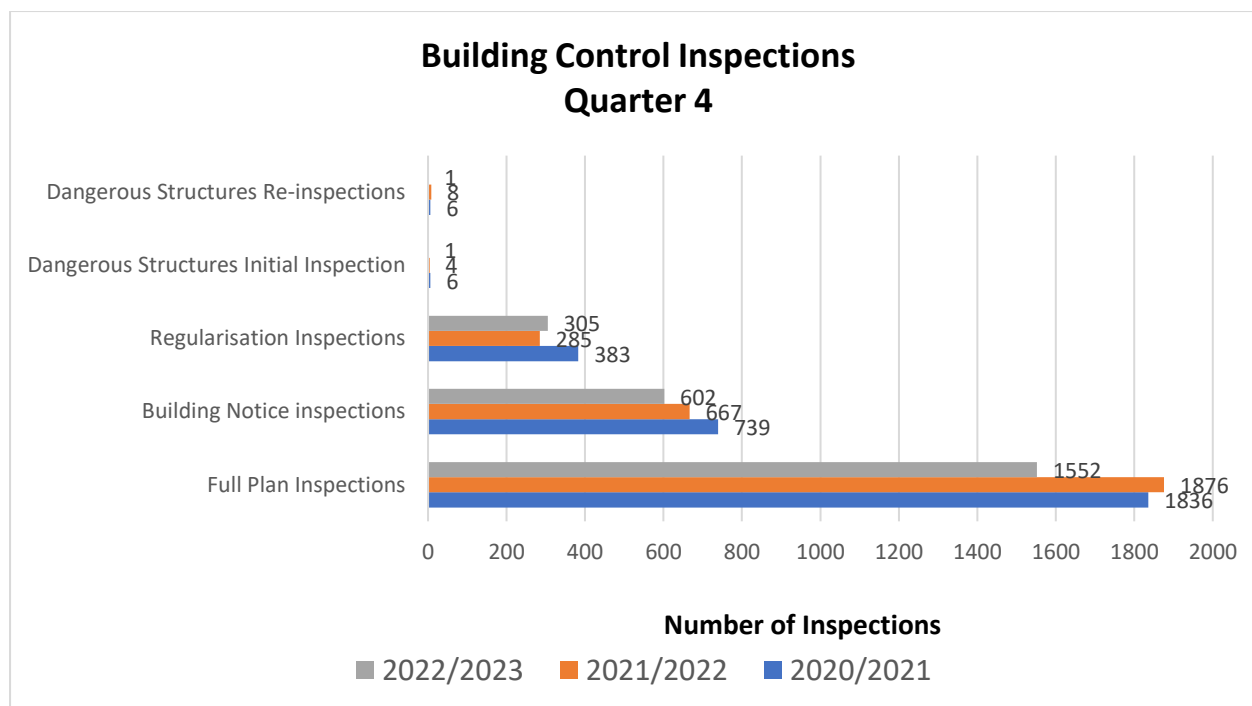
	Period of Report 01/01/2023 – 31/03/2023	01/01/2022 – 31/03/2022	01/01/2021 – 31/03/2021
Full Plan Approvals	122	162	153
Full Plan Completions	177	253	242
Building Notice Completions	302	283	299
Regularisation Completions	151	145	180



5.0 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.

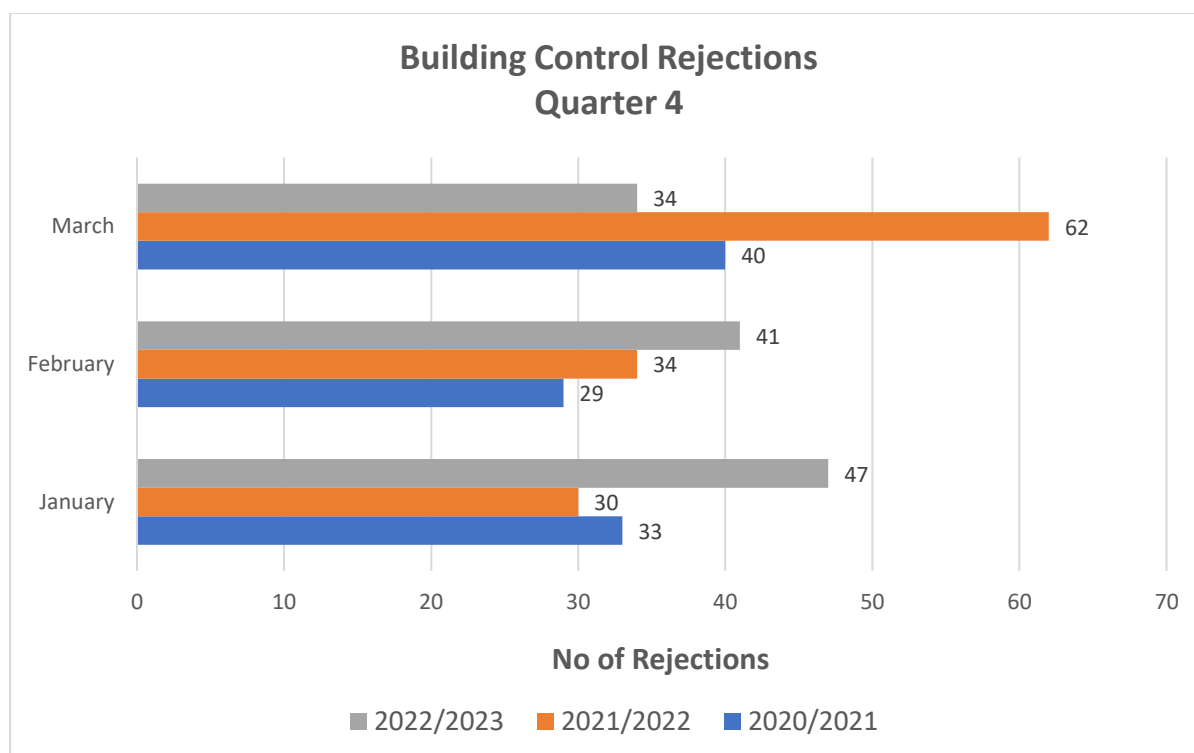
	Period of Report 01/01/2023 – 31/03/2023	01/01/2022 – 31/01/2022	01/01/2021 – 31/03/2021
Full Plan Inspections	1552	1876	1836
Building Notice Inspections	602	667	739
Regularisation Inspections	305	285	383
Dangerous structures initial inspection	1	4	6
Dangerous structure re-inspections	1	8	6
Total inspections	2461	2840	2970



6.0 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 01/01/2023 – 31/03/2023	01/01/2022 – 31/03/2022	01/01/2021 – 31/03/2021
Full Plan Rejection Notice	122	126	102
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.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter felt that the volume of full plans received was something that did fall in the remit of Council, albeit with another Committee, but she asked the Director if that could be fed back to the Planning Service which could look at quicker processing times.

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

(Councillor Kerr joined the meeting - 8.33pm)

11. NOTICES OF MOTION

There were no notices of motion.

12. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

There were no items of Any Other Notified Business.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

13. EXTENSION OF TENDER FOR BUILDING REPAIR WORKS (FILE 77064)

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

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

A report on the extension of contracts for building repair works, was considered.

It was agreed that contracts with Lisburn Astral Ltd and McDowell Construction be extended as outlined in the report.

14. TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF NEW AND REPLACEMENT PLAY AREAS WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF ARDS AND NORTH DOWN

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

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

A report on the extension of contracts for the provision of new and replacement play areas within the Borough, was considered.

It was agreed that contracts with Garden Escapes and Play and Leisure Services be extended as outlined in the report.

15. REPORT ON TENDERS RECEIVED FOR THE COLLECTION AND TREATMENT OF VARIOUS HRC WASTESTREAMS (FILE 77071)

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

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

A report on the award of contracts for the collection and treatment of various HRC waste streams, was considered.

It was agreed that contracts be awarded as outlined in the report to:

Lot No.	Materials	Company
1	Timber	R Heatrick Ltd

2	Paints	McQuillan Envirocare
3	Metals	McKenzies
4	Rubble	NWP Recycling
5	Oily rags and filters	Enva (NI) Ltd.
6	Plasterboard	R Heatrick Ltd
7	Hard plastics	No award
8	Vehicle batteries	Mckenzie's

16. TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF THE PUBLIC SPACES CCTV MONITORING SERVICES (FILE LRTCC / 77077)

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

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

A report on the award of a contract for the provision of public places CCTV monitoring services, was considered.

It was agreed that a contract be awarded to Sword Security (NI) Ltd., as outlined in the report. Further agreed that the already agreed review of town centre CCTV systems be resourced where possible during the incoming 2024-25 financial year through in-year budget savings elsewhere within the Directorate, and that a report be brought back accordingly in due course. This work will encompass a wide range of key issues which will include the scope of CCTV coverage and potential extension to other towns such as Comber and Donaghadee.

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 9.01pm.

ITEM 8.3

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ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Place & Prosperity Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards on Thursday 8 February 2024 at 7.00pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor Blaney

Aldermen: Adair
Armstrong-Cotter
McDowell

Councillors: Ashe
Edmund
Gilmour
Hollywood
Kennedy

McCracken
McKimm (Zoom)
Rossiter (7.51 pm)
Smart (7.15 pm Zoom)

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

1. APOLOGIES

The Chair advised that apologies had been received from Councillor MacArthur and Councillor McLaren and apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Rossiter and Alderman McDowell.

NOTED.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman sought any Declarations of Interest and Councillor McCracken declared an interest in Item 3 – Deputation – Open House re Business Improvement District.

NOTED.

(Having declared an interest in Item 3 Councillor McCracken left the meeting at 7.03 pm)

3. DEPUTATION – OPEN HOUSE RE BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

(Appendix I)

The Chair welcomed and introduced Alison Gordon and Jonathan Fusco who represented the Steering Group of Bangor Improvement District and invited them to make their presentation.

Alison Gordon thanked the Committee for its invitation to make the Deputation on behalf of the Bangor Improvement District and explained that in recent years Bangor had experienced difficult times and could now be viewed as a city in transition. The time was now right in her opinion to change that, and many local businesses had come together to help Bangor to do something for itself. Those businesses hoped to work in partnership with other stakeholders, particularly the Council, to help make Bangor a better place to live and do business.

She referred to the social and economic decline of the City Centre area and the negativity that was often expressed, which now needed to be reversed. Bangor had many natural and physical assets and there were large infrastructure projects being planned and those positives needed to be maximised.

Local traders covering a range of areas such as retail, hospitality and creative arts along with Translink and the Aurora complex were working collectively. They made up a good representative group which had come to the unanimous decision that the model was successful and that the city of Bangor was crying out for this. She explained that a BID was a Business Improvement District and it was a formula that had been tried and tested worldwide. It was a democratic set up and run by local businesses for local businesses and was run on a not-for-profit basis. The three key areas that BIDs normally supported were; a safe and clean environment, marketing and promotion of an area and place management. It was believed that the Bangor Business Improvement District would be a powerful single point of contact particularly during the disruption that would be coming over the coming years of development.

There was a strong sense of place in the definition of the city centre of Bangor and that was outlined along with the desire to bring people into the central commercial hub. The group had met with stakeholders such as the Council, relevant government departments, the Chamber of Commerce, Retail NI and Hospitality Ulster and had started a public information campaign with local businesses. As a group of volunteers there was a lot of work to do but the initiative had been viewed positively.

It was explained that the next step would be to continue engagement with local businesses. It was hoped that the Department for Communities Fund for BID initiatives would be released shortly and Bangor believed it was well ahead in terms of preparation for that, more than any other area within Northern Ireland. A business plan would be created with consultation and to get the initiative to ballot stage to

finance the project. The support from the Council would be needed if the project were to receive the DfC funding it would need.

The Chair thanked the speakers for their interesting presentation and invited Members to ask questions.

Alderman Adair commended the Deputation for what was a very positive presentation and he referred to Ballymena's success in its BID and the improvements that had been made in that town. He suggested that Bangor made contact with that area to view what could be done. He wished the Bangor group much success and appreciated the positive presentation and the feel good factor that it produced.

Councillor Gilmour also gave her thanks and considered it to be encouraging to showcase the real positives in Bangor and the great potential for growth looking at the exciting developments that were occurring and it was a credit to show what determination could achieve. She referred to discussion with the Chamber of Commerce and asked how communications with the Chamber were going since many local businesses were represented there. It was explained that there may have been a breakdown in communication at one point but that it was believed that had been resolved and everyone was working together for the good of the city.

Councillor McKimm said the Deputation had been very refreshing to hear and he believed that much could be gained from creating a project from the bottom up. He referred to the negative voices and asked what advice could be given to those people and what the Council could do to help the Business Improvement District.

In response the Deputation stressed that Bangor was a safe place to be with good natural resources, a sense of place, fine restaurants, independent businesses and it had much to shout about. It was hoped that elected representatives could work to support Bangor Improvement District in achieving a bid from DfC by nominating it.

The Chair, Councillor Blaney, thanked the Deputation for a very good presentation and as a Bangor representation was delighted to hear about the positive initiatives planned for the City.

(Councillor McCracken re-entered the meeting at 7.20 pm)

4. COMBER DERELICTION IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity detailing that Council officers had met with the Comber Chamber of Commerce in June 2023 as it was working with businesses to improve the appearance of the town, with a view to entering "In Bloom" competitions. The Chamber was concerned that the prominent gap site at 18-22 Castle Street, which had hoarding around it, was in disrepair and would detract from any application. The issue was also discussed at the Comber Town Advisory Group meeting in August 2023 and Members asked officers to source funding, if possible, that may be available to tackle the issue.

Update

The Department for Communities (DfC) invited an application from the Council for funding to address the appearance of the gap site. DfC further advised the application would be strengthened if additional premises in need of improvement within the town could be identified. Officers undertook a survey of the town to identify further sites. DfC had now advised that the vacant unit at 15 Bridge Street could also be considered for funding.

Officers had secured permission of both property owners to include their sites in an application for improvement funding. Council would be required to have agreements drawn up with property owners describing the nature of the work to be undertaken, and stating the Council accepted no liability for loss, damage, expenses or other claims for compensation arising from carrying out those works once they had been completed and accepted by the property owners.

It was envisaged the works to be undertaken would be as followed:

1. Castle Street Site - Erect new Plywood Hoarding and cover with Vinyl artwork digitally printed and laminated. Estimated cost £12,400 (exc Vat)
2. Bridge Street Site – Strip down existing plywood, install new plywood, digitally print vinyl artwork and laminate. Estimated Cost £4,824.66 (exc Vat)

The nature of the artwork was still to be finalised with the property owners and the costs would be funded by DfC.

Due to time constraints an application had now been submitted to DfC, but no response had been received as yet.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves acceptance of DfC grant, completion of works and entering into agreements with the property owners, as outlined in the report, subject to confirmation of the DfC funding.

Proposed by Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Ashe, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Adair thanked the Head of Regeneration and his team for the work that was ongoing. Dereliction was a terrible blight in any town and it was pleasing to see the area being tidied up. He said that Comber was a vibrant place with its shops and market and was also branded the home of good taste for its excellent food produce. He hoped the initiative would create sense of place in this up and coming town which could help to eradicate some of the problems being faced.

Councillor Ashe asked officers about their response to property owners who were not currently residing in the United Kingdom. The Head of Regeneration explained that steps were being put in place to keep a tighter control on that and a management company would be appointed to help.

Councillor Smart also welcomed the report and congratulated officers in their work to make the area more attractive. That should not detract from tackling the core issue in delivering lasting improvements to Comber. He looked forward to the update report for the town and other towns across the Borough.

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

5. ARDS BUSINESS AWARDS

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity detailing that Members would recall a previous report on the Business Awards in September 2023 informing that the Ards Business Awards, due to unforeseen circumstances and resources, were unable to be held the previous year or in Autumn of 2023.

Detail

Following discussion with a representative from Ards Chamber of Commerce it was anticipated that the event would be revived in either April or May 2024. It had yet to finalise the date for the event, but it would take place in Scrabo Golf Club and initial preparations were already getting underway.

Members would be aware that Council officers had been working closely with the Chambers of Commerce in the city and each of the towns to engage and develop the business capacity of the Chambers, and to support their efforts to revitalise and promote local businesses.

Within the business plans submitted to the Regeneration Unit and Council each year the Chamber included the delivery of a Business Awards event to celebrate the work, resilience and successes of local businesses in the area. The Chamber looked for sponsorship from various sources to fund the event.

It was proposed that the Council sponsor the Ards Business Awards at a cost of £3,000 and support payment within this financial year to help offset event preparation costs; that could be facilitated due to a budget underspend on another programme.

As part of the package, five complimentary tickets would be made available to Council to include Elected Members and one senior officer. The Mayor would be invited separately as guest of the Chamber.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves budgetary support in 2023-24 for the Ards Business Awards and nominates four Members to attend the Ards Business Awards along with a senior officer with a date to be confirmed.

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

Proposed by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor Adair, that Councillor Kennedy be nominated.

Proposed by Alderman Adair, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter that Councillor Blaney be nominated.

Proposed by Councillor Ashe, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter that Alderman McDowell be nominated.

Proposed by Councillor Hollywood, seconded by Alderman Armstrong-Cotter that Councillor Smart be nominated.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Alderman Adair, that the recommendation be adopted and that Councillor Kennedy, Councillor Blaney, Alderman McDowell and Councillor Smart be nominated.

6. AND EXPERIENCES AND WALKS AND TOURS PROGRAMME END OF SEASON REPORT 2023/24

(Appendices II & III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity detailing that throughout 2023/24, the Tourism service had delivered 16 Experiences and 15 Walks and Tours as part of its AND Experience and Walks and Tours Programme. The Tourism Service had also recently finalised all intended AND Experiences and Walks and Tours for 2024/25. Those mostly took place from April – September each year.

AND Experience Programme 2023/24

In collaboration with tourism and other local businesses (those who may be interested into diversifying into the visitor/tourism market) the tourism team delivered a series of new or enhanced experiences in 2023/24. That was via an application based developmental business process, meaning that those businesses which were successful could develop and operate a pilot at no or limited financial risk to themselves. The total Council budget associated with the Experience Programme was £6,000.

Initially, 24 experiences were programmed between May and September 2023. However, due mostly to adverse weather conditions, where re-scheduling was not an option, coupled with unforeseen personal circumstances and some lower than anticipated ticket sales, a total of 16 experiences were delivered. Those included 'on the water' activity, craft and wellbeing themes taking place across various locations throughout the Borough.

A total of 233 tickets were available with 196 tickets sold, equating to 83% of tickets sold. Of those, 60% were Out of Borough (OoB) with visitors from Canada,

Germany, GB, ROI as well as the rest of NI. Every experience received positive feedback.

Industry Day – October 2023

Due to the success of the 23/24 programme (sales and feedback), the Tourism Service hosted an industry day at the Ulster Folk Museum. The aim of the day was to further facilitate and support previous and new applicants, on experience development and delivery. A total of 40 businesses attended to hear from tourism officers and previous participants on the benefits of the programme, plus Tourism NI who delivered a Q&A session on what made the 'best' visitor experience. A speed networking session allowed businesses to collaborate and form early ideas. Feedback on the day was very positive. This had delivered new business collaborations both specifically for the 2024/25 programme and other purposes.

Learning Journey

Due to the success of the 2023/24 programme sales, which meant budget remained, a learning journey was being developed for the businesses who were engaged in the 'Sustainable Giants' programme. They would visit a range of experiences in NI to gain further insights into business and visitor development which could be applied locally. That was due to take place on 4 and 5 March 2024.

AND Experience Programme 2024/2025

An Expression of Interest exercise for the 24/25 programme was launched after the Industry Day on 26 October 2024. It was promoted through Council ezines, contact lists and social media. 36 applications were received by the close date on 12 November 2023.

The Assessment Panel agreed that 22 experiences met the criteria and were duly accepted onto the programme for 2024/25. Experiences were currently under development, but it was anticipated experiences would run April – December 2024 throughout the borough. The experiences developed included creative, wellbeing, 'on the water' and food themes.

AND Walks and Tours Programme 2023/24

Beginning in May, 13 walks and tours took place across the borough. It started with a new historical walking tour of Holywood and finished with two new year day walks, one in Newtownards and Donaghadee.

A total of 345 tickets were available with 320 sold, equating to 93% of tickets sold. Of these 33% were OoB with visitors from the USA, GB, ROI and rest of NI.

The programme included a diverse range of themes including horticultural, historical, Christian heritage and themed boat trips taking place across the borough. Tours were incorporated this year to complement the Food Festivals in summer and autumn.

AND Walks and Tours Programme 2024/25

Like last year the 2024/25 Walks and Tours programme would begin in May and finish on New Year's Day 2025. The programme would seek to complement monthly food activities and events happening within the borough.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

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

Alderman Adair commended the Head of Tourism and her team on a very good report remarking that one of the few good things to have happened post Covid was that people had a renewed sense of enjoyment in the great outdoors. He was pleased to see the increased numbers of visitors and was aware that the area was being well marketed. He was excited about the initiatives for Alpaca and tree planting in Carrowdore particularly and asked for further details on those and the officer agreed to come back to him directly. The Member welcomed diversifying of businesses and the opportunities for family friendly activities locally and opportunities to get children to enjoy the outdoors.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter agreed and asked if there had been any consideration given to involving schools in walking tours or visits locally. She referred to the increasing costs of transport on schools and some of those initiatives outlined ticked many of the boxes in terms of physical activity and history for children. The Head of Tourism explained that there had been conversations with other services such as with the biodiversity officers and the opportunity to tie in with education for children.

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

7. MARKETING – DESTINATION CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW SPRING AND AUTUMN 2023

(Appendix IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity detailing that the Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Development (ITRDS) had identified the delivery of a Borough Marketing and Communications Strategy (BMCS) as a key action to help drive gains towards the following ambitious targets:

- To increase the Borough's share of overnight tourism trips to NI from 6% in 2016 to 10% in 2030
- To increase associated visitor expenditure from £46m in 2016 to £82m in 2030

The roll out of biannual destination campaigns in spring and autumn was a key deliverable of the BMCS. In 2023, those campaigns were delivered in March and October (the quieter shoulder seasons before and after peak summer months) and

guided by Tourism Northern Ireland’s consumer sentiment to target ‘most likely to travel’ segments in NI domestic, Republic of Ireland, and GB markets.

Both campaigns were designed to raise awareness of Ards and North Down as an appealing destination that was easily accessible and offered value for money short breaks (taking into consideration the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis on the decision-making process).

Campaign Aims

1. Promote AND tourism industry offers aligned to discoverni (Tourism NI) and visitardsandnorthdown websites.
2. Increase awareness of AND as an appealing place to book short breaks, driving traffic and engagement to visitardsandnorthdown website and social channels.

The total marketing investment was £64,350 (£48,015 from Council and £16,335 from Tourism NI Spring 2023 Co-operative Partnership Marketing Fund). The Tourism Northern Ireland funding was available to local authorities as part of Covid Recovery Funding and would not be available in 2024.

The two multi-channel, digital-led marketing campaigns were designed to support the industry by directing audiences to book offers and inspire potential visitors about what to see and do on a short break in Ards and North Down. Simultaneously, that would also help grow Visit AND’s online following. Messaging delivered clear and compelling reasons to visit, with a call-to-action to book offers and enter the campaign competition for a chance to win £300 off a stay in the Borough. A total of 36 local tourism provider offers were promoted.

Spring 2023 – ‘Moments to Remember’ Campaign

This targeted ‘Aspiring Families’ and ‘Natural Quality Seekers in NI’, ‘Active Maximisers’ and ‘Open-Minded Explorers’ in ROI, and the ‘Culturally Curious’ in GB.

The campaign ran across organic and paid-for social media, video, email, radio, and web, as well as out-of-home on billboards, adshels and digital signs in Enniskillen, Craigavon, Newry, and in sites around high footfall areas of Belfast, including at the Visit Belfast Welcome Centre – a key gateway for visitors opposite Belfast City Hall.

Objective	Result
Feature all offers submitted from tourism providers located in AND for the Tourism NI co-op marketing campaign.	100% AND Tourism offers promoted
At least 2% growth in social media audience	Social media audience growth = 2.6%
At least 5,000 web page views	1.6m impressions (organic/ paid for) 26,772 web page views
Digital impressions (opportunities to see) target 400k	3.1 million digital impressions

Autumn 2023 – ‘Time Together This Autumn’ Campaign

That targeted NI and ROI audiences with a particular focus on ‘Natural Quality Seekers’, ‘Indulgent Relaxers’ and ‘Open-Minded Explorers’ segments.

The fully integrated campaign ran digital advertising across channels including YouTube, Spotify, META Facebook, and Instagram, with complementary organic social media, video, web, email, Google Search, and display advertising. That was supported via promotional partners including Visit Belfast and Whatsonni. It was further visible at 33 out of home sites – billboards, adshels, and digital screens in NI (Belfast, Londonderry, Newry, and Warrenpoint), in the Visit Belfast Welcome Centre – a key gateway for visitors opposite Belfast City Hall; and in ROI (Drogheda, Castleblaney and Monaghan Town).

Objective	Result
Feature all offers submitted from tourism providers located in Ards and North Down Borough for the Tourism NI coop marketing campaign.	100% AND tourism offers promoted
At least 2% growth in social media audience	2% growth 957k digital impressions (paid for/ organic)
At least 5,000 web page views	30,828 web page views
Digital impressions 400k	4.3 million digital impressions

Together, those two campaigns effectively promoted a total of 36 seasonal offers for tourism providers based in the Borough. Overall, they generated 7.4million digital impressions (opportunities to see) with strong visibility across social media, META Facebook and Instagram, Google Ads, YouTube, Spotify, pay-per-click, and online advertising. As a direct result of the campaigns, 58k visitors were driven to the visitardsandnorthdown.com website and the audience following visitAND on social media increased by 4%.

The fully integrated approach also included traditional channels such as out-of-home billboards and digital screens, PR and print to ensure visibility across a broad range of channels. The existing Visit Belfast Regional Tourism Partnership with Visit Belfast was also utilized to further extend campaign reach in Belfast City Centre.

Offer providers fed back the positive impact of those campaigns:

‘The Your Time Together campaign was great ...The next few months is looking very positive in terms of accommodation and dining bookings which is fantastic.’

'The destination campaigns are fantastic as I feel that these give potential travellers ideas of things to do in the area and the reasons to visit.'

The longevity of the positive impact of those campaigns was extended with 44% of the 842 competition entrants signing up to receive Council's regular tourism updates on an ongoing basis.

Summary

The main objective - building awareness through creating a strong profile of the Borough as an appealing visitor destination to potential visitors - was achieved with strong reach across NI, ROI, and GB audiences. The fully integrated digital-led approach effectively reached the target audiences. It was anticipated that the output of that greater awareness would be a positive impact on visitor interest and bookings.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

Proposed by Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Hollywood, that the recommendation be adopted.

Alderman Adair was encouraged to see the Ards and North Down Borough being marketed more widely when he had been in Belfast. He was also pleased to see the Northern Ireland Tourist Board promote the Borough and that should be enhanced in his opinion since the Borough with its beautiful beaches and close proximity to Belfast was every bit as attractive as the north coast of Ireland.

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

8. PROSPERITY DIRECTORATE BUDGETARY REPORT **DECEMBER**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity detailing that the Prosperity Directorate's Budgetary Control Report covered the 9-month period 1 April to 31 December 2023. The net cost of the Directorate was showing an underspend of £151k (7.0%).

Explanation of Variance

The Prosperity Directorate's budgetary performance was further analysed into 3 key areas:

Report	Type	Variance	Page
Report 2	Payroll Expenditure	£71k favourable	3
Report 3	Goods & Services Expenditure	£41k favourable	3

Report 4	Income	£40k favourable	3
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Explanation of Variance

The Prosperity Directorate's overall variance could be summarised by the following table (variances over £10k): -

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Payroll	(71)	Vacant posts – mainly within Economic Development.
Goods & Services		
Economic Development	(19)	Small underspends within Signal Centre, ED operational costs, ED projects
Tourism	(21)	Small underspends within Tourism and Tourism Events.
Income		
Economic Development	(14)	Refund of Council Contribution to NIBSUP
Tourism	(25)	Small number of favourable variances which include:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor Information Centres – (£9k). • Tourism Events – (£11k).

REPORT 1 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT					
Period 9 - December 2023					
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance
	£	£	£	£	%
Prosperity					
700 Prosperity HQ	106,788	98,900	7,888	132,000	8.0
720 Economic Development	806,052	933,000	(126,948)	1,303,000	(13.6)
740 Tourism	1,102,143	1,133,900	(31,757)	1,530,700	(2.8)
Total	2,014,982	2,165,800	A (150,818)	2,965,700	(7.0)
REPORT 2 PAYROLL REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Prosperity - Payroll					
700 Prosperity HQ	99,402	91,300	8,102	121,800	8.9
720 Economic Development	552,827	646,000	(93,173)	862,000	(14.4)
740 Tourism	722,881	708,500	14,381	933,800	2.0
Total	1,375,109	1,445,800	B (70,691)	1,917,600	(4.9)
REPORT 3 GOODS & SERVICES REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Prosperity - Goods & Services					
700 Prosperity HQ	7,386	7,600	(214)	10,200	(2.8)
720 Economic Development	512,034	531,400	(19,366)	935,500	(3.6)
740 Tourism	480,511	501,500	(20,989)	684,300	(4.2)
Total	999,931	1,040,500	C (40,569)	1,630,000	(3.9)
REPORT 4 INCOME REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Prosperity - Income					
700 Prosperity HQ	-	-	-	-	-
720 Economic Development	(258,809)	(244,400)	(14,409)	(494,500)	(5.9)
740 Tourism	(101,250)	(76,100)	(25,150)	(87,400)	(33.0)
Totals	(360,058)	(320,500)	D (39,558)	(581,900)	(12.3)

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

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

9. RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION RE KIRCUBBIN HARBOUR (Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity detailing that at the meetings of the Place and Prosperity Committee held on 7 September and 7 December 2023, the response from the Historic Environment Division (HED), which was issued on behalf of the Departments for Communities and Infrastructure, concerning the above was tabled.

At both meetings it was agreed to defer consideration of the response to allow the Kircubbin Harbour Working Group to consider this. Alderman Adair undertook to

contact the Group to seek their views. That was subsequently agreed by the Council.

Alderman Adair had confirmed he had contacted the Group again but had still been unable to secure a response.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the response from the HED.

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

Alderman Adair thanked Council officers for their positive engagement and noted that it was unfortunate that there was no legislation in place to require the owners of such monuments to keep them to standard. He was aware that the Council had exhausted all avenues and the effort had been appreciated locally.

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

10. PLACE DIRECTORATE BUDGETARY REPORT DECEMBER

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity detailing that The Place Directorate’s Budgetary Control Report covered the 9-month period 1 April to 31 December 2023. The net cost of the Directorate was showing an underspend of £144k (12.4%).

Explanation of Variance

The Place Directorate’s budget performance was further analysed into 3 key areas:

Report	Type	Variance	Page
Report 2	Payroll Expenditure	£104k favourable	3
Report 3	Goods & Services Expenditure	£22k adverse	3
Report 4	Income	£62k favourable	3

Explanation of Variance

The Place Directorate’s overall variance could be summarised by the following table (variances over £10k): -

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Payroll	(104)	Vacant posts mainly within Regeneration.
Goods & Services		

Type	Variance £'000	Comment			
Regeneration	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Development project spend - £42k but this is offset by additional grant income (see below). Project underspends – Queens Parade (£6k), Kinnegar Project (£9k). 			
Income					
Regeneration	(62)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural Development project funding (see above). 			
REPORT 1 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT					
Period 9 - December 2023					
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance
	£	£	£	£	%
Place					
800 Place HQ	207,637	209,500	(1,863)	266,400	(0.9)
810 Regeneration	508,530	643,400	(134,870)	1,186,800	(21.0)
820 Strategic Capital Development	302,652	310,300	(7,648)	365,100	(2.5)
Total	1,018,819	1,163,200	A (144,381)	1,818,300	(12.4)
REPORT 2 PAYROLL REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Place - Payroll					
800 Place HQ	123,864	125,500	(1,636)	167,200	(1.3)
810 Regeneration	389,786	488,300	(98,514)	651,700	(20.2)
820 Strategic Capital Development	300,845	305,100	(4,255)	358,900	(1.4)
Total	814,496	918,900	(104,404)	1,177,800	(11.4)
REPORT 3 GOODS & SERVICES REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Place - Goods & Services					
800 Place HQ	83,773	84,000	(227)	99,200	(0.3)
810 Regeneration	180,458	155,100	25,358	535,100	16.3
820 Strategic Capital Development	1,807	5,200	(3,393)	6,200	(65.3)
Total	266,037	244,300	21,737	640,500	8.9
REPORT 4 INCOME REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Place - Income					
800 Place HQ	-	-	-	-	-
810 Regeneration	(61,715)	-	(61,715)	-	-
820 Strategic Capital Development	-	-	-	-	-
Totals	(61,715)	-	(61,715)	-	-

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

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

11. NOTICES OF MOTION

There were no Notices of Motion referred by the Council.

12. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

There were no items of Any Other Notified Business.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

13. TENDER FOR THE PROVISION, ERECTION AND DISMANTLING OF PORTABLE WOODEN CHALETs FOR EVENTS

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

This report presented the procurement process and recommended award for the provision, erection and dismantling of portable wooden chalets for events.

14. TENDER FOR THE PROVISION, ERECTION AND DISMANTLING OF STRETCH TENTS FOR EVENTS

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

This report presented the procurement process and recommended award for the provision, erection and dismantling of stretch tents for events.

15. DIGITAL UPDATE (Appendix VI)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

This report presented information on 2 potential funding applications 1) a Peace Plus project and 2) Innovation Hub which included commercial and financial details.

15a. PIPE BAND AND UPDATE

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

This report presented an opportunity presented by the RSPBANI to Council on the AND event for 20224 which included financial information.

16. ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT OPEN HOUSE FESTIVAL 2023

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

The report presented evaluation information relating to the Open House Festival and Seaside Revival event, August 2023. Income, expenditure, attendance and attendee profile was presented for both events. The report was recommended for noting.

17. NISS – GO SUCCEED UPDATE 2024

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Council holding that information).

This report provides the details of the new Enterprise Support service since its launch in October 2023, including budget and target figures.

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 7.58 pm.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Corporate Services Committee was held at the Council Chamber, City Hall, The Castle, Bangor and via Zoom, on Tuesday 13 February 2024 at 7.50pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor Moore

Aldermen: Brooks (Zoom) Mcllveen
 Graham Smith
 McAlpine

Councillors: Chambers W Irvine
 Cochrane Irwin
 Gilmour McCracken
 Kennedy McRandal
 S Irvine

Officers: Director of Corporate Services (M Steele), Head of Administration (A Curtis), Head of Human Resources (R McCullough) and Democratic Services Officer (P Foster)

Also Present: Councillors Cathcart, Morgan and Wray

1. APOLOGIES

The Chairman (Councillor Moore) sought apologies at this stage and none were received.

NOTED.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman sought Declarations of Interest at this stage and no Declarations were made.

NOTED.

REPORTS FOR APPROVAL

3. REQUEST FOR A CIVIC EVENT – GLASTRY METHODIST CHURCH

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services stating that a letter had been received from Alderman Adair, Councillor Kerr and

Councillor Edmund requesting that Glastry Methodist Church be considered for a civic reception to acknowledge its 175th anniversary.

The Church contributed to the religious and spiritual wellbeing of the community of Glastry and the wider Rural area. The Church was at the heart of Glastry, and its volunteers provided services for children, young people, and the elderly. The Church involved itself with the local community group reaching out and supporting the local farming community.

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 the agreed procedures and while it did not meet the criteria for a civic reception as stated in point 1 above – milestone of 25, 50 or 100 years – 175 years was considered to be very significant and therefore the view would be that the request should be acceded to. The cost could be met from the 2023/24 civic budget.

RECOMMENDED that the Council proceeds to offer Glastry Methodist Church a Civic Reception to acknowledge 175 years since the formation of the Church and should the offer be accepted, proceeds to arrange same on a date to be agreed by relevant parties.

Councillor Kennedy proposed, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that the recommendation be adopted.

Commenting as seconder Alderman McIlveen noted the significance of a 175th anniversary, particularly as the Church had been a valuable part of the community throughout that time.

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

4. REQUEST FOR A CIVIC RECEPTION - 2ND COMBER BOYS BRIGADE

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services stating that a letter had been received from Councillor Douglas, Alderman McIlveen and Alderman Adair requesting that 2nd Comber Boys Brigade be considered for a civic reception to acknowledge its 125th anniversary.

The Boys Brigade leaders had been working alongside boys and young men from the town for 125 years and hoped to celebrate and promote the organisation with special events this year. It was a voluntary organisation run by locally trained, dedicated and caring church volunteers who were committed to creating a safe and fun environment for every child and young person. Its aim was to help all age groups to grow in confidence, gain a sense of belonging and develop new skills.

The Company was made up of approximately 147 boys/young men ranging from the age of 4 to 18. They met on a weekly basis to partake in a variety of activities such as crafts, outdoor pursuits, music, Bible study, sports, and Duke of Edinburgh Award.

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 the agreed procedures and met the criteria set out in point one above. The cost could be met from the 2024/25 civic budget.

RECOMMENDED that the Council proceeds to offer 2nd Comber Boys Brigade a Civic Reception to acknowledge 125 years since its formation and should the offer be accepted, proceeds to arrange same on a date to be agreed by relevant parties.

Alderman McIlveen proposed, seconded by Alderman Graham, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer Alderman McIlveen remarked on the number of requests for Civic Receptions which were being submitted with many successfully meeting the

Council's criteria for a Civic Reception. Continuing Alderman McIlveen noted that 2nd Comber Boys Brigade had almost 147 boys currently in its Company which he was aware was very well attended.

Councillor S Irvine commented that as a former member of the BB and whose father was a past president of a Newtownards BB Company he fully supported the proposal.

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

REPORTS FOR NOTING

5. RESPONSE TO NOTICES OF MOTION:

(A) NOM 185 – EDUCATION SHOULD BE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL (FILE NOM 185)
(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services stating that a Notice of Motion was debated at Corporate Committee in October 2023 and subsequently ratified by Council which stated:

“This Council believes:

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

This Council therefore resolves to:

To assist in the promotion, through the dissemination of material in support of a Lifelong Learning campaign, to inform and raise public awareness of how lifelong learning transforms lives and communities.

Write to Strangford and North Down MLAs and MPs to prioritise funding for formal and informal part-time education when the Executive is formed.

Encourage Strangford and North Down MLAs to form an All-Party Group on Lifelong Learning to support and evidence and best-practice informed approach to policy making, in collaboration with adult education bodies and other stakeholders to form a voice for Lifelong Learning in the Assembly when an Executive is formed.

To write to other Councils in Northern Ireland to take similar action and to write to MPs and MLAs for their respective areas in a similar manner."

Letters were sent from the Chief Executive to the other 10 Councils, and the 2 MP's and the 9 MLA's covering Strangford and North Down on 20 November 2023. A reply was received by email on 21 November 2023 from M Nesbitt, MLA for Strangford and a copy was attached. A letter was received on 29 November 2023 from the 4 Alliance MLA's representing Strangford and North Down and a copy was attached. A letter was received on 15 December 2023 from Fermanagh & Omagh District Council and a copy was attached. A letter was received on 21 December 2023 from Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Council and a copy was attached. Acknowledgement emails had also been received from a number of Councils and Michelle McIlveen, MLA, Strangford.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the responses.

At this stage the Chairman, Councillor Moore, commented as proposer of the Notice of Motion, by welcoming the report and adding that the most significant change since she had brought it forward for consideration was that there was now a fully functioning Northern Ireland Assembly in place. While acknowledging that we were in challenging times she stated that this was an important area to invest in.

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

(B) NOM 189 – STRANGFORD LOUGH FERRY SERVICE – FARE INCREASE
(FILE NOM 189)
 (Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services stating that a Notice of Motion was debated at Council in December 2023 which stated:

"That this Council writes to the Department for Infrastructure (DFI) objecting to the significant proposed percentage increases to charges involving the structures along with pedestrian and various vehicle usage, availing of the Strangford Ferry Services."

A letter was sent from the Chief Executive to The Permanent Secretary of the Department of Infrastructure on 21 December 2023 and a reply on 9 January 2024 which was attached.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the response.

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

6. NOTICES OF MOTION

(a) NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR W IRVINE AND COUNCILLOR MCKIMM

That this Council writes to the Secretary of State to voice its objection to the NIO consultation on Water Charges and any attempt to introduce Water Charges to Northern Ireland.

At this stage Councillor W Irvine indicated that he wished to amend his motion to read:

That this Council writes to the DFI Minister to voice its objection to the DFI consultation on water charges and any attempt to introduce water charges to Northern Ireland.

Councillor W Irvine proposed, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that this Council writes to the DFI Minister to voice its objection to the DFI consultation on water charges and any attempt to introduce water charges to Northern Ireland.

The proposer, Councillor W Irvine, referred to a consultation on water charges which had been launched in December 2023. He stated that the introduction of water charges would affect those most vulnerable in society along with those families on low incomes. Continuing he noted that there were grants currently available to help such families but was also aware that there would be no such grants to assist with water charges. Councillor W Irvine added that the proposed introduction of water charges was not on the agenda of many of the political parties and as such he encouraged members to support his motion.

Commenting as seconder, Alderman McIlveen, stated that his party had always stood in opposition to the introduction of water charges, particularly as that was already accounted for within the existing rates. He agreed that investment was needed in water infrastructure throughout Northern Ireland and was aware that the newly appointed First Minister Michelle O'Neill had confirmed that she would not be supportive of the introduction of water charges. He added that he would look forward to future plans for further investment particularly as the longer things were left the more difficult it would be to restore. Alderman McIlveen added that he did not wish to see already struggling families having to face additional household bills.

Thanking Alderman McIlveen for his comments, Councillor W Irvine, stated that it was important that a message was sent to Government that any proposed introduction of water charges was unacceptable.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that this Council writes to the DFI Minister to voice its objection to the DFI consultation on water charges and any attempt to introduce water charges to Northern Ireland.

(b) NOTICE OF MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR WRAY AND ALDERMAN SMITH

Councillor Wray proposed, seconded by Alderman Smith that this Council writes to the Department of Infrastructure to once again express our deep concern at the poor state of roads across Ards and North Down.

Council further requests that DFI changes their policy in relation to the depth of potholes that are required to be repaired back to 20 millimetres from the current 50 millimetres in order to improve the quality and safety of our roads network.

The proposer, Councillor Wray, commented that he was sure he was not alone when he said that the condition of the roads infrastructure including the amount and the size of potholes was one of, if not the most, commonly reported issue brought to Councillors by members of the community. The sense of frustration and anger from constituents had been growing particularly over the last six months, and he could say that for certain in relation to the Ards Peninsula. He stated that it did not help whenever they visited other Boroughs and noticed that the condition of the roads there was in no way comparable to Ards and North Down. Our residents, he stated, felt they were being treated unfairly and were being ignored. He suggested that if members were to take a drive that night across the Ards Peninsula it would be hard for them to argue against this.

Statistics provided by the Department for Infrastructure itself and published by the BBC stated that the Borough was one of the top of the league in terms of the amount of reported potholes. This he believed was absolutely nothing to boast about. 1,364 cases were reported in Causeway Coast and Glens, 1,963 in Fermanagh and Omagh. Moving up the table it was noted Lisburn and Castlereagh was third with 2,181 cases reported, whereas Ards and North Down eclipsed that with 3,866 potholes recorded to the Department.

Councillor Wray reported that the impact of those potholes had caused road traffic accidents, resulted in damage to vehicles, and they had also impacted on the confidence of road users. He added that when he encouraged friends and colleagues to visit Ards and North Down, and particularly the Ards Peninsula, the DEA which he represented, he was embarrassed when they talked about their experience on the roads. He knew of tourists who were put off by the condition of the roads, and he was also aware of residents who currently took ten-minute detours on their commutes just to avoid certain hot spots. That, he stated, was unacceptable.

Continuing, Councillor Wray advised that the situation had got so bad that this was a community safety issue. He reported that there were areas with potholes that put vehicle drivers and passengers at risk, cyclists at risk, and indeed cyclists and pedestrians at risk because motorists were forced to swerve and move across the road to avoid the defects.

Similar to many of his colleagues in the Council Chamber he had reported those cases on the DFI website, and supported constituents to go through the process of claiming refunds for damages to their vehicle. He reported that many people asked why they not just fix the roads because it would save them money in comparison to

the amount of claims that they had been bombarded with recently. Councillor Wray indicated that then took him onto one of the main causes of this problem and the second part to this Notice of Motion, which was around the current policy of potholes that qualify to be repaired.

Councillor Wray stated that it used to be the case that all potholes reported were inspected, and if determined to be 20mm or deeper, they would then be repaired. This policy was then changed to 50mm, and that had led to the issues which were occurring so much so that if a pothole was 45mm deep, it would not be repaired. This was why there were infamous holes on the Ards Peninsula that had grown so wide but because the depth was not 50mm, DFI would not carry out repairs.

The news announced from the Department a number of days ago that an additional £1million was to be invested into maintenance with a focus on addressing the pothole problem was welcome and very timely. Now he stated was the time to exert pressure on the Minister and to make the case for the policy change. Councillor Wray stated that the current policy was poor, and a message needed to be sent to DFI that it needed to change. He stated that a united voice should be that DFI was asked to revert this policy back to repairs at 20mm and if that were to change it would get rid of many of the potholes in the Borough. As a result, the government would save money as opposed to waiting until defects grew deeper, meanwhile occurring claim costs. Finally, he stated we would be keeping the community safer, and delivering for them. Councillor Wray sought the support of members for his notice of motion.

The seconder, Alderman Smith agreed that undoubtedly there was a crisis on the Borough's road network. While he welcomed the recent funding announcement of £1million for road investment he was aware that would be divided between the four Roads Services Divisions and as such would equate to approximately £83,000 of funding for the Borough. He stated that would not go far. He noted this matter had been continually raised by all Parties with no progress made to date as the result of budget issues. Continuing he noted the criteria for repairs effectively ruled out many of the Roads within the Borough even though in one small part of the Borough along a single stretch of road he had counted 35 major defects. He added that he had also been contacted by a local cycling club voicing its concerns about the road conditions particularly as it was proposing to host a cycle race in the locality to which Clubs from far and wide had been invited. They had indicated during their conversation that they may have to consider cancelling the event due to the road conditions. Having said all of that he acknowledged the assistance provided from staff at the Ards Section Office who always did what they could. As such he offered his full support to the Notice of Motion and encouraged members to also lend their support.

Alderman McIlveen commented that while he had no issue with the proposal he noted that two of his Party colleagues had fielded questions in respect of funding for roads and been advised that was allocated on the basis of need. Alderman McIlveen referred to the type of vehicles throughout the Borough and the density of many populations and as such he believed that a change in the Policy was required. He agreed that further investment was undoubtedly required and recalled how last year up to three roads only in the Borough had been resurfaced and that in his opinion

was unsustainable. As such Alderman McIlveen expressed his full support for the proposal.

At this stage Councillor Gilmour also expressed her support for the proposal, adding that you would be hard pressed to find a street anywhere in the Borough which did not have any potholes. She agreed there was a need for further investment through the Borough particularly as for a number of years there had not been a re surfacing contractor in place, which had only exacerbated the problem. As such she stated that she was more than happy to support the proposal.

Councillor McRandal also rose in support of the proposal stating that it was even more urgent at this time of the year. He welcomed the reinstatement of the Northern Ireland Executive which he stated would hopefully see the reinstatement of funding after years of underfunding.

Councillor McCracken agreed there were significant issues with potholes currently, even on the Castle Park Road, Bangor which was the main route to the City Hall, many schools, the college and cinema. Continuing he suggested that the increased use of SUV's and heavier electric vehicles would only cause more damage. Urgent repairs and the reinstatement of many roads throughout the Borough were urgently needed and as such anything the Council could do to lobby for that was to be welcomed.

By way of summing up Councillor Wray indicated that he would take on board all of the comments made by members and he thanked them for their contributions. He stated that strategy changes were required to address the issue which was prevalent throughout the Borough.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Alderman Smith, that this Council writes to the Department of Infrastructure to once again express our deep concern at the poor state of roads across Ards and North Down.

Council further requests that DFI changes their policy in relation to the depth of potholes that are required to be repaired back to 20 millimetres from the current 50 millimetres in order to improve the quality and safety of our roads network.

7. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

The Chairman advised that there were no items of Any Other Notified Business.

NOTED.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

REPORTS FOR APPROVAL (IN CONFIDENCE)

8. RENEWAL OF LEASE - PREMISES AT 100 WARD AVENUE, BANGOR (Appendix III)

*****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)

Council was asked to consider the renewal of the lease for the premises at 100 Ward Avenue, Bangor. It was recommended that the Council acceded to the request.

The recommendation was adopted.

9. POTENTIAL ACQUISITION OF LAND AT AMBLESIDE, BANGOR (NOM187) (Appendix IV)

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

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

Council was asked to consider an offer to acquire land at Ambleside, Bangor. The report outlined the issues and made a recommendation to resolve the position.

The matter was deferred.

10. RENEWAL OF 2 LICENCES TO NORTH DOWN HOCKEY CLUB OF LAND AT COMBER LEISURE CENTRE (Appendix V)

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

5. Exemption: a claim to legal professional privilege

Council was asked to consider a request from North Down Hockey Club to renew 2 licences in relation to paths that they installed and also the temporary scaffolding used by them to record matches at Comber Leisure Centre.

The recommendation was adopted.

11. REQUEST FROM CURRY'S AMUSEMENTS TO USE MCKEE CLOCK ARENA BANGOR FOR AN EASTER FUNFAIR 2024

(Appendix VI)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 6 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON

Council was asked to consider a request from Curry's Amusements to hold an Easter Funfair at the McKee Clock Arena.

The recommendation was adopted.

12. REQUEST FROM MARKET PLACE EUROPE LIMITED TO HOLD AN INTERNATIONAL MARKET AT CONWAY SQUARE - MAY 2024 (Appendix VII)

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

Exemption 3: relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person
Council was asked to consider a request from Market Place International Limited to hold a market at Conway Square, Newtownards in May 2024.

The recommendation was adopted.

13. REQUEST FROM NIE FOR A WAYLEAVE OVER LAND AT GREYABBEY CEMETERY

(Appendix VIII)

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

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

Council was asked to consider granting NIE a Wayleave over land at Greyabbey new Cemetery. It was recommended that the Council acceded to the request from NIE.

The recommendation was adopted.

14. REQUEST TO RENEW THE LICENCE FOR THE USE OF THE PITCH AT ISLANDVIEW, GREYABBEY

(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)

Council was asked to consider the renewal of the licence for the use of the pitch at Islandview, Greyabbey for intermediate football. It was recommended that the Council acceded to the request.

The recommendation was adopted.

15. REQUEST FOR A STORAGE CONTAINER AT SEAPARK, HOLYWOOD (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)

Council was asked to consider granting a licence for a storage container at Seapark for sporting equipment. It was recommended that the Council acceded to the request.

The recommendation was adopted.

16. REQUEST FROM NI WATER FOR RECTIFICATION OF TITLE OF LAND AT CLANBRASSIL (SEAPARK) AND A TEMPORARY WORKING AREA AT CLANBRASSIL (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)

Council was asked to agree to rectify a title issue at Clanbrassil and to also grant NI Water approval for a temporary working area at the same location. It was recommended that the Council acceded to the request from NI Water.

The recommendation was adopted.

17. ASSERTED PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY FROM KILLINCHY ROAD PART WAY TO BALLYDRAIN ROAD, COMBER (Appendix XII)

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

6b. Exemption: order or direction under any statutory provision

Summary: The report outlines the issues, and legal advice received, in relation to the asserted public right of way and makes a recommendation to resolve the issues.

The recommendation was adopted.

18. GREYABBEY VILLAGE HALL

(Appendix XIII)

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

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

Council was asked to agree to the surrender and release of a mortgage debenture relating to Greyabbey Village Hall. It is recommended that the Council accedes to the request.

The recommendation was adopted.

19. BLAIR MAYNE BURSARY AWARDS

(Appendix XIV)

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

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE- 1. Exemption: relating to an individual

The Council was asked to agree two sets of minutes from November 2023 and January 2024 from the Blair Mayne bursary fund committee.

The minutes were adopted.

REPORTS FOR NOTING (IN CONFIDENCE)

20. ABSENCE MANAGEMENT UPDATE

(Appendix XV)

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

4. Exemption: Consultations or negotiations

Council was asked to consider an update on the proposed Absence Management Action Plan prepared by Senior Management to tackle the issues raised by APSE.

The recommendation was adopted.

(Councillor Chambers left the meeting at this stage – 9.49pm)

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 9.52pm.

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Community and Wellbeing Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards and via Zoom, on Wednesday 14 February 2024 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT:

In the Chair: Councillor Martin

Aldermen: Adair
Brooks
Cummings

Councillors: Ashe Hollywood
Boyle Irwin
Chambers S Irvine (Zoom)
Cochrane W Irvine
Creighton Kendall
Douglas Moore

Officers: Director of Community and Wellbeing (G Bannister), Head of Community & Culture (N Dorrian), Head of Leisure Services (I O’Neill), Head of Parks & Cemeteries (S Daye), and Democratic Services Officer (R King)

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were notified:

The Chair (Councillor Martin), Councillor Chambers and Councillor W Irvine – Item 5 – Proposal to change Kingsland Pitch and Putt - Putting Facility

Councillor Chambers and Councillor W Irvine - Item 19 – Aurora Pool Floor Update

Councillor W Irvine explained that his declaration of interest related to membership of the NCLT and he would only remove himself from the meeting if he felt it was appropriate to do so during the discussion.

Councillor Kendall – Item 6 – Arts Project Grants

3. ARDS AND NORTH DOWN SPORTS FORUM GRANTS (WG JANUARY 2024) (FILE SD149)

(Appendices I – II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would be aware that on the 26th August 2015 Council delegated authority to the Ards and North Down Sports Forum, in order to allow it to administer sports grants funding on behalf of the Council. £45,000 had been allocated within the 2023/2024 revenue budget for this purpose.

The Council further authorised the Forum under delegated powers to award grants of up to £250. Grants above £250 still required Council approval. In addition, the Council requested that regular updates were reported to members.

During December 2023, the Forum received a total of 3 applications: 2 Goldcard and 1 Travel/Accommodation. A summary of the **3** successful applications were detailed in the attached Successful Goldcard and Successful Travel & Accommodation Appendices.

For information, the annual budget and spend to date on grant categories was as follows:

2023/24 Budget £45,000	Annual Budget	Funding Awarded December 2023	Remaining Budget
Anniversary	£1,000	£0	£250.00
Coaching	£3,000	£0	£1,453.75
Equipment	£14,000	£0	*-£6,877.03
Events	£6,000	£0	-£523.33
Seeding	£500	£0	£55.01
Travel and Accommodation	£14,500	*£50.00	-£3,108.99
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	£1,000.00
Schools/Sports Club Pathway	£5,000	£0	£3,002.00
*Goldcards proposed during the period December 2023 is 2 (21 Goldcards in total during 2023/24).			

*The proposed remaining budget for Equipment of **-£6,877.03** was based on Reclaimed costs of £47.74.

*The proposed remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of **-£3,108.99** was based on a proposed award of **£50.00** – for Noting.

The proposed funding for December was **£50.00** and the proposed remaining budget for 2023/24 was **-£4,748.59** (111% of the 2023/24 budget spent).

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) were noted.

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

Councillor Boyle praised the continued success of the Ards and North Down Sports Forum grants programme and the outcomes it was delivering for the athletes involved.

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

4. MARY PETERS TRUST (FILE CW32)
(Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would be aware that this Council had previously, on an annual basis, helped to support the Mary Peters Trust in the form of a grant. The Mary Peters Trust did excellent work in supporting upcoming local athletes from a wide range of sports through the distribution of financial support that allowed the athletes to train and compete at the highest levels.

Since its inception more than 40 years ago, the Trust had made a difference to the lives of thousands of young athletes from across Northern Ireland, selecting the best athletes, supporting them financially and providing access to a team of experts, who helped support their pathway to success and aided them in achieving their sporting dreams and ambitions.

In 2023 the Mary Peters Trust provided financial support to twenty-two local athletes from nine different sports across the Ards and North Down Borough Council area, totalling £16,450 for of investment. Details in the attached letter from Lady Mary Peters (Appendix 1).

Without this support many of the athletes would struggle to do the training required or be able to afford to travel to events to compete and represent everything that was good about this Borough.

Council had contributed £3,000 annually towards this fund and that amount was included in the budgets for 2023/24.

It was proposed to continue to support the work of the Trust through the award of this grant which could be paid from the Sport Development Budget for 2023/24.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the award of £3,000 to the Mary Peters Trust from 2023/24 budget.

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

(Councillors Martin, Chambers and W Irvine left the meeting having declared an interest in Item 5 – 7.04pm)

The Vice Chair, Councillor Kendall, assumed the chair for the following item in the absence of The Chair, Councillor Martin – 7.04pm.

5. PROPOSAL TO CHANGE KINGSLAND PITCH AND PUTT - PUTTING FACILITY (FILE LA/LS22)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Community and Wellbeing stating that Members would be aware that the Kingsland Pitch and Putt/Putting facility was currently operated by Serco/Northern Community Leisure Trust (NCLT) under the Leisure Services Contract between Council and NCLT.

Current Facility Provision

The Kingsland recreation site currently consisted of a nine-hole Pitch and Putt course and an enclosed Putting area alongside the tennis court facility and Kingsland pavilion onsite. The Pitch and Putt/Putting facility had traditionally been operated and staffed in July and August with low visitor rates being reported. This had been the case for a number of years now and therefore NCLT/Serco had requested that Council consider a change to the recreation offering to Footgolf and Frisbee golf.

Table 1 below provided Members with an indication of usage pre and post Covid of the Kingsland Pitch and Putt/Putting facility.

It could be clearly seen there was little demand for the activity, particularly with a similar family activity at nearby Pickie facility and putting green at Ward Park.

2019				*2021				2022				2023			
No. of days open	Total Income	Approx total visitor figure	Approx visitors per day	No. of days open	Total Income	Approx total visitor figure	Approx visitors per day	No. of days open	Total Income	Approx total visitor figure	Approx visitors per day	No. of days open	Total Income	Approx total visitor figure	Approx visitors per day
55	£1,700	425	8 per day	62	£2,165	541	9 per day	59	£1,968	492	8 per day	59	819.30	221	4 per day

*2020 Closed due to Covid

Proposed change to Facility Provision and operations

Serco had proposed to convert the existing golf facilities at Kingsland to footgolf and frisbee golf which would provide two distinct fun activity for a range of ages all year round. The rules were the same as golf but you kick a football into a larger hole in as few shots as possible or throw the frisbee into a basket.

For ease of reference to Members, the below was a visual example of the frisbee basket and football golf hole:



The Course would follow similar to what had been previously the Pitch and Putt course. Starting beside the tennis courts, going behind pavilion and round to the raised grass area. It was proposed to leave the enclosed putting area as an enclosed green space at present.



The current golf facility was only open during July and August, with staff on site for all hours of operation. NCLT/Serco proposed that Footgolf and Frisbee golf could be a facility that would be open to the public all year round. It was proposed that this facility may be suitable to operate without a requirement for staff, with users utilising their own footballs and frisbees to undertake the activity. This would provide families and visitors with a new, active, accessible, fun facility all year round in the Kingsland area and an added benefit to the nearby Playpark. Officers had taken account of the Bangor Waterfront redevelopment, attending a public consultation event to attain feedback and, subsequently believed that this proposal was likely to complement the Bangor Waterfront project.

Members should also note that a putting green facility operated in Ward Park over the Summer months and therefore, the ability of residents and visitors to take part in

a golf activity would remain within the City should the change to facility provision be taken forward.

Maintenance

The Putting and Pitch and Putt at Kingsland required extensive maintenance from the Councils parks department for it to be the standard it was pre Covid:

Putting Green

- Green 2 x per week 2 hrs each, one member of staff
- Fringe Strim & Tidy 2 x per week 2 hr each one member of staff
- Total 8 hrs
- Resources – Van, Trailer, Ride on Mower x 1, Pedestrian Mower x 1, Strimmer x 1, Blower x 1 and Staff x 2
- Total hours 8

Pitch and Putt

- Green 2 x per week half day, two members of staff
- Rough 1 x per week 1 day, two members of staff
- Resources – Van, Trailer, Ride On Mower x 1, Pedestrian Mower x 2, Strimmer x 2, Blower x 2 and Staff x 4
- Total 30 hrs

Total labour hours for Kingsland = 38 hours per week regular maintenance during periods of operation.

Conversion to footgolf/frisbee golf would reduce maintenance to 2 x staff for half a day every week to cut fairways and greens with ride on mower and strimmer. Total labour hours = 8 hours per week regular maintenance.

This was a reduction of 30 hrs per week regular maintenance which frees up 2 members of staff to be reallocated to other Parks duties during periods of operation.

Financial

As noted above Council currently provided NCLT with a subsidy to manage this facility. The subsidy for 2023/24 for Kingsland was £7,700.

Serco had advised that the cost to purchase and install the proposed footgolf and frisbee golf was circa £6,500.

Under the NCLT/Serco request, the facility would not be staffed during operating hours however circa 2.5 daily management hours would be allocated to Kingsland to complete facility inspections of the football/frisbee golf facility, tennis courts and Kingsland pavilion. NCLT/Serco had advised that the new subsidy cost to manage the facility based on the reduced staffing requirement would therefore be £4,000 p/a for the remaining term of the contract following year 1 of installation.

Based on above the installation of the footgolf/frisbee golf facility would be at no additional cost to Council in Year 1 i.e. 2024/25 (Over and above subsidy cost) and a reduced cost to Council from Year 2 onwards.

Whilst Council Leisure Officers were supportive of the change in facility usage proposed, they would propose that the current arrangements for staffing during the summer months would be retained. Maintaining the staffing arrangements which were currently in place for golf at the site could provide an onsite point for contact for information on the new facility, encourage facility usage, ensure safe and appropriate use and enable equipment to be hired or loaned to customers. On site staffing would also allow for the possibility of a charging policy to be implemented which could drive income generation at the site.

Should Members conclude that the retention of onsite staff during July and August was preferable, the installation of the footgolf/frisbee golf facility would be an additional cost to Council of £6,500 in year 1. The Council would continue to provide NCLT/Serco with the full subsidy amount in year 1 and for the remaining term of the contract.

Usage and feasibility of facility would be monitored throughout the year. Both Serco and Council would promote the new opportunity if approved through their social media and online platforms and plan to open the new offering as soon as practical. Following the first summer of operation a full review would be undertaken by Serco and Council to assess the initiative and apply any lessons learnt to ongoing provision.

As part of the Waterfront public consultation process in the summer of 2023 held in Ballyholme, the proposals were put to a public meeting and discussed. At that meeting there was a clear and overwhelming support from the local community for the proposals which were presented by the leisure contract manager.

There were three options to consider:

1. Retain the current pitch and putt provision and subsidy to Serco as detailed in the contract.
2. Accept Serco's proposal of replacing current provision with a free to use frisbee/foot golf facility which would remain unstaffed for the remainder of the contract and change the contract fees as detailed above.
3. Replace the current pitch and putt facility with frisbee/footgolf facility at an additional cost to Council in 2024/25 of £6,500 but retain the current contractual staffing during July and August.

RECOMMENDED that Council consider the request from Serco for the change of provision and determine which of the three options detailed above they would support going forward.

Proposed by Councillor Irwin, seconded by Councillor Hollywood, that the Council proceeds with Option 2.

As someone who had played the sport, Councillor Hollywood welcomed Serco's proposed new use of the site and he felt it would provide an opportunity to generate higher user numbers. Also welcoming the proposal, Alderman Adair paid tribute to his party colleague, Councillor Cathcart, who had called for a change to the recreation offering in order to boost visitor numbers at the facility.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Irwin, seconded by Councillor Hollywood, that the Council proceeds with Option 2.

(Councillors Martin, Chambers and W Irvine returned to the meeting - 7.06pm)

(Councillor Martin returned to Chair the meeting at this stage – 7.06pm)

(Councillor Kendall left the meeting having declared an interest in Item 6 – 7.06pm)

6. ARTS PROJECT GRANTS (FILE ART 05 R1/24)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that The Arts Project Grants for 2024-2025 opened for application in December 2023 with a closing date of Monday 22 January 2024. The grants were advertised in the local press, social media and on the Councils web site.

An assessment panel met on Wednesday 24 January 2024 to assess 11 applications received by the closing date. The panel comprised of the following members of the Arts & Heritage Panel and Ards & North Down Council Officers:

- Pandora Butterfield
- Dympna Curran
- Amy McKelvey

A maximum of £1,000 could be applied for per application.

The total available budget was £11,000.

Applications received totaled £10,892.50.

Pass mark was agreed at 60%, prior to scoring taking place.

Table 1 below provided a summary of the applications and the recommended awards.

Name of Organisation	Requested Amount	Project	Score	Amount Recommended
Boom	£1000	Youth Volunteer Programme	51	£0
Hollywood Shared Town	£1000	Creative Programme for Hollywood's Over 55s Group	48	£0
Inspiring Yarns	£1000	Sew it is!	58	£0
Kilcooley Women's Centre	£1000	Footprints of Expression	0	£0

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Peninsula Veterans	£1000	Ghost Soldiers "Remembering 110 Years of WW1"	0	£0
Seen Dance Company	£1000	Community Festival Irish Dance Workshops	85	£1000
Portico	£1000	New Quay Singers	86	£1000
AMH New Horizons	£1000	Creative Kiln Work	82	£1000
Lisbarnett & Lisbane Com Ass	£892.50	Art for All Project 2024	77	£892.50
Cre8 Theatre	£1000	Introducing BSL through Story Time and to schools in ANDBC locality, for Nursery/KS1.	88	£1000
Bangor Speech Festival	£1000	Bangor Speech Festival 2025	84	£1000
Total	£10892.50			£5892.50

Six organisations scored above the pass mark, and it was recommended that they received the full amount as shown in the table above.

Three unsuccessful applications were marked down due to a lack of detail or focus or not representing good value for money.

Two applications were unable to be marked due to a lack of required information. Kilcooley Women's Centre did not provide a CV or any substantiating information about the dance facilitator that they planned to use (requested in the application), and the Peninsula Veteran Group were looking for funding for equipment, which was not eligible for funding through this grant.

This recommendation would take the total spend in this round to £5,892.50 leaving a remaining budget of £5,107.50. The process would open again in April 2024 and those who were unsuccessful in this round would be provided with feedback, if requested, to assist them in future applications.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the 6 successful applications and awards detailed in table 1, totalling £5,892.50.

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

(Councillor Kendall returned to the meeting – 7.08pm)

7. ART BURSARY REPORT 2024-2025 (FILE ART 04/24-25)

(Appendix IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that The AND Arts Service offered creative bursaries to artists in the borough to attend the Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Co. Monaghan (four x one-week bursaries) and to Ballinglen Arts Foundation, Co. Mayo (one x two-week bursary).

These unique bursaries gave an artist an opportunity to focus on a specific project or development in their work and further their artistic and professional practice.

The bursaries were advertised in an e-bulletin sent to artists and also advertised through social media (Council Facebook and AND Culture), AND Culture and Council websites, press release and other online visual artist reference sites e.g. Visual Artist Ireland.

The application process opened on Thursday 30 November 2023 and closed on Monday 22 January 2024. Applicants were asked to clearly demonstrate their experience and how they would use the bursary to further their professional practice.

Members of the Arts and Cultural Advisory Panel met virtually on Tuesday 23 January 2024 to assess nine Tyrone Guthrie applications.

The panel comprised the following Arts Panel Members:

- Jane McCann: arts specialist - visual
- Dymphna Curran: arts specialist - visual
- Pandora Butterfield: arts specialist - visual

A second panel met on Monday 29 January 2024 to assess four Ballinglen Arts Foundation Bursaries applications.

The panel comprised the following Arts Panel Members:

- Jane McCann: Arts specialist - visual
- Dymphna Curran: Arts specialist - visual
- Marcus Hunter Neil: Arts specialist - performance

Applications were scored against set criteria and the following highest scoring applications from residents of the Borough are recommended for approval by the assessment panel.

Name of Applicant	Bursary	Project Score	Recommendation
Paul Maddern	Tyrone Guthrie Centre	79%	Awarded one week
Savannah Dodd	Tyrone Guthrie Centre	66%	Not awarded
Bryonie Reid	Tyrone Guthrie Centre	54%	Not awarded
Tim Dwyer	Tyrone Guthrie Centre	70%	Awarded one week

Marian Noone	Tyrone Guthrie Centre	–	No CV uploaded – as an essential document the application could not be assessed.
Fionnuala Lennon	Tyrone Guthrie Centre	38%	Not awarded
Linda Barbour	Tyrone Guthrie Centre	46%	Not awarded
Victoria Patterson	Tyrone Guthrie Centre	75%	Chris Ledger Award Awarded one week
Clare Gallagher	Tyrone Guthrie Centre	84%	Awarded one week
Joel Smyth	Ballinglen Arts Foundation	78%	Not awarded
Kathryn Graham Maria and Anna	Ballinglen Arts Foundation	71%	Not awarded
Maria and Anna Horvathova	Ballinglen Arts Foundation	78%	Not awarded
Sally Houston	Ballinglen Arts Foundation	90%	Awarded two week bursary

Recommended Bursaries:

Tyrone Guthrie Centre Bursary, Co. Monaghan

One-week bursary:

- Victoria Patterson received the highest score from the two applications from artists with a disability. Victoria was a painter and plans to create a body of new work during the residency. The award was created in memory of Chris Ledger through the developments of the Arts and Disability Working Group.
- One-week bursary: Paul Maddern - poet
- One-week bursary: Clare Gallagher – visual artist
- One week bursary: Tim Dwyer - poet

Ballinglen Bursary, Co. Mayo

- Two-week bursary: Sally Houston

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the recommendations of the scoring panel as detailed in this report.

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

8. HERITAGE GRANTS (FILE HER 01 24-25)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Community and Wellbeing stating that applications to the Heritage Grant 2024-25 opened in December 2023 and closed on 22 January 2024. Ten applications were received.

Three members of the Arts and Heritage Panel assessed the applications on 29 January 2024, administered by the Heritage Development Officer:

- Catherine Charley
- Billy Carlile
- Dr Verity Peet

There was a total of £5,000 available with a maximum of £500 per application awarded. As shown in the accompanying Scoring Matrix, each application was scored out of 100. Recommendation for award of grant was based on a minimum score of 50.

Application Assessment Scoring

GRANT REF:	ORGANISATION	PROJECT TITLE	SCORE	AWARDED
HER-PG001/2425	Portaferry & Strangford Trust	A Wee Bit of Maritime History - publication	90	500.00
HER-PG002/2425	Inspiring Yarns	Know Your Worth Heritage Quilting	76	500.00
HER-PG003/2425	Ards Historical Society	Publication of Booklet on the Ards TT Races	83	500.00
HER-PG004/2425	Portavogie Cultural & Heritage Society	Interview, Record and print memories from Portavogie and Surrounding Area	75	500.00
HER-PG005/2425	St Patrick's Community Centre, Portaferry	Researching the Clothes Making History of Our Premises	70	500.00
HER-PG006/2425	Comber Historical Society	Comber History.com Website Redevelopment	85	500.00
HER-PG007/2425	Discover Groomspport	Discover Groomspport Digital Archive	75	500.00
HER-PG008/2425	Ballywalter & District Historical Society	Historical Society Journal for 2024	77	500.00
HER-PG009/2425	Friends of Columbanus Bangor	Columban Way Walk pilot for guided tour	71	500.00

HER-PG010/2425	Donaghadee Heritage Preservation Company Ltd.	Local history of the Coastguard Service exhibition	72	500.00
Total awarded				5,000.00

Billy Carlile declared himself a member of Ballywalter & District Historical Society and abstained from scoring their application.

The total amount recommended for award was £5,000.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves that a grant of £500 is awarded to each of the 10 successful applicants as tabled above.

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

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Irwin, praised the programme and those organisations that had benefited. In particular she welcomed the offerings from Discover Groomsport and Donaghadee Heritage Preservation Company along with the Columban Way Walk pilot that she hoped would be successful.

Alderman Adair praised those projects that had been successful in the Ards Peninsula, namely Portaferry & Strangford Trust, Portavogie Cultural & Heritage Society and Ballywalter & District Historical Society. He spoke of the important work undertaken by those organisations and the publications they produced which he had enjoyed reading over the years. They brought the history of the Ards Peninsula to life and preserved it for future generations both locally and indeed throughout the world.

The Chairman echoed those comments, highlighting the importance of such projects which preserved the Borough's heritage.

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

9. MULTI-ANNUAL ARTS GRANTS 2024-2026 APPEAL (FILE ART 06/24-26)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Community and Wellbeing stating that Ards and North Down Borough Council offered two-year funding for Arts organisations operating in the borough. Organisations which operated an annual programme of arts activity could apply for core multi-annual grants up to a maximum of £5,000 per year.

The multi-annual arts grant opened for applications on Monday 4th September 2023 with a closing date of Thursday 19th October 2023 at 4pm.

An appeal was received from Kilcooley Women's Centre on the grounds that Council did not follow due process.

CS.14.02.24 PM

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An appeal panel, consisting of three members from the Arts and Heritage panel who had not sat on the first panel, met on Monday 15th January 2024, administered by Nicola Dorrian, Head of Community & Culture and Emily Crawford, Service Unit Manager.

The panel was reminded of the pass mark agreed by the original assessment panel held in October 2023 of 50%.

The panel concluded that the application should be assessed as a clear definition of what the Council deemed to be an 'arts organisation' had not been given in the criteria and guidance notes.

Applicant	% Score	Amount Requested CORE / PROGRAMME	Awarded
Kilcooley Women's Centre	71%	CORE £5,000	£5,000
TOTAL		£5,000	£5,000

Six successful applications were previously awarded funding totalling £27,000 from a total budget available of £28,000. A total award of £32,000 had been made for Multi-Annual Grants for 2024-2026.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the recommendation of the appeal panel to award Kilcooley Women's Centre £5,000 p/a for two years.

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

Councillor W Irvine praised the Council's appeals policy and this case had shown that Council took its grants application process very seriously, He wished Kilcooley Women's Centre success with its project. The seconder, Councillor Boyle, was pleased to see that the grant application had been reviewed and that the Council was not afraid of putting things right in its cause for helping groups achieve success throughout the Borough.

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

10. GOOD RELATIONS ACTION PLAN 2024-2025 (FILE GREL 424)
(Appendix V - VII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing stating that Members would be aware that funding for the Council's Good Relations Programme was provided by the Executive Office (75%) and match funded by the Council (25%). The award was made based on an assessment of an annual Action Plan which reflected the needs and priorities of the Borough, detailed in the Council's approved Good Relations Strategy (2022-2025).

The Executive Office (TEO) required the Council's annual Action Plan (2024-2025) to be submitted for consideration in February 2024, therefore the attached Action Plan had been submitted to TEO in draft format, subject to Council approval. The Plan had been submitted on the basis that 100% budget would be available and not on the basis of the 53% budget total which was received in 2023-2024.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the attached Good Relations Action Plan for 2024-2025.

Proposed by Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

While recognising that Council was waiting on the appropriate funding, Councillor Kendall commented that the Good Relations programme had been successful over previous years and praised the Good Relations team for putting together such a comprehensive offering for the forthcoming year.

Councillor W Irvine felt that the programme offered lots of positive outcomes, particularly for children and young people and its aims regarding a shared future. He asked if any tweaks had been made this year based on feedback from the existing year.

The Head of Community and Culture explained that the plan was the same as in previous years going into the last year of the strategy, so it would be a full comprehensive review going forward into next year, but she advised that many programmes could not be delivered in the last year due to a lack of external funding.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

11. COMMUNITY & WELLBEING DIRECTORATE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT DECEMBER 2023 (FILE FIN 45)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the Community & Wellbeing Directorate's Budgetary Control Report covered the 9-month period 1 April to 31 December 2023. The net cost of the Directorate was showing an underspend of £1,383k (15.5%) – box A on page 4.

It should be noted that the 2023/24 Leisure income budget was prepared with the assumption that VAT status for Leisure income would change from 1 April 2023 as a result of HMRC accepting that leisure activities should be considered as outside the scope of VAT. This had not happened yet. An estimate of VAT on Leisure income up to 31 December was £300k (the Council would receive this back when its claim was settled) so, if the VAT status had changed on 1 April 2023, Leisure's budgetary performance would be approximately £300k better than shown in this report.

Explanation of Variance

Community & Wellbeing's budget performance was further analysed on page 4 into 3 key areas:

Report	Type	Variance	Page
Report 2	Payroll Expenditure	£877k favourable	4
Report 3	Goods & Services Expenditure	£90k favourable	4
Report 4	Income	£417k favourable	4

Explanation of Variance

The Community & Wellbeing Directorate's overall variance could be summarised by the following table (variances over £25k): -

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
Payroll	(877)	Payroll underspends throughout the Directorate mainly due to vacant posts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Health (£224k). • Community & Culture (£194k). • Parks & Cemeteries (£335k). • Leisure (£122k).
Goods & Services		
Community & Culture	79	Social Supermarket and Hardship Fund schemes. These are fully funded.
Parks & Cemeteries	201	Parks & Cemeteries operating costs - £203k. Costs such as hired equipment, hired services and hired vehicles. These are more than offset by increased cemeteries income and payroll savings
Leisure	(349)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCLT contract (£400k). The details of the contract extension were not known when 23/24 budgets were set. • New leisure system implementation - £81k
Income		
Environmental Health	(52)	Additional FSA grant funding for Food Control.
Community & Culture	(178)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts & Museum – (£20k). • Community Development – (£157k). Additional DfC funding for Advice Services, Social Supermarket & Hardship Fund.
Parks & Cemeteries	(84)	Cemeteries income (£107k).
Leisure	(102)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Londonderry Park – (£30k) • Leisure Centres – (£15k). • Community Centres – (£31k)

Type	Variance £'000	Comment
		As mentioned on page 1 the Leisure favourable variance would be approximately £300k higher if the Leisure VAT status had changed on 1 April 2023.

REPORT 1 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT					
Period 9 - December 2023					
	Year to Date Actual	Year to Date Budget	Variance	Annual Budget	Variance
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	156,945	159,600	(2,655)	211,800	(1.7)
110 Environmental Health	1,454,885	1,751,000	(296,115)	2,336,900	(16.9)
120 Community and Culture	1,514,716	1,806,900	(292,184)	2,495,000	(16.2)
140 Parks & Cemeteries	3,118,393	3,336,300	(217,907)	4,466,700	(6.5)
150 Leisure Services	1,279,486	1,853,600	(574,114)	2,692,400	(31.0)
Total	7,524,425	8,907,400	A (1,382,975)	12,202,800	(15.5)
REPORT 2 PAYROLL REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing - Payroll					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	124,480	126,400	(1,920)	168,400	(1.5)
110 Environmental Health	1,788,211	2,012,300	(224,089)	2,679,100	(11.1)
120 Community and Culture	1,147,922	1,341,800	(193,878)	1,768,300	(14.4)
140 Parks & Cemeteries	2,606,649	2,941,200	(334,551)	3,863,100	(11.4)
150 Leisure	3,298,402	3,420,700	(122,298)	4,576,300	(3.6)
Total	8,965,664	9,842,400	(876,736)	13,055,200	(8.9)
REPORT 3 GOODS & SERVICES REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing - Goods & Services					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	34,025	34,800	(775)	45,000	(2.2)
110 Environmental Health	143,937	163,900	(19,963)	265,200	(12.2)
120 Community and Culture	1,218,624	1,139,200	79,424	1,725,800	7.0
140 Parks & Cemeteries	932,506	731,700	200,806	1,062,600	27.4
150 Leisure	453,194	802,300	(349,106)	1,320,200	(43.5)
Total	2,782,286	2,871,900	(89,614)	4,418,800	(3.1)
REPORT 4 INCOME REPORT					
	£	£	£	£	%
Community & Wellbeing - Income					
100 Community & Wellbeing HQ	(1,560)	(1,600)	40	(1,600)	2.5
110 Environmental Health	(477,263)	(425,200)	(52,063)	(607,400)	(12.2)
120 Community and Culture	(851,830)	(674,100)	(177,730)	(999,100)	(26.4)
140 Parks & Cemeteries	(420,762)	(336,600)	(84,162)	(459,000)	(25.0)
150 Leisure	(2,472,110)	(2,369,400)	(102,710)	(3,204,100)	(4.3)
Totals	(4,223,525)	(3,806,900)	(416,625)	(5,271,200)	(10.9)

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report.

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

Noting that Leisure was often rightly under scrutiny, Councillor Boyle wanted to highlight what was an excellent report which showed a £102,000 favourable variance and if Council was to get the VAT back that it was owed, he understood that figure would be more than £400,000. He asked for an update on when Council would receive that payment and the Director advised that while the decision had been reached the details of the outcome was still ongoing and the final settlement therefore was yet to be determined.

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

12. NORTHERN IRELAND AUDIT OFFICE REPORT ON TACKLING THE PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACTS OF SMOKING AND VAPING (FILE CW165)
(Appendix VIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing stating that a report, published on Tuesday 30 January 2024 by Northern Ireland's Auditor General, had concluded that the health service had made significant progress in reducing smoking prevalence among the local population, but that levels remained concerningly high among some of the most vulnerable groups in society.

The report noted that an estimated 320,000 people aged 16 and over currently smoked in Northern Ireland, representing 14 per cent of the total population - this compared with 24 per cent of the population in 2010-11. However, challenges remained – the report noted that smoking prevalence was significantly higher among the most deprived areas (24 per cent) compared to the least deprived (7 per cent). In addition, around 2,200 pregnant women continued to smoke annually, and emerging research suggested a high smoking prevalence amongst people with mental health issues.

The report noted that:

- Around 15 per cent (2,200) of deaths in NI were attributable to smoking every year.
- There were around 35,000 smoking-related hospital admissions recorded in NI annually.
- The Department of Health estimated that local hospitals incurred annual costs of around £218 million in treating smoking-related illnesses.
- A Public Health Agency (PHA) estimate of other factors, including premature deaths and excess sickness absence, indicated that local annual economic costs arising from smoking were around £450 million.
- Smokers with a 20-a-day habit incurred annual costs of over £4,600, impacting disproportionately on lower income households.

While the report acknowledged notable progress in reducing overall smoking prevalence in NI over the last decade, it also observed that the rapid emergence of vaping had presented new challenges. Vaping levels among adults had almost

doubled from 5 per cent of the population to 9 per cent between 2014-15 and 2022-23. In addition, the most recent Department of Health survey suggested that 9 per cent of local 11-16 year olds here were vaping, with 6 per cent doing so regularly (an increase from the respective levels of 6 percent and 3 per cent in 2019). Underlying this, 24 per cent of Year 12 children currently vape. While research to date had highlighted benefits of adults vaping to help them quit smoking, it had also highlighted that not enough was known yet on potential long-term health effects. UK public health bodies all agreed that children should not vape.

The report also considered the enforcement of tobacco control legislation by local councils on behalf of the PHA, including 'spot checks' at retailers and businesses, to identify if tobacco or vaping products were being sold to children. While over 5,000 tobacco test purchases were made by councils between 2011-12 and 2018-19 (identifying 570 age-of-sale offences), the report noted that targets set by the PHA for the required number of annual visits and test purchases were often not met*. In addition, the report highlighted that local businesses stocking vapes did not currently have to register with councils, even though a requirement for tobacco retailers to register had been in place since April 2016. It recommended that the health service reassessed the budgetary requirements for delivering a future combined tobacco and vaping strategy, and that it considered quality standards to ensure a more consistent approach to enforcement across councils.

*Note that other than when covid restrictions were in place in 2020 and 2021 Ards and North Down had always met or exceeded PHA targets in relation to test purchasing and retailer visits.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report.

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

13. NOTICE OF MOTION

13.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Adair and Councillor Edmund

That Council Note the closure of the training area at Portavogie Football Pitch due to health and safety concerns recognises the negative impact this has on local provision and sports development and tasks officers to bring forward a report on options to provide temporary training facilities in the village in the short term and repairs to the pitch in the long term as a matter of urgency further Council task officers to bring forward a bi-monthly progress report on the development of the Portavogie 3G Pitch Project to Council.

(Councillor Edmund was admitted to the meeting from the virtual public gallery)

Amendment proposed by Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that Council notes the closure of the training area at Portavogie Football Pitch due to health and safety concerns, recognises the negative impact this has on local provision and sports development and tasks officers to bring forward a report on options to provide temporary training facilities in the village in the short term and

repairs to the pitch in the long term. As a matter of urgency Council tasks officers to bring forward a bimonthly progress report on the development of the Portavogie 3G Pitch , Portaferry Sports Centre and Portaferry 3G Pitch to this committee.

Proposing, Alderman Adair explained that he had brought the motion with deep regret as the training pitch had been an issue for more than 12 years and in that time there had been little progress, much saga and deadlock. He recalled that in March last year a business case had been agreed which had given hope of a new playing surface but that had stalled over recent months with further deadlock and delay.

He explained that the scheme had stalled through the Planning Service which had not received any contact from Council since March 2023 and the original business case was now impacted by Shared Environmental Services legislation which would come into effect from 2031. This would mean Council would have to update its business case due to a ban by the European Union on the microplastics.

The issues at the training pitch had now led to its closure due to health and safety concerns. There had been a football pitch at that location in Portavogie for over 60 years and it had now come to the end of its life. He explained that Council was not being asked for a new facility but an upgrade of an existing grass pitch to a modern 21st Century sporting facility that could meet the needs of the sporting community in Portavogie which was home to a very successful senior football team. There were also more than 200 children connected to Portavogie's youth team and they came to play there from surrounding areas.

Alderman Adair referred to a roadblock by NI Water and the Planning Service was still waiting on information from the Council for that to be lifted. He also called for clarity on the microplastics legislation which he understood would not come in to force until 2031 but he hoped that the facility could be delivered well before 2031.

Continuing, he believed that when that legislation did come in, leisure providers were not going to rip up every 3G pitch in Northern Ireland – he believed it would be a phased approach. He also understood that the IFA, as football's regional governing body, had not established an alternative solution to apply.

The proposer explained that Councillor Boyle had asked that an update for Portaferry 3G pitch and Portaferry Sports Centre be included as part of his Notice of Motion which he had agreed to do.

In closing, Alderman Adair stated that the ratepayers of the Ards Peninsula deserved the same service as everywhere else and they were not prepared to accept deadlock and delay. He hoped that Councillors could send out a united voice by backing the motion unanimously.

By asking for bimonthly updates on this then Councillors could scrutinise and move things forward swiftly and earnestly. He looked forward to action and a report coming forward and wanted to see planning approval confirmed for this. He asked Members to give their support.

The seconder, Councillor Edmund agreed with the proposer, feeling that the issue had gone on far too long. He was not aware of any other project that had taken so long to be delivered. There were 200 children involved in the set up in Portavogie and then there were the senior teams. He was proud to have represented the club himself as a player in his younger years.

In terms of the forthcoming legislation, he could simply not accept that every 3G pitch in Northern Ireland would suddenly be ripped up as soon as it came into force. There would need to be an affordable alternative before that could happen.

Continuing, he spoke of the health and wellbeing benefits and the opportunities that modern facilities such as 3G pitches provided, along with their importance for the infrastructure of amateur soccer.

In closing, he concurred that urgent upgrades were required and the project needed to be moved forward to help sports development in that part of the Borough.

Rising to support the motion, Councillor Boyle felt the proposer and seconder had outlined the serious need for provision of football in Portavogie given the numbers involved. He felt that it had almost taken a shorter time to build a £40m leisure centre in Newtownards than it had to cover a piece of ground in Portavogie that the Council owned.

Commenting further, Councillor Boyle could not understand why it was taking so long and he knew the people were at their wits end over the matter. He looked forward to a report coming back and asked for clarity around the legislation and if that would be a factor now or not apply until 2031.

He thanked Alderman Adair for including the Portaferry facilities, explaining that Portaferry Leisure Centre had been without its main hall now for eight months. While he understood that was not solely Council related, he would appreciate an update.

In terms of the pitch closure in Portaferry, he asked if there were temporary training facilities available and the the Director explained that there had been temporary training facilities offered but as yet those had not been accepted. In the meantime, the relevant officer would continue to work with the club to identify alternative facilities.

He explained that the Head of Leisure Services and Head of Parks and Cemeteries had been trying to keep up to speed with the new legislation in relation to micro-plastics and had attended conferences in Belfast and Dublin. The Head of Leisure Services further advised that from 2031 it would not be possible to purchase the fill that was also known as rubber crumb. The upshot of that was that from 2031 Council would not be able to maintain its 3G pitches and that would affect any project that would be going beyond that period, in terms of lifespan and any existing pitches that were due to be refurbished in that timescale. The existing business case had not factored in this information.

The officer explained that the legislation changes would mean Council having to replace sub structure of its 3G playing surfaces and it would not be possible to

simply replace the infill. It was therefore essential that any business case considered the impact of that legislation and he welcomed that there was sufficient lead in time to do that.

Councillor Boyle raised a further query about potential replacement substances and if the Council would still be prevented, even with Planning Permission, from proceeding with the project until there was clear direction on alternative substances.

The officer added that the legislation could potentially prevent planning permission being granted if the Council did not have alternatives or mitigations to prevent microplastics being leaked into the waterways.

Alderman Cummings asked if there was a possibility of replacing the rubber crumb with an alternative substance but the officer reiterated that the sub structure of the pitch would need to be replaced. Research was ongoing but further information would be provided in the report requested.

Summing up, Alderman Adair asked if the legislation meant that Council would need to rip up every affected playing surface. The Director advised that this was not yet known and it was unclear if there would be a phased approach or a day one ban from the introduction of the legislation.

The proposer added that his interpretation of the legislation was that it affected any facilities built from 2031 onwards but he hoped that there would be clarity provided because he did not find it practical for providers to dig up every 3G pitch by 2031. He was hopeful that the pitch could have been installed in 2025 and then the surface would have been in place for six years by the time the legislation was introduced. He understood that the lifespan of those surface types was 10 years anyway. He hoped that clarity and assurance would be provided and thanked Members for their support. He felt that it sent a message that Council wanted to move the project forward.

He thanked the football teams in Portavogie along with the Portavogie Rangers Chairman Mark Thompson who he said worked hard behind the scenes in lobbying for improvements.

RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that Council notes the closure of the training area at Portavogie Football Pitch due to health and safety concerns, recognises the negative impact this has on local provision and sports development and tasks officers to bring forward a report on options to provide temporary training facilities in the village in the short term and repairs to the pitch in the long term. As a matter of urgency Council tasks officers to bring forward a bi monthly progress report on the development of the Portavogie 3G Pitch , Portaferry Sports Centre and Portaferry 3G Pitch to this committee.

14. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS

There were no items of any other notified business.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

15. PEACEPLUS SCORING (FILE PEACV-1)

(Appendix IX)

****IN CONFIDENCE****

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 3 – Exemption relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person

A report was presented to Community & Wellbeing detailing the outcome of the scoring panel.

The report recommended that Council considers the three options proposed by the scoring panel, and chooses one or a number of the applications that passed the scoring threshold, within the budget, to be included in the PEACEPLUS Local Authority Action Plan and proceeds to develop an outline business case for each application which will help determine need and more accurate costs in preparation of a letter of offer being received.

There was an amendment agreed for officers to schedule a special C&W Committee to discuss this one agenda item.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Brooks, seconded by Councillor Chambers that that the Committee defers making a decision on the outcome of the PEACEPLUS scoring panel tonight and tasks officers to schedule a special meeting where committee members with officers can be given the opportunity to learn and ask questions about the process before making a decision which involves a substantial amount of money and has involved many meetings with the PEACEPLUS panel over the past six months.

16. TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF A KEYHOLDER RESPONSE SERVICE AND OPENING AND LOCKING OF VARIOUS COUNCIL AREAS (FILE PCA 37)

****IN CONFIDENCE****

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 3 – Exemption relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person

A report was presented to Community & Wellbeing detailing the tender for the provision of a keyholder response service and opening and locking of various Council areas.

The report recommended that Council award the tender in line with the process.

The recommendation was adopted

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Cochrane, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

17. APPOINTMENT OF ICE CREAM & HOT DRINKS VENDORS AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN THE BOROUGH 2024-25 (FILE PCA 125)

****IN CONFIDENCE****

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 3 – Exemption relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person

A report was presented to Community & Wellbeing detailing the tender for the appointment of ice cream and hot drinks vendors at various locations in the Borough 2024-2025.

The report recommended that Council award the tender in line with the process.

The recommendation was adopted.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Alderman Brooks, that the recommendation be adopted.

**18. SOCIAL SUPERMARKETS (FILE CW142)
(Appendix X)**

****IN CONFIDENCE****

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 3 – Exemption relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person

A report was presented to Community & Wellbeing detailing the end of the Social Supermarket Pilot in March 2024 and the options for next steps.

The report recommended that Council decide which of the options to progress.

The recommendation was adopted that Council proceed with Option 1.

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor S Irvine, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the Council proceeds with Option 1.

19. AURORA POOL FLOORS UPDATE (FILE CW24)
(Appendix XI)

****IN CONFIDENCE****

NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 5 – Exemption a claim to legal professional privilege

A report was presented to Community & Wellbeing detailing the background and interim proposal for Aurora moveable pool floors

The report recommended that Council endorses the approach to dealing with the ongoing issues with the Aurora moveable floors as outlined in the interim proposal.

The recommendation was adopted that Council proceed with Interim Proposal

AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS

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

TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting terminated at 8.44pm.

Unclassified

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ITEM 9

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Choose an item.
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	28 February 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	19 February 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Invest NI Industrial Land Questionnaire
Attachments	Appendix 1 - INI Letter dated 29 January 2024 Appendix 2 - ANDBC Questionnaire response

Members will be aware that Invest NI (INI) own a 19-acre site adject to Council land at Balloo (Signal and previous NIE site), outlined in the drawing 1. Currently INI land is only available to businesses who meet its strict eligibility criteria, and as such the land has remained undeveloped for some time, despite interest from local businesses over the last few years.

The recent Sir Michael Lyons independent review on INI, which Council fed into, outlined that there is an issue with market failure in terms of provision of industrial land across a number of areas in NI and recommended that INI should bring forward a strategy for the development of industrial land and property in partnership with other key stakeholders, in particularly local councils.

Following on from this the Department for the Economy (DfE) launched the INI Action Plan on 4th October 2023, (see link below). Action 26 outlines that INI will publish an Industrial Land and Buildings Strategy, developed in consultation with key

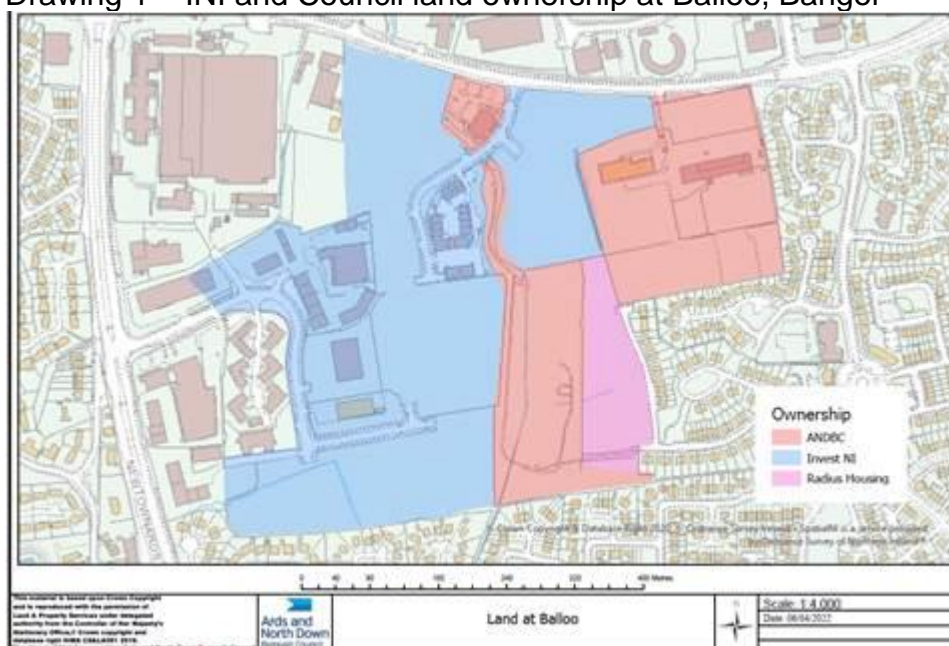
Choose an item.

stakeholders including Councils, that will provide a prioritised and phased approach to the delivery of industrial infrastructure, delivering solutions which support our local businesses to grow and expand and addressing the lack of provision in the areas of greatest need.

<https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/economy/independent-review-invest-ni-action-plan.pdf>

Officers have met with INI officials several times over recent months/years, stressing that ANDBC would like to work with INI in relation to their land at Balloo. INI have now written to all Council's seeking a response to their questionnaire in relation to industrial land provision within NI. (Appendix 1). Council's response to their questionnaire is outlined in Appendix 2.

Drawing 1 – INI and Council land ownership at Balloo, Bangor



RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approve and submit the response to INI questionnaire on Industrial Land provision as outlined in Appendix 2.

29th January 2024

Stephen Reid
Ards and North Down Borough Council
Town Hall, The Castle
Bangor
BT20 4BT

Dear Stephen

INVEST NI AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY

I understand that representatives from each Council met with colleagues from the Department for the Economy and Invest NI's Regional Team on 16th January 2024 to discuss the development of a Sub Regional Economic Plan for Northern Ireland, one of the Strategic Actions emanating from Sir Michael Lyon's Independent Review of Invest NI. You will be aware that there is also a Strategic Action specific to Invest NI's role in the industrial land and buildings market, with a commitment to publish a new land and buildings strategy by September 2024, this strategy will be very much linked to the Department's Sub Regional Plan.

It is my understanding that Councils are assisting with the co-design of the Plan and currently giving consideration to defining your sub regional priorities. Should you identify industrial property as a priority for your Council, Invest NI would be interested in hearing your views. We would like to understand how we may be able to work together to collectively bring forward property solutions to help businesses throughout Northern Ireland to grow and expand.

To help us with this process we would ask you to consider the attached questionnaire. This is an extremely important element of our ongoing process of engagement with stakeholders. I understand you will soon be meeting with your Invest NI Regional Manager to discuss the Sub Regional Plan in more detail, and given the obvious link to the Property Strategy, representatives from Invest NI's Property Team will also join those discussions.

In the meantime, I would ask that you return the attached to psuprojects@investni.com by 1st March 2024.

You will appreciate that public resources, both human and financial, are under considerable pressure at present and therefore any strategy brought forward will need to be prioritised and phased, with particular emphasis on demonstrable need and the ability to deliver against both 10X and City & Growth objectives.

I look forward to receipt of your completed questionnaire and to continued discussion as we work to initially complete and then deliver the strategy in collaboration with our key partners.

Yours sincerely



BRIAN DOLAGHAN
Executive Director Finance
INVEST NORTHERN IRELAND

LAND & PROPERTY FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

JANUARY 2024

Invest NI and the Department for the Economy recently published a detailed Action Plan that aims to address the recommendation made in Sir Michael Lyons' Independent Review of Invest NI. This Action Plan contains a Strategic Action specific to Invest NI's role in the industrial land and buildings market and commits to the publication of a new industrial land and buildings strategy by September 2024.

As part of the development of this new strategy, Invest NI is now consulting with key stakeholders, including councils, and we would like to hear your views on how we may be able to work together to collectively bring forward property solutions that can help businesses, across Northern Ireland to grow and expand.

To assist us we would like to invite you to consider and respond to the following short questionnaire;

1. **Is industrial infrastructure (land and/or buildings) a priority area of need for your council? In addressing this question, we would ask you to be as specific as possible in outlining the**

- **location**
- **size**
- **scale**
- **nature and**
- **timing,**

of perceived need for industrial land/property solutions, to support business growth within your region.

A number of recent studies undertaken by Ards and North Down Borough Council indicate a demand within the Borough for manufacturing / light industrial accommodation and warehousing/logistics in particular. Specifically feedback from businesses outlined a demand for:

- Manufacturing / light industrial accommodation between 1,000 and 8,000 sq ft in both Bangor and Newtownards.
- Manufacturing / light industrial accommodation 8,000 – 10,000 sq ft in both Bangor and Newtownards
- Warehousing with office space 10,000 – 15,000 sq ft in Bangor and Newtownards
- Warehousing / logistics space 50,000 – 60,000 sq ft in Balloo
- Office space for technology/creative industries in Holywood

The studies outlined that businesses were finding it challenging to access accommodation within the Borough, resulting in them either limiting their potential business growth and/or leaving the Borough. A number of reasons were cited, but in the main access to actual available land and/or premises was the main factor.

Both Enterprise Agencies within the Borough, ABC and NDDO confirmed they are currently unable to meet the demand for smaller start up units. Both would like to expand but are finding this challenging due to land availability and/or costs.

2. What evidence do you have to support the need for any additional collective intervention i.e. what does current demand and supply of industrial land and/or property look like within your council area?

Studies undertaken by Ards and North Down Borough Council in 2019 and 2021 indicate that business in the Borough are having difficult finding premises, both in relation to start ups as well as those wishing to grow. This primarily relates to manufacturing / light industrial and distribution/logistic companies based and/or wishing to locate in either Newtownards or Bangor/Balloo. ABC and NDDO (Enterprise Agencies) are also at capacity, both with a vision to expand.

A number of the sites within the Borough zoned for employment are no longer available as they are either fully developed, such as Jubilee Rd Business Park Bangor and INI's Ballyharry Business Park Newtownards, or have been developed for other uses. A total of 45ha is currently zoned for employment, including INI's (7.5ha at Balloo). However there are key constraints in the development of these lands with previous reports indicating public sector support and/or intervention may be required to overcome these issues which include:

- New access junctions connecting into main transport routes
- Drainage / flooding issues, potentially requiring significant interventions/costs
- Occupiers need to meet INI criteria and timeline to access INI land

Council had previous discussions with INI, under INI's 25% set aside policy, to support NDDO to access further land at the Balloo site. Unfortunately, NDDO could not meet the INI timeline but are still extremely interested in discussing this further with INI to see if a solution could be achieved to enable them to access a small portion of the INI land to build further business start up units.

3. Have you given any consideration to becoming involved in delivering industrial property in partnership with Invest NI?

ANDBC officers have met with INI team on several occasions over recent years. Council has also fed into both the Sir Michael Lyons Review and SQW Industrial Land Review. Council would very much like to see the INI land at Balloo used to support local business growth. ANDBC owns the former NIE site next to the INI land at Balloo, and previously outlined to INI Council's vision to work collectively to develop a Masterplan for the whole 9ha site, as well as considering potential delivery models. For example, (note these would require a change to the current INI criteria):

- Establishment of a joint Partnership between INI and Council to develop the whole site for economic growth/business use
- Agree a Masterplan and either:
 - Look for private sector development partner
 - Put in the infrastructure and release individual sites to businesses
 - Put in the infrastructure and build to basic shell to rent to businesses
- NDDO purchase a small section of the site for development
- Council purchase a section of the site to join to the NIE site

In order to support the 45ha of employment land to be developed INI and Council should also give consideration to interventions to de-risk these sites such as; Brown Field Grants, support for enabling infrastructure or facilitating anchor tenants/undertakes role as head-leasee.

4. **If so, what sort of role do you envisage for the council in such a partnership and how do you see this working?**

ANDBC own the previous NIE site (1.5ha) beside the INI land at Balloo, Bangor. Council have agreed to develop the site to support business growth within the Borough and would very much encourage INI to consider how its land could be used to support this. Council also owns and manages the Signal Business Centre, located on previous INI land. As outlined in section 3 above, Council would welcome the opportunity to work with INI to review a range of different options and models; this could include interventions such as a collective Masterplan for the whole site, to a potential partnership to develop the site, either collectively and/or with a private developer, as well as considering the role of NDDO. This may require INI to relax the criteria for acquisition of the Balloo lands, ideally for the whole site, but if this isn't possible then to at least 'set aside' 25% of the site, allowing NDDO and Council to acquire some of the land for economic development.

Council could undertake a number of roles in a partnership for example:

- Equity Investor – establishing a Joint Venture – potentially transferring Council land into a LABV or LLP
- Site acquisition and redevelopment – Council purchases section of INI land and develops the site potentially via a Design, Build and Operator contract, or Design, construct and rent/sell
- Provision of Grants / subsidies to enable private sector to bring to market

5. **What sort of role would you envisage Invest Northern Ireland, or other stakeholders, playing in delivering a partnership based solution to any land & property needs identified above. Please be as specific as possible with regard to roles of any stakeholder partners identified.**

Depending on the agreed partnership model there are a number of different roles INI could play. INI own 7.5ha of prime employment lands at Balloo South Bangor. Council is aware of a number of businesses, including NDDO, who have requested use of the land for employment, job creation and business growth within the Borough. Unfortunately the businesses either did not meet the INI criteria or could not comply with the timeline to purchase the lands. It should be noted that these lands have been undeveloped for some time, and Council is not aware of any FDI interest in them.

- INI to review and relax criteria for use and purchase of lands at Balloo – sell section of the site to NDDO and/or Council
- Equity Investor – establishment of a Joint Venture (with Council and/or potential developer) – potentially transferring INI lands into a LABV or LLP
- Joint Masterplan and potentially redevelopment of the site (infrastructure works, DBO, etc), working with Council
- Provision of Grants / subsidies to de-risk sites and enable private sector to develop the sites zoned for employment (45ha in Bangor and Newtownards)

The studies previously undertaken by Council also outline issues in relation to vacancies rates in our city/town centres, outlining potential solutions including public sector intervention. However as the focus of this questionnaire is industrial land we haven't gone into these issues or solutions within this submission.

6. Is your council in a position to commit resources (both budgets and staff), to the partnership and what is the likely quantum of either or both?

ANDBC can commit lands (for example the former NIE site at Balloo beside the INI land), budget (for example Council has a current budget of £65,000 to undertake the Masterplan and Business Case for the NIE site), and staff resources to a potential partnership. Council has internal expertise by way of regeneration officers and project managers, as well as specialist expertise including for example architects.

The Ards and North Down Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy: 'Blue, Green & Creatively Connected', previously approved by Council, has ambitious targets to create 7,500 new jobs within the Borough by 2030. Council's Corporate Plan has a key objective to grow the non-domestic rate base within the Borough. In this regard ANDBC is focused on supporting business growth within the Borough and willing to commit the required resources, (both budget and staff) to do so.

Council would also request reassurance from INI that it would be a proactive partner, particularly in relation to the development of the current INI lands at Balloo. Council previously in 2002, in partnership with NDDO and the College (now SERC), developed a masterplan and business case for the Bangor Business Village Balloo. This was to be developed on part of the site previously owned by IDB (now INI). The concept included a new college campus, extended NDDO, new business units focusing on key industry sectors and the Signal Business Centre. Unfortunately, due in part to the accessibility of using the IDB land, this vision wasn't realised, with only the Signal Business Centre being developed by the Council.

Unclassified

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ITEM 10.1**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	28 February 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	22 February 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Deputation Request - Geodiversity Charter
Attachments	Deputation Request Form

The attached deputation request had been received from the Geological Survey of Northern Ireland to present to either the Environment Committee, Place and Prosperity Committee or the Planning Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council considers the request for a deputation from the Geodiversity Charter and refers it to the relevant Committee.

Deputation Request Form

A 'deputation request' refers to a person or group of persons asking to appear in person before the Council or a Council Committee in order to address the Council or Committee (as the case may be) on a particular matter.

The procedure governing deputations is contained within section 12 of the Council's Standing Orders, a copy of which is set out below.

If you wish to make a deputation request, please complete this form and return it to Ards and North Down Borough Council via the following email address: member.services@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk, providing us with a contact email or postal address and contact telephone number when doing so (please do not include your personal contact details on this form – see privacy notice below).

Please note that it will be for the Council to decide whether to accede to your request and, if it does, to determine when and where the deputation will be heard. The Council will draw upon the information you provide in this form in order to reach its decision, therefore you are encouraged to clearly outline the topic of your request and the reason why you wish to raise the matter before the Council or a Committee.

Applicant Details

I/we apply to Ards and North Down Borough Council to make a deputation and should this application be successful, I/we agree to comply with section 12 of the Council's Standing Orders.

Name of person(s) making the deputation request:	Dr Kirstin Lemon
Date of request:	31 January 2024
If making the deputation on behalf of an organisation or a group of individuals, name of the organisation / individuals:	Geological Survey of Northern Ireland
Name of Committee (if known) to which you wish to make your deputation:	Relevant for: Environment Committee Place and Prosperity Committee Planning Committee

Please summarise below (continuing onto an additional page if required) the subject matter of your deputation request and the reason why you wish to raise the matter before the Council or a Committee.

The Geological Survey of Northern Ireland (GSNI) would like to request the opportunity to address the Council on Northern Ireland's Geodiversity Charter, the role of which is to raise awareness of geological diversity, including the range of economic, social and environmental benefits that it provides.

Nowhere is this more obvious than within the Ards and North Down Borough Council area with its vast array of geological diversity being the foundation of industrial heritage through the rich mining heritage at places like the old lead mines at Conlig, through tourism and recreation at places like Scrabo and Castle Espie, and as a foundation for the array of natural landscapes including Strangford Lough and Lecale AONB. A knowledge of geodiversity also helps to understand the triggers for and how to manage geological hazards such as coastal erosion which is an increasing issue.

The Charter is of relevance to local councils working in a number of areas including Tourism, Arts, Leisure and Culture, Local Economic Development and Planning & Building Control. It will also be of interest to those working on climate change adaptation and sustainability.

GSNI would like to deliver a short, bespoke presentation to highlight the relevance of NI's Geodiversity Charter to Ards and North Down Borough Council and bring to the attention of those present, some of the key relevant challenges and opportunities that geodiversity presents. The reasons for this presentation are:

1. Raise awareness of NI's Geodiversity Charter
2. Bring the opportunities and challenges that geodiversity provides to the attention of Ards and North Down Borough Council

Extract from Ards and North Down Borough Council's Standing Orders, Version 8, September 2021

12. Deputations

(1) Deputations, from any source, shall only be admitted to address the Council provided the Chief Executive has received seven working days notice of the intended deputation and a statement of its objective, and subject to the agreement of the Council.

(2) In the case of an emergency, deputations, from any source, shall only be admitted to address the Council provided the Chief Executive has received one working day's notice of the intended deputation and a statement of its objective, and subject to the agreement of the Mayor.

(3) The deputation shall be confined to the presentation of a statement, or copy of resolutions, and shall not make more than two short addresses by any two members of the deputation. The totality of the address shall not exceed 10 minutes followed by a maximum 15 minutes question and answer session.

(4) Deputations should not be repetitive and, where possible, issues of a similar or linked nature should be contained in one deputation. Where a deputation has made a presentation to the Council, the Council will decline to accept another deputation on the same issue from the same individual or group for a period of six months.

(5) No further discussion or proposals beyond questions shall take place at a Council or Committee meeting until after the deputation has withdrawn. Any subsequent proposal made should be limited to a request for officers to bring back a report on the matters raised by the deputation.

Privacy notice – how we will use information about you

Ards and North Down Borough Council is a Data Processor under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for the personal data it gathers when receiving and administering deputation requests.

You are providing your personal data to the Council whose lawful basis for processing it falls within the following three categories:

- a) **Consent** - you consent to the information being processed for the specific purpose of the Council considering your deputation request;
- b) **Public task** - the processing is necessary in order for the Council to consider your request in line with its Standing Orders which were established under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014; and
- c) **Legitimate interests** - the processing is necessary for your legitimate interests (or the legitimate interests of a third party) in order that Council may consider your deputation request.

The personal data you provide when making a deputation request may be shared internally within the Council with staff who are involved in decision making and administration in respect of Council and Committee meetings. This includes both the data contained within this form and any other data, such as an email address or other contact details, we may gather when you send the form to us.

The information you provide on this form only will be provided as a report to Council and potentially thereafter as a report to a Committee (depending on whether Council accedes to your request). Any such report will not usually be heard 'in confidence' and therefore the report will also be published on the Council website prior to the meeting. Members of the press and public may attend the Council (and Committee) meeting at which the report is discussed. An audio recording and written minute will be made of the meeting and both will be published on the website.

Your personal data will not be shared or disclosed to any other organisation without your consent, unless the law permits or places an obligation on the Council to do so.

Personal data is held and stored by the Council in a safe and secure manner and in compliance with Data Protection legislation and in line with the Council's Records Retention and Disposal Schedule.

If you have any queries regarding the processing of your personal data, please contact:

Data Protection Officer
Ards and North Down Borough Council
Town Hall, The Castle
Bangor
BT20 4BT
Email: dataprotection@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 013 3333

Unclassified

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ITEM 10.2**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	28 February 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	22 February 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Deputation Request - Sustainable NI
Attachments	Deputation Request Form

The attached deputation request had been received from Sustainable NI to present to the Council.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council considers the request for a deputation from Sustainable NI to the Council.

Deputation Request Form

A 'deputation request' refers to a person or group of persons asking to appear in person before the Council or a Council Committee in order to address the Council or Committee (as the case may be) on a particular matter.

The procedure governing deputations is contained within section 12 of the Council's Standing Orders, a copy of which is set out below.

If you wish to make a deputation request, please complete this form and return it to Ards and North Down Borough Council via the following email address: member.services@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk, providing us with a contact email or postal address and contact telephone number when doing so (please do not include your personal contact details on this form – see privacy notice below).

Please note that it will be for the Council to decide whether to accede to your request and, if it does, to determine when and where the deputation will be heard. The Council will draw upon the information you provide in this form in order to reach its decision, therefore you are encouraged to clearly outline the topic of your request and the reason why you wish to raise the matter before the Council or a Committee.

Applicant Details

I/we apply to Ards and North Down Borough Council to make a deputation and should this application be successful, I/we agree to comply with section 12 of the Council's Standing Orders.

Name of person(s) making the deputation request:	Dr Francesca Di Palo
Date of request:	06/02/2024
If making the deputation on behalf of an organisation or a group of individuals, name of the organisation / individuals:	Sustainable Northern Ireland
Name of Committee (if known) to which you wish to make your deputation:	Council

Please summarise below (continuing onto an additional page if required) the subject matter of your deputation request and the reason why you wish to raise the matter before the Council or a Committee.

With Northern Ireland's devolved government reconvened, Local Authorities will soon be asked to comply with public reporting duties and respond to actions for emission reduction as requirements from DAERA will be set in the next few months (Climate Change Act Section 42).

Sustainable Northern Ireland is the independent body advocating for local authorities' sustainability and climate in Northern Ireland.

Ards and North Down Borough Council have been supporting the SNI work for many years as a member of the Sustainable Development Forum and recipient of several services we provide, including consultation responses and 1-2-1 support for sustainability and climate matters.

We are now proposing a new range of services additional to the ones we already provide, to strengthen our relationship with local authorities and upskill staff members and guide Northern Irish Councils to become leaders in Net Zero advancement.

We wish to speak at the Council Committee to present the two new tiers of membership available for the financial year 2024-2025 confident that it will be beneficial for the committee to hear about the new potential support, added to the one already provided, from a local not-for-profit organisation and how together we can build a new workstream to lead on in Northern Ireland.

Extract from Ards and North Down Borough Council's Standing Orders, Version 9, December 2021

12. Deputations

(1) Deputations, from any source, shall only be admitted to address the Council provided the Chief Executive has received seven working days notice of the intended deputation and a statement of its objective, and subject to the agreement of the Council.

(2) In the case of an emergency, deputations, from any source, shall only be admitted to address the Council provided the Chief Executive has received one working day's notice of the intended deputation and a statement of its objective, and subject to the agreement of the Mayor.

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(4) Deputations should not be repetitive and, where possible, issues of a similar or linked nature should be contained in one deputation. Where a deputation has made a presentation to the Council, the Council will decline to accept another deputation on the same issue from the same individual or group for a period of six months.

(5) No further discussion or proposals beyond questions shall take place at a Council or Committee meeting until after the deputation has withdrawn. Any subsequent proposal made should be limited to a request for officers to bring back a report on the matters raised by the deputation.

Privacy notice – how we will use information about you

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You are providing your personal data to the Council whose lawful basis for processing it falls within the following three categories:

- a) **Consent** - you consent to the information being processed for the specific purpose of the Council considering your deputation request;
- b) **Public task** - the processing is necessary in order for the Council to consider your request in line with its Standing Orders which were established under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014; and
- c) **Legitimate interests** - the processing is necessary for your legitimate interests (or the legitimate interests of a third party) in order that Council may consider your deputation request.

The personal data you provide when making a deputation request may be shared internally within the Council with staff who are involved in decision making and administration in respect of Council and Committee meetings. This includes both the data contained within this form and any other data, such as an email address or other contact details, we may gather when you send the form to us.

The information you provide on this form only will be provided as a report to Council and potentially thereafter as a report to a Committee (depending on whether Council accedes to your request). Any such report will not usually be heard 'in confidence' and therefore the report will also be published on the Council website prior to the meeting. Members of the press and public may attend the Council (and Committee) meeting at which the report is discussed. An audio recording and written minute will be made of the meeting and both will be published on the website.

Your personal data will not be shared or disclosed to any other organisation without your consent, unless the law permits or places an obligation on the Council to do so.

Personal data is held and stored by the Council in a safe and secure manner and in compliance with Data Protection legislation and in line with the Council's Records Retention and Disposal Schedule.

If you have any queries regarding the processing of your personal data, please contact:

Data Protection Officer
Ards and North Down Borough Council
Town Hall, The Castle
Bangor
BT20 4BT
Email: dataprotection@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 013 3333

Unclassified

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ITEM 10.3**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	28 February 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	22 February 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Deputation Request - Newtownards Masonic Centre and Community Hub - Hall Management Committee
Attachments	Deputation Request Form

The attached deputation request had been received from Newtownards Masonic Centre and Community Hub – Hall Management Committee to present to the Place and Prosperity Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council considers the request for a deputation from Newtownards Masonic Centre and Community Hub – Hall Management Centre and refers it to the Place and Prosperity Committee.



Deputation Request Form

A 'deputation request' refers to a person or group of persons asking to appear in person before the Council or a Council Committee in order to address the Council or Committee (as the case may be) on a particular matter.

The procedure governing deputations is contained within section 12 of the Council's Standing Orders, a copy of which is set out below.

If you wish to make a deputation request, please complete this form and return it to Ards and North Down Borough Council via the following email address: member.services@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk, providing us with a contact email or postal address and contact telephone number when doing so (please do not include your personal contact details on this form – see privacy notice below).

Please note that it will be for the Council to decide whether to accede to your request and, if it does, to determine when and where the deputation will be heard. The Council will draw upon the information you provide in this form in order to reach its decision, therefore you are encouraged to clearly outline the topic of your request and the reason why you wish to raise the matter before the Council or a Committee.

Applicant Details

I/we apply to Ards and North Down Borough Council to make a deputation and should this application be successful, I/we agree to comply with section 12 of the Council's Standing Orders.

Name of person(s) making the deputation request:	Hugh McKeag Alastair Wilson
Date of request:	6 th February 2024
If making the deputation on behalf of an organisation or a group of individuals, name of the organisation / individuals:	Newtownards Masonic Centre & Community Hub - Hall Management Committee
Name of Committee (if known) to which you wish to make your deputation:	Place & Prosperity Committee

Please summarise below (continuing onto an additional page if required) the subject matter of your deputation request and the reason why you wish to raise the matter before the Council or a Committee.

Newtownards Masonic Center and Community Hub is located in a prominent location in Regent Street, Newtownards. The Hall was originally built in 1812 by the brethren of Friendship Masonic Lodge No.447, who were constituted in Newtownards in 1766. Friendship Lodge continues to meet in the hall today together with 15 other Masonic Lodges / Units. Over 200 freemasons from the council borough meet regularly in the Hall.

The Hall also provides a home to a Sala Dancing Class, a Slimming Club and the Newtownards Sequence & Ballroom Dancing Club. The Ards District Masonic Charity Fund, (a registered charity) is based in the hall. The function room of the hall is also widely used for many masonic and non-masonic charitable and community events. Members of the general public and local community are always welcome and regularly use our facilities.

The original building is listed as a category B1 on the Dept. of Communities Historic Building Database and is regarded as a unique example of a Regency Period building still in regular use within the town.

The Hall Committee have a vision to develop our site into a modern and accessible Masonic Centre and Community Hub that can provide state of art facilities to all of our current users and to attract additional community groups to use the facilities. We have plans to establish a Heat & Eat Club for pensioners, facilitate local youth dance groups for practice and competition preparation, provide a performance space for local musicians and music festivals, run wellness clinics and provide a space for craft and educational classes.

A major phased redevelopment program has been developed in conjunction with a registered Conservation Architect and a Heritage Consultant. This plan will include a significant Enabling Work Phase that is focused on the original listed building. Unfortunately, due to weather damage, the front facade of the building requires significant replacing / restoration (in line with Heritage Services and Planning regulations). The Enabling Phase is estimated to cost £240,000.

An application for funding is being prepared for the National Lottery Heritage Fund NI (NLHF).

The further funding of Phase 2 of the development has an estimated cost of £2M. The NLHF are prepared to consider phased funding to deliver the entire project or a significant percentage of the total costs.

A feasibility study has been completed by our architect that will deliver modern accessible facilities that are in keeping with the historical heritage of our Hall and the built heritage of the area.

Our committee would welcome the opportunity to present our plans to the Council, so we can share our vision to provide facilities that can serve the community in the center of the town.

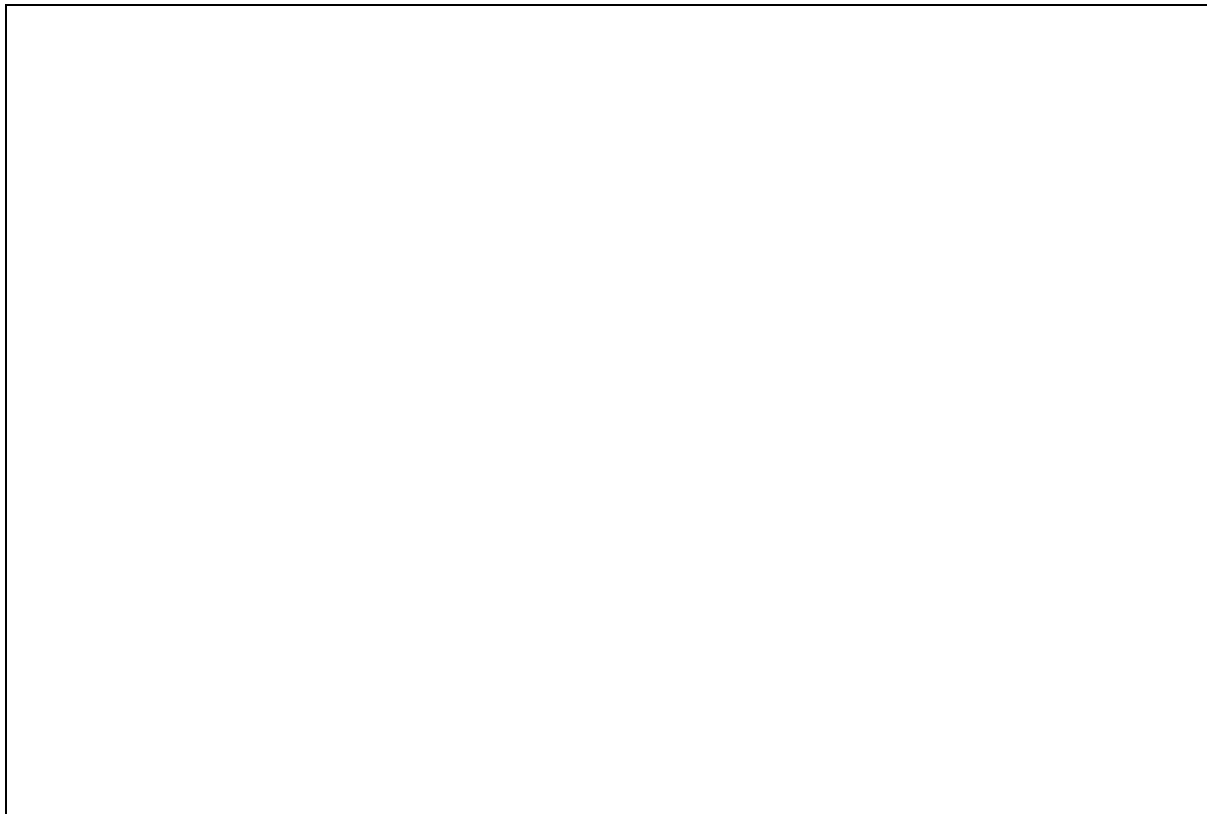
We would welcome the opportunity to partner with the council to ensure that the community need is understood and integrated into our plans.

We seek a letter of support from the council that can be included in our application to the NLHF.

The support of the Council will be critical to ensure that the NLHF understand and appreciate the community need for this project as well as the importance of protecting this important part of our town's heritage.

This project will allow our volunteers to work closely with the local community to plan and prepare the redevelopment of our facilities in an efficient manner so that we continue to protect not only the rich history of this listed building, but also ensure that we improve an important community hub and help it reach its potential. We want to ensure that we can offer a warm, welcoming, and inclusive shared space that can cater for a range of activities, projects and programmes in our community. We are ideally situated (just yards from the bus station and main taxi rank) to allow for ease of access for all people of all ages abilities and backgrounds. Our capital redevelopment plan will enable us to promote the hub as a venue for all in our community.

Newtownards Masonic Hall has played an important role in the lives of many of our town's most eminent citizens, including Lt Col. Blair Mayne and his family, many past Mayor's, Councilors, poets, artists as well as the thousands of decent, community minded residents of the borough. We owe it to these individuals as well as our future generations to deliver this project for Newtownards and the local community.



Extract from Ards and North Down Borough Council's Standing Orders, Version 8, September 2021

12. Deputations

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(2) In the case of an emergency, deputations, from any source, shall only be admitted to address the Council provided the Chief Executive has received one working day's notice of the intended deputation and a statement of its objective, and subject to the agreement of the Mayor.

(3) The deputation shall be confined to the presentation of a statement, or copy of resolutions, and shall not make more than two short addresses by any two members of the deputation. The totality of the address shall not exceed 10 minutes followed by a maximum 15 minutes question and answer session.

(4) Deputations should not be repetitive and, where possible, issues of a similar or linked nature should be contained in one deputation. Where a deputation has made a presentation to the Council, the Council will decline to accept another deputation on the same issue from the same individual or group for a period of six months.

(5) No further discussion or proposals beyond questions shall take place at a Council or Committee meeting until after the deputation has withdrawn. Any subsequent proposal made should be limited to a request for officers to bring back a report on the matters raised by the deputation.

Privacy notice – how we will use information about you

Ards and North Down Borough Council is a Data Processor under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) for the personal data it gathers when receiving and administering deputation requests.

You are providing your personal data to the Council whose lawful basis for processing it falls within the following three categories:

- a) **Consent** - you consent to the information being processed for the specific purpose of the Council considering your deputation request;
- b) **Public task** - the processing is necessary in order for the Council to consider your request in line with its Standing Orders which were established under the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014; and
- c) **Legitimate interests** - the processing is necessary for your legitimate interests (or the legitimate interests of a third party) in order that Council may consider your deputation request.

The personal data you provide when making a deputation request may be shared internally within the Council with staff who are involved in decision making and administration in respect of Council and Committee meetings. This includes both the data contained within this form and any other data, such as an email address or other contact details, we may gather when you send the form to us.

The information you provide on this form only will be provided as a report to Council and potentially thereafter as a report to a Committee (depending on whether Council accedes to your request). Any such report will not usually be heard 'in confidence' and therefore the report will also be published on the Council website prior to the meeting. Members of the press and public may attend the Council (and Committee) meeting at which the report is discussed. An audio recording and written minute will be made of the meeting and both will be published on the website.

Your personal data will not be shared or disclosed to any other organisation without your consent, unless the law permits or places an obligation on the Council to do so.

Personal data is held and stored by the Council in a safe and secure manner and in compliance with Data Protection legislation and in line with the Council's Records Retention and Disposal Schedule.

If you have any queries regarding the processing of your personal data, please contact:

Data Protection Officer
Ards and North Down Borough Council
Town Hall, The Castle
Bangor
BT20 4BT
Email: dataprotection@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk
Tel: 0300 013 3333



Our Ref: TJ/C49/24

16 February 2024

Mr Stephen Reid
Chief Executive
Ards and North Down Borough Council

stephen.reid@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Dear Mr Reid

At a Meeting of Derry City and Strabane District Council held on 31 January 2024, the following Motion was passed:

That this Council notes with deep concern that at least 26,900 civilians have been killed as a result of the ongoing bombardment and siege of Gaza of which at least 10,000 are children Council notes that more than 8000 Palestinians are missing. Council Further notes there is an escalating death toll in the West Bank, with 370 people killed of which 99 are children.

Council is alarmed that almost 70 percent of the buildings in Gaza, including hospitals and schools, have been destroyed or severely damaged. The civilian population is facing a dire humanitarian crisis, with critical shortages of food, water, and medical supplies.

Council is particularly concerned that civilians are being confined to increasingly smaller areas without access to shelter or aid. This dire situation is leading to an escalation in civilian deaths due to bombing, shootings, starvation, disease, and lack of medical treatment.

Council resolves to:

1. Write to the British Prime Minister and Home Secretary, urging them to immediately implement a Palestinian Visa Scheme similar to the Ukraine Visa Scheme,

Derry

C/o Council Offices
98 Strand Road
Derry
BT48 7NN

Strabane

C/o Council Offices
47 Derry Road
Strabane
BT82 8DY

John Kelpie MEng., CEng., MStructE., MIEI

Chief Executive
Derry City and Strabane District Council

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@dcsdcouncil

- 2. Write to an Taoiseach asking that a request is put to the EU commission proposing a temporary protection directive, for those Palestinians seeking sanctuary, as was enacted in March 2022 in response to the Ukraine war.**
- 3. Council will also write to the leaders of all political parties across Ireland urging them to support this call.**
- 4. Council will seek collaboration from ALL NI councils and relevant Northern Ireland government departments, support this call pledging to facilitate and support the resettlement of Palestinian families in Ireland**

With this in mind, we as a council affirm our support to UN General Assembly resolution 194, article 11, which enshrines the Palestinian Peoples' Right of Return.

I would appreciate your consideration in this important matter and would be grateful for a response at your earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely



John Kelpie
Chief Executive

From: OCB Enquiries Mailbox <OCB.enquiries@justice-ni.gov.uk>

Sent: Thursday, February 15, 2024 4:54 PM

Subject: POCA 2002 - Code of Practice consultation

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.

Good afternoon

Please find below Press Release that issued today highlighting that the Department is consulting on the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) draft Codes of Practice for NI.

A link to Citizen Space is also provided for your convenience. [Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 - Draft Codes of Practice \(Northern Ireland\) - NI Direct - Citizen Space](#)

The closing date for the consultation is **Wednesday 10th April**.

Thank you

Marion
Organised Crime Branch
DOJ

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

15 February 2024

Consultation on criminal assets recovery Codes of Practice launched

Department of Justice has launched a public consultation to seek views on recovery of criminal assets Codes of Practice.

Updates to two existing codes of practice and one new code of practice are required to take account of new measures under the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023.

The Codes of Practice refer to search, seizure and detention of property; investigations; and recovery of cryptoassets search powers.

- **Search, seizure and detention of property:** This revised code provides guidance about exercising the powers to search and seize and detain property in order for it to be sold to meet the value of a confiscation order in certain circumstances.
- **Investigations:** This revised code provides guidance on the exercise of the investigation powers in Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA). It includes extended powers relating to civil recovery and confiscation investigations and transfer of jurisdiction from the High Court to the Crown Court in detained cash investigations.
- **Recovery of cryptoassets: search powers:** This new code provides guidance on the exercise of powers to search for cryptoassets or cryptoasset-related items.

The Department of Justice has a statutory duty to issue new and revised Codes of Practice where asset recovery powers under Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) 2002 change.

The consultation is about the guidance provided in the Codes of Practice on the exercise of the powers, rather than the actual powers, which are already passed in law.

Further information on the consultation, including how to respond is available on the Department's website publication page at [Consultation on codes of practice issued under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 | Department of Justice \(justice-ni.gov.uk\)](#) or on Citizenspace at [Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 - Draft Codes of Practice \(Northern Ireland\) - NI Direct - Citizen Space](#)

The eight week consultation closes on Wednesday 10 April 2024.

Notes to editors:

- 1.The [Proceeds of Crime Act 2002](#) and the [Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023](#) are available online.
- 2.Cryptoasset means a cryptographically secured digital representation of value or contractual rights that uses a form of distributed ledger technology and can be transferred, stored or traded electronically.
- 3.A cryptoasset-related item means an item of property that is, or that contains or gives access to information that is likely to assist in the seizure of cryptoassets that are recoverable property or intended for use in unlawful conduct.
- 4.Media enquiries should be directed to the Department of Justice press office at press.office@justice-ni.gov.uk.
- 5.The Executive Information Service operates an out of hour's service for media enquiries only between 1800hrs and 0800hrs Monday to Friday and at weekends and public holidays. The duty press officer can be contacted out of hours on 028 9037 8110.
- 6.Follow us on [Twitter](#)

Unclassified

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ITEM 13**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	28 February 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	15 February 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Nomination to Community Advice Ards and North Down (CAAND)
Attachments	

Places on outside bodies are filled through nomination at the Council's Annual Meeting and are thus held by individual Members rather than Parties. When a position becomes vacant, it reverts back to Council to nominate a Member to fill the place rather than Party Nominating Officers.

Following the resignation of Councillor Hollywood from Community Advice Ards and North Down (CAAND), a place has now become available. The Council is represented by three Members, the other Members being Councillor Moore and Councillor McKee.

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

Not Applicable

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council nominate a Member to Community Advice Ards and North Down (CAAND).

Unclassified

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ITEM 16**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	28 February 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	22 February 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Notice of Motion Status Report
Attachments	Notice of Motion Status Report

Please find attached a Status Report in respect of Notices of Motion.

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

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council notes the report.

NOM REF	DATE RECEIVED	NOTICE	SUBMITTED BY	COUNCIL MEETING DATE	COMMITTEE REFERRED TO	OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE WHERE NOM DEBATED	MONTH IT WILL BE REPORTED BACK TO COMMITTEE	OTHER ACTION TO BE TAKEN
-	31/05/15	Rory McIlroy recognition	Councillor Muir	Jun-15	Corporate Services Committee – October 2015	Agreed	May-24	Further Report to follow in May 2024.
	21/01/19	Shelter at slipway in Donaghadee	Councillor Brooks & Cllr Smith	Jan-19	Environment Committee	Agreed	TBC	Officers awaiting feedback from potential funder
-	25/09/19	Report on feasibility of holding annual remembrance service for those lost to suicide	Councillor Martin	Oct-19	Corporate Services – November 2019	Agreed	TBC	Further Report to follow, awaiting proposer feedback .
	20/10/20	“I would like to task officers to produce a report to consider what could be a more environmentally friendly and benefit the wellbeing of the community for the use of the disused putting green on the Commons and play park at Hunts park in Donaghadee . Following the success of the Dog park in Bangor and the demand for a Dementia garden, both should be considered as options in the report. The process should involve consultation with the local community.”	Councillor Brooks	Oct-20	Community & Wellbeing Committee – December 2020	Agreed	TBC	Report to follow after consideration of Masterplan and application of play strategy with local consultation when it takes place in Donaghadee
	10/05/21	That officers are tasked to bring back a Report on how the Council might approach a Climate Change Action Plan and perhaps including - but not limited to - a review of all Council long-term investment, a Borough-wide engagement via an Innovation Lab, a Conference of Ideas, and values-based recommendations for next steps.	Councillors Walker & Egan	Jun-21	Environment Committee – October 2021 (deferred from September Committee)	Agreed	TBC	Various strands of work taking place across different departments on development of Council Climate Action Plan - led within Corporate Services Directorate.

	13.04.22	That this Council recognises the environmental damage caused by modern day packaging, much of which is disposed of in landfill or as litter. This Council agrees that producers, not ratepayers, should be responsible for the net costs of managing packaging waste and that litter payments must be included in any Extended Producer Responsibility scheme. This Council tasks Officers with bringing back a report detailing what initiatives Council have undertaken to encourage businesses within the Borough to review, change and/or reduce the packaging they use. The report should include analysis of achievements and challenges encountered to date and outline further initiatives that could be undertaken to encourage businesses to change or reduce the packaging they use.	Councillors McRandal and Douglas	Apr-22	Environment Committee – June 2022	Agreed	Reported to January 2024 Environment Committee - agreed to bring back another report on further actions - to be ratified by January 2024 Council	Agreed amendment: We propose the Officers bring back a further report outlining future initiatives that could be undertaken to encourage businesses to change or reduce the packaging they use, instead of waiting for the 2024-2028 Corporate Plan.
	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	May- 22	Community and Wellbeing June 2022 - Moved to Place & Prosperity Committee	Agreed	Reported to November 2023 P&P, agreed and ratified by Council	NoM transferred to P&P Committee.
	19.05.2022	Business case for redesign of the parallel sports pitches and facilities at Park Way, Comber	Councillors Cummings and Johnson	Jun-22	Community and Wellbeing Committee – September 2022 – deferred to October 2022		TBC	Council agreed Comber 3G pitch is ranked 21st in project prioritisation. Stakeholder engagement to commence at the appropriate time
NOM164	20.06.2022	Review of health and safety process re community groups	Councillors MacArthur, Brooks, T Smith and Kennedy	Jun-22	Corporate Services Committee - deferred to October 2022	Agreed	Mar-24	Report will be sent to March 2024 committee.
NOM165	20.06.2022	Report exploring the possibility of introducing a policy that shows commitment to supporting the wellbeing of our workforce by ensuring appropriate support is available to anyone undergoing IVF.	Councillor Greer and Councillor McKee	Jun-22	Corporate Services Committee – deferred to October 2022	Agreed	TBC	Further Report to follow during 2024.

	21.06.2022	Engagement with relevant community stakeholders to ascertain community need and desires in respect of the Queen's Leisure Complex	Councillors Kendall, McRandal and McClean	Jun-22	Community and Wellbeing Committee – September 2022 – deferred to October 2022		April 2024 C&W Committee	Engagement Ongoing
NOM181	5.07.2022	That this Council changes the name of Queen's Parade to Queen's Platinum Jubilee Parade in honour and recognition of the 70th anniversary of the Queen's accession to the throne. *** Amendment Received from Councillor Cathcart - That this Council, in recognition of Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee and her conferment of City Status upon Bangor, agrees to name an appropriate place or building within Bangor in her honour and that future Council Bangor entrance signs make reference to Bangor being a Platinum Jubilee City.	Alderman Irvine & Keery	Jul-22	Environment Committee - September 2022	Amended and agreed	TBC	Officers considering report to be brought back to future Committee once advice from the Cabinet Office is received. This NOM went to
NOM167	24.08.2022	That this council withdraws all funding to any sporting organisations with any political objectives or named references to terrorism in their constitution, club names, stadiums or competitions, and tasks officers to bring back a report outlining the specific relevant council policy.	Cllrs Cooper, T Smith and Councillor Irvine	Aug-22	Corporate Committee – deferred to October 2022 NoM transferred to C&W Committee	Amended and agreed	TBC	NoM Transferred to C&W Committee. Officers considering report to be brought to future Committee
	22.08.22	Street Clutter Audit for the Borough	Councillor Dunlop and Councillor Douglas	Sep-22	Environment Committee – October 2022	Agreed	Reported to October 2022 EC Committee	Report to be brought back to a future meeting
	21.09.22	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.	Alderman McIlveen and Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	Sep-22	Environment Committee 2022	Agreed	Reported to October 2022 ENV Committee	Signage has been erected in Conway Square. Further report to be prepared for Environment Committee setting out
	16.11.22	That Council officers open discussions with Historic Environment Division regarding the return of the 13th century 'Movilla Stones' to the Borough and the provision of a suitable site for these to be located. Officers are also tasked with promoting these extremely important archaeological artefacts in the local community and local schools when the stones have been returned.	Alderman McIlveen & Councillor Cummings	Nov-22	Community & Wellbeing - December 2022	Agreed	March 2023 and June 2023 C&W Committee	Officers to discuss further with HED and report to future C&W Committee when final arrangements for return of the stones is agreed.

NOM 172	09.12.22	That this Council adopts the White Ribbon Pledge to ' <i>Never commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women and girls</i> ', agrees to sign the Pledge, and tasks Officers to bring back a report outlining how we can amalgamate existing relevant policies, undertake the Listen, Learn, Lead programme within the Council, and identify effective routes to encourage other agencies and organisations in our Borough to engage with the White Ribbon Project.	Councillors Douglas & Walker	Dec-22	Corporate Services Committee – January 2023 Community and Wellbeing Committee - TBC	Agreed	January 2024 C&W Committee	Womens Night Charter reported to January C&W Committee to be ratified at Council. Action plan being developed by PCSP and brought back to C&W Committee
	13.12.22	That this Council expresses concern with the number of residential and commercial bins left on public footways in the Borough long after the bin collection date. Bins left on public footways are not only unsightly, they can lead to hygiene and contamination issues, as well as safety concerns, forcing pedestrians onto the road due to the blocking of a footway. This Council notes its own lack of enforcement powers to tackle this issue and expresses concern at the Department for Infrastructure's reluctance to use its own enforcement powers. Accordingly, this Council agrees to write to the Department for Infrastructure asking the Department to engage with Councils with the aim of creating appropriate enforcement powers to tackle this issue. Council Officers, will in the meantime, bring back a report to the appropriate committee detailing action that the Council can take under current powers to try address the issue of bins left on public footways.	Councillors Cathcart and MacArthur	Dec-22	Environment Committee – January 2023	Agreed	TBC	Alternative proposal agreed at June 2023 Committee. Update report to be brought to a future meeting (date to be confirmed) Letters sent to DfI and PSNI 12/10/23 - Response rec'd from PSNI 13.11.23, Response rec'd from DfI 02.11.23 Letter sent to DAERA 12.12.23 and response rec'd 14.12.23
	08.12.22	This Council acknowledges the environmental and health benefits associated with the recent increase in cycling and declares Ards & North Down a cycling friendly borough. The Council also recognises that people who cycle are among the most vulnerable road users, and tasks officers with producing a report detailing ways in which we can help improve safety. The report should include possible sources of funding, potential partnerships, and ways in which we can promote good relations between users of different forms of transport	Alderman Wilson & Councillor Douglas (Postponed from Dec Council to Jan Council)	Jan-23	Community and Wellbeing Committee – February 2023		June 2023 C&W Committee	Further report to future C&WC including a report recommendation on declaration.

08.01.2023	That this Council writes to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Infrastructure expressing concern that the provision of a footpath at Shore Road Ballyhalbert is currently not considered a priority by the Department following the completion of a feasibility study which demonstrated need. That the Council highlights the road safety concerns raised by residents for pedestrians using the Shore Road from the village to the residential developments including Park Homes and St Andrew's. That Council requests that the Department for Infrastructure makes the installation of a footpath a priority and commits to deliver the scheme as a matter of urgency.	Councillors Adair & Edmund	Jan-23	Place & Prosperity – February 2023	Agreed and ratified at Council 5.7.23	TBC - still awaiting response from DfI Perm Sec	Perm Sec's of DfI ltr of 10.8.23 reported to Sept P&P where it was agreed that that Council writes to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Infrastructure expressing disappointment at the lack of
18.01.2023	The prolonged cold weather spells just before Christmas and last week resulted in icy, slippery, and dangerous footpaths and car parks in the Borough's City and town centres. It is not acceptable that in such circumstances the Council does not have a plan or the resources or facilities to grit these areas to enable residents to walk safely to and from the main shopping areas or fall when they step out of their cars onto ice. It is proposed that officers bring back a report with costs to outline what steps can be taken to ensure that Council car parks and footpaths in the City and town centres are gritted when the weather is forecast to have heavy snowfall or prolonged freezing weather conditions.	Councillors Morgan and McRandal	Jan-23	Environment Committee – February 2023	Agreed	01/10/2023 and ratified at October 2023 Council	Agreed that officers bring back a report detailing the legal advice that backs up this risk assessment and that this report is brought back to the Committee and a review is undertaken of other NI Council policies on Council owned car parks during freezing weather conditions. This should include analysis of how
18.01.2023	That Council, subject to consultation with addressees on the road, considers changing the name of that stretch of the A21 in Newtownards which runs from Portaferry Road to the junction with upper Greenwell Street, Newtownards currently named New Road to Viscount Castlereagh Avenue as a mark of the life and legacy of Robert Stewart, 2 nd Marquess of Londonderry, who was known by the courtesy title of Viscount Castlereagh during most of his life, in the 200 th year of his passing.	Alderman McIlveen and Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	Feb-23	Environment Committee March 2023	Agreed	TBC	Report to be brought to future meeting
08.02.2023	That this Council tasks officers to begin discussions with the Education Authority with regards to the Future of Bloomfield playing fields, Bangor. This is to include the lease and the exploring of the possibility of bringing the facility up to intermediate level for football. A report to be brought back to Council following said discussions.	Alderman Irvine and Alderman Keery	Feb-23	Community and Wellbeing Committee March 2023	Agreed	TBC	Officers considering report to be brought back to future Committee

NOM180	14.02.2023	This Council rename the square at Portavogie War Memorial Queen Elizabeth Square in memory of our late Sovereign Queen Elizabeth II.	Councillor Adair and Councillor Edmund	Feb-23	Corporate Services March 2023		TBC	Officers considering next steps for further report to be brought back once advice from Cabinet Office is
TBC	20.3.2023	That this Council recognises the issues and concerns detailed in the letter sent to the Chief Executive by The Kircubbin Harbour Action Group and agrees to write to the Permanent Secretaries of the Departments of Infrastructure and Communities, asking them to provide details of the responsibility they have in ensuring the public safety of the harbour and listing any details of dealings their departments have had with the owner.	Councillors Thompson & Adair	Mar-23	Place and Prosperity Committee June 2023	Agreed and ratified at Council 5.7.23. Discussed at P&P 7.12.23 - Amended and agreed that Council defer a decision on the Kircubbin Harbour report to February 2024	Feb 2024 P&P	CEx issued ltrs to Perm Secretaries of DfI and DfC 2.8.23 - Kircubbin HAG to consider response. P&P 7.12.24
575	31.07.2023	That this council notes that the number of households with homelessness status on the social housing waiting list across NI has increased from 12,431 to 26,310 households between 31 March 2013 and 31 March 2023, an increase of 111.7%; notes the enormous strain the homelessness system is under with the number of households in temporary accommodation at unprecedented levels; agrees that this council has a role to play in preventing homelessness in this borough alongside other organisations and bodies in the Public, Statutory and Voluntary sectors; calls on this Council to assess how it contributes to homelessness prevention through carrying out an audit of its services; and requests that Officers bring back a report detailing the homelessness prevention work currently supported as well as how the Council's community planning	Councillors Creighton and Moore	Council - August 2023	Community & Wellbeing Committee- September 2023	Agreed - ratified at September Council	September 2024 C&W Committee	Officers considering report to be brought back to September 2024 C&W Committee
576	01.08.2023	That this Council recognises the significant public concern created by the feud between rival organised crime groups within Ards and North Down. This feud which began in March 2023 has led to violence, criminal damage, and communities living in fear. We ask that Council contact representatives of the Talking Paramilitarism Programme including The Executive Office and Department of Justice seeking their shared engagement with Council and elected representatives focusing solutions to address this issue, and to reduce the prospect of a similar occurrence in the future. Further to this we ask the Communities in Transition Programme to broaden its remit across the Borough to help create a culture of lawfulness, and	Councillors Smart & P Smith	Council - August 2023	Heard at Council August & Agreed			
577	02.08.2023	This Council condemns without reservation the threats made to District Judge Mark Hamill and the attack on Newtownards Courthouse as an attack on the rule of law which is the basis of a democratic and free society. Furthermore, this Council affirms its full support for the PSNI in investigating and bringing to justice those who have committed criminal acts within this Borough and encourages everyone to assist the legitimate authorities in this endeavour	Aldermen McIlveen & Armstrong Cotter, Councillor Kennedy	Council - August 2023	Heard at Council August & Agreed			

		That Council task officers to bring back a report on the costing to install signage identifying the townlands of Ballyblack and Kirkistown and that officers are tasked to bring forward proposals to incorporate townland signage across our Borough.	Alderman Adair, Councillors Edmund & Kerr	Council - August 2023	Environment Committee - September 2023	Agreed - ratified by September Council	To be confirmed	
581	18.09.2023	That Council notes the increasing complaints regarding the poor condition and appearance of our cemeteries across the Borough and tasks officers to bring back a report on options to improve the maintenance of our cemeteries which are places of special significance to those who have lost loved ones.	Alderman Adair, Councillor Douglas and Alderman McIlveen	27-Sep-23	Community and Wellbeing Committee	Agreed subject to ratification at October Council	December 2023 C&W Committee. June 2024 C&W Committee	December 2023 C&W Committee Report ratified at December 2023 Council. Officers to consider tangible options and report to June 2024 C&W Committee
NOM 185	31.08.2023	Education should be accessible to all who seek it and embedding a culture of lifelong learning in our society is essential to enabling people to realise their potential. Part-time flexible learning is crucial to meeting the skills needed to build a modern, inclusive and green economy. Part-time students are a unique demographic, they are more likely to have disabilities, come from disadvantaged backgrounds, have caring responsibilities, such as children or elderly relatives, and in general, be part of a 'hard to reach' group who missed out on full-time study. Lifelong learning, including non-formal education, addresses social issues, strengthens communities and builds civic engagement. It is the most effective tool for meeting social policy objectives and creating positive social change. Recognises that lifelong learning must become a meaningful and developed policy area with tangible actions and outcomes, underpinned by the wealth of best practice and innovation from across the UK and Ireland. This Council therefore resolves to: - To work with the Lifelong Learning Alliance to develop a Lifelong Learning campaign, to inform and raise public awareness of how lifelong learning transforms lives and communities. Engage with MLAs and MPs to prioritise funding for formal and informal part-time education when the Executive is formed. Encourage MLAs to form and All-Party Group on Lifelong Learning to support and evidence and best-practice informed approach to policy making, in collaboration with adult education bodies to form a voice for Lifelong Learning in the Assembly when an Executive is formed.	Councillor Moore and Councillor Creighton	Sep-23	Corporate Services- October 2023	Agreed to recommend	Feb-24	Letters sent to MLA's & MP's for Strangford and NDown and other Councils. NOM to be closed off.

NOM 186	06.09.2023	That this Council, recognising its commitment as a responsible employer, and that staff are paid the current Living Wage, tasks officers to explore becoming 'Living Wage' accredited with the UK Living Wage Foundation, as well as ensuring any regularly contracted employees and workers, including those who are employed externally to deliver Council services, are paid the living wage hourly rate. It also explores becoming Living Hours and Living Pensions accredited too.	Councillor Woods and Councillor McKee	Sep-23	Corporate Services- October 2023	Agreed to recommend	TBC	Accreditation to be sought by HR.
		That Council recognise the value of our Beaches and coastal environment to our residents and tourists alike note the new DEARA regulations for the cleaning and maintenance of our beaches and task officers to bring forward a report on cleaning and maintaining our beaches on a proactive basis in line with the new DEARA regulations to ensure our beaches continue to be a clean, safe, attractive and well-managed coastal environments.	Alderman Adair, Councillor Edmund and Councillor Kerr	Oct-23	Environment Committee - November 2023 - Transferred to Community & Wellbeing Committee	Agreed subject to ratification at November Council	January 2024 C&W Committee	Report to January 2024 C&WC. Further report requested subject to ratification at January 2024 Council.
		That this council asks officers to include the repainting of the traditionally styled bus shelter (owned by Council), located in Main Street, Greyabbey in the 2024/25 maintenance budget. Furthermore Council seeks an officer's report on the feasibility of Council painting the decorative Greyabbey lamp posts (in the ownership of DFI). This is a feature of the historic village, and we understand the current shabby condition impacts not only residents of the village, but the wider tourism and regeneration potential of this scenic conservation area.	Councillor Wray and Alderman Smith	Oct-23	Environment Committee - November 2023	Agreed - ratified at November Council		Amendment Agreed. That Council welcomes the repainting of the traditionally styled bus shelter located on Main Street, Greyabbey and tasks officers to ensure it is maintained to a high standard going forward. Furthermore, Council writes to the Department of Infrastructure
NOM 187	16.10.23	That this Council, further to recent positive discussions with landowners, agrees to reexamine the April 2014 decision of North Down Borough Council to accept a gift of open space at Ambleside, Bangor, which was never completed and tasks Council Officers to bring back a report looking at (i) acquiring the land and (ii) options around future uses for the land.	Councillor Cathcart and Councillor Martin	Oct-23	Corporate Services November 2023	Agreed	Feb-24	Report to February 2024 committee .

NOM 592	27.10.23	This Council recognises the importance of Bangor Sportsplex for athletics, football and community leisure facilities in the Borough and notes with concern the deteriorating conditions of the site rendering several pitches unusable, and therefore tasks council officers with producing a report regarding the future of Bangor Sportsplex, including addressing maintenance and structural issues and exploring options for the long term provision of track and field athletics facilities in the Borough.	Councillor Creighton and Councillor Irwin	29.11.23	C&W December	Agreed	TBC	Officers considering report to be brought back to future C&W Committee
NOM 188	16.11.23	That this Council amends its flag policy to include the flying of the Union Flag at every war memorial all year round.	Councillor S Irvine, Councillor W Irvine and Alderman Brooks	29.11.23	Corporate December	Agreed		Decision has been called-in
NOM 595	16.11.23	This Council recognises the importance of Bangor's early Christian heritage in the story of our city, and its role in local tourism strategies. This Council requests that officers bring back a report which evaluates how the physical link between two main sites, Bangor Abbey and the North Down Museum, could be improved, to include the renovation and potential remodelling of Bell's Walk, with consideration for improved wayfinding and lighting. The motion also requests that officers consider how Bangor Castle Gardens and The Walled Garden could be better incorporated into the walking route, and how the overall attraction could be packaged to create a more complete tourism and placemaking experience.	Councillor McCracken and Councillor Blaney	29.11.23	C&W December	Agreed	TBC	Officers considering report to be brought back to future C&W Committee
596	20.11.23	Ulster Scots - tasking Officers to develop a budget to ensure and encourage participation in future Ulster Scots Language weeks; develop and action plan, with advice from the Ulster-Scots Agency, to develop all aspects of the Borough's rich Ulster Heritage	Alderman McIlveen and Councillor Kennedy	29.11.23	C&W December	Agreed	TBC	Action Plan to be brought to future C&W Committee subject to budget being made available
598	20.11.23	That this Council continues discussions with the Education Authority concerning the redevelopment of the play area fronting Victoria Primary School, Ballyhalbert (which is a shared facility between the school and public) and tasks officers to source external funding streams to enhance recreation & sports facilities for the village and surrounding area. Further, Council notes the poor condition of Ballyhalbert children's play park and tasks officers to bring forward a report on enhancing and improving the play park to meet the needs of local children.	Alderman Adair and Councillor Edmund	29.11.23	C&W January	Agreed	March 2024 C&W Committee	January 2024 C&W Committee Minutes ratified at January Council. Officers considering report to March 2024 C&W Committee

599	21.11.23	<p>“That this Council recognises the invaluable work undertaken by community/voluntary groups and organisations in this Borough in identifying and tackling the needs of communities and residents. The Council therefore, commits to undertaking a root and branch review of community development funding, arts and heritage, sports development and all other funding streams to ensure that it provides the most efficient, effective and responsive service to our community, thus maximising impact, accessibility and equitable allocation of resources. The review should examine the following 4 categories: (see further wording on agenda)</p>	Councillor Cathcart and Councillor Gilmour	29.11.23	C&W January	Agreed	TBC	January 2024 C&W Committee Minutes ratified at January 2024 Council. Grants transformation project already underway
560	23.11.23	<p>That this Council recognises the growing concerns and impact of single use vapes on young people, schools, and our local environment. Calls on Council Officers to undertake a full review of options available to address these concerns and strengthen enforcement. This Council also calls on a ban on the importation of illicit vapes and calls on Stormont, at the earliest opportunity, to bring forward legislation to enforce regulations that will combat illicit importations.</p>	Councillor McLaren and Councillor Hollywood	Dec-23	C&W January	Agreed	TBC	January 2024 C&W Committee Minutes ratified at January 2024 Council
561	29.11.23	<p>That this Council notes the continuing issue of dead seals washed up on our beaches and coastlines and the negative impact that this has on the use of beaches when the carcasses are not picked up in a timely manner. It therefore tasks officers to bring forward a report to ensure seal carcasses are prioritised for removal as soon as possible after reporting to ensure that our beaches continue to be a clean, safe, and well-managed coastal environment to be enjoyed by everyone.</p>	Alderman Adair and Councillor MacArthur	Council December 2023	Environment Committee January 2024 - to be ratified at January 2024 Council	<p>Agreed with amendment:</p> <p>That this Council notes the continuing issue of dead seals and all mammals washed up on our beaches and coastline and the negative impact that this has on the use of beaches when the carcasses are not picked up in a timely manner. It therefore tasks officers to bring forward a report to ensure seal carcasses are prioritised for removal as soon as possible after reporting to ensure that our beaches continue to be a clean, safe, and well-managed coastal environment to be enjoyed by everyone.</p>	TBC	

NOM 189	30.11.23	That this Council writes to the Department for Infrastructure (DFI) objecting to the significant proposed percentage increases to charges involving the structures along with pedestrian and various vehicle usage, availing of the Strangford Ferry Services.	Councillors Boyle and Wray	Council - December 2023	Heard at Council and agreed			CE to write to DFI
NOM190	13.12.23	That this Council writes to the Secretary of State to voice its objection to the NIO consultation on Water Charges and any attempt to introduce Water Charges to Northern Ireland.	Councillors W Irvine and McKimm	Council - January 2024	Corporate Services Committee			
565	13.12.23	That Council Note the closure of the training area at Portavogie Football Pitch due to health and safety concerns recognises the negative impact this has on local provision and sports development and tasks officers to bring forward a report on options to provide temporary training facilities in the village in the short term and repairs to the pitch in the long term as a matter of urgency further Council task officers to bring forward a bi-monthly progress report on the development of the Portavogie 3G Pitch Project to Council.	Alderman Adair and Cllr Edmund	Council - January 2024	CW Committee	NoM amended and agreed at February C&WC to be ratified at February Council		
NOM191	13.01.24	That this Council writes to the Department of Infrastructure to once again express our deep concern at the poor state of roads across Ards and North Down. Council further requests that DFI changes their policy in relation to the depth of potholes that are required to be repaired back to 20ml from the current 50ml in order to improve the quality and safety of our roads network.	Cllr Wray and Alderman Smith	Council - January 2024	Corporatate Services Committee			
568	16.01.24	That this Council agrees to write to the Department for Infrastructure (Dfi), seeking a meeting with elected members representing the Ards Peninsula DEA, to discuss the recent and ongoing interruptions to the Strangford Ferry Service.	Cllr Boyle and Alderman McAlpine	Council - January 2024	Withdrawn at Council			
569	23.01.24	That this Council acknowledges with concern the devastating impact of the planned closure of the Action Mental Health Promote Day Opportunities Service on its users, their families and the wider community throughout this borough and agrees to write urgently to the Chair and Chief Executive of South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust to call on the Trust to address funding pressures to secure the future of the service and centre at Enterprise Road, Conlig.	Cllrs McCollum nad Morgan	Council - January 2024	Heard and agreed at Council. Further agreed that Council writes to the Health Minister once appointed		TBC	Letter sent to Minister for Health, and the Chairman and Chief Executive of the SEHSCT. Response received from the Chairman & Minister, response to NOM will go to C&W Committee

570	23.01.24	That this Council notes the announcement on Monday 15th January of the closure of Promote Day Opportunities Service in Bangor; this Council notes the importance of this day opportunities service, relied upon by so many residents of this borough; acknowledges the public outcry and widespread support for retention of this vital service, demonstrated by the change.org petition; writes to SEHSCT for clarity on what support will be made available for those affected by this closure and writes to the Department of Health calling for sustainable public financing of much needed learning disability services in our Borough.	Cllrs McKee and Kendall	Council - January 2024	Withdrawn at Council			
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Back on track: securing the health and wellbeing of our population

Health and social care leaders' priorities
for the incoming executive

Towards an HSC which is innovative, efficient, outcomes-focused, has
a valued and supported workforce and works in partnership to get
closer to communities

About us

About NICON

The Northern Ireland Confederation for Health and Social Care (NICON) is the voice of the organisations working across Northern Ireland's integrated health and social care system (HSC). Part of the NHS Confederation in England and Wales, it is the membership body for all HSC organisations which comprises of all six HSC trusts together with the range of regional HSC organisations.

www.nhsconfed.org/NICON

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Our priorities: overview



Investment in workforce

Our members urge immediate agreement on a new pay deal and the implementation of the Health and Care Workforce Strategy 2026 to address our significant workforce gaps. This must be supported by investment to ensure the HSC is recognised as a great place to work, to attract and retain staff and modernise for the future.



Sustainable funding

To stabilise, support transformation and meet growing demand, we need a sustained funding package underpinned by a three-year budget to support effective planning. Funding shortfalls will limit progress. We need honest conversations with the public and realistic expectations within the funding envelope agreed. Importantly, we must recognise spending as an investment with a £4 return for every £1 spent.¹



Redesigning services – accessing value

There are significant opportunities to improve the design of our service delivery model, but changes have traditionally been met with resistance. It is urgent that we break this pattern to deliver. We propose the establishment of a Citizens' Assembly to support this vital public conversation, to fast track agreement and support make progress at pace.



Collaborative and empowered leaders

We must invest in more collaborative ways of working, tapping into leadership in our HSC organisations, communities, partners, patients and in our workforce.



Stabilisation and transformation

Recognising the significant pressure currently, we must prioritise the stabilisation of our services and address unacceptable waiting times, while seizing opportunities for transformation.



Population health approach

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We must press on with our integrated care planning model, investing in prevention and addressing inequalities and working in partnership with communities, other public services and the voluntary sector.



Mental health

Our new Mental Health Strategy has been co-created with patients and partners, emphasising the need for parity of esteem between physical and mental health. We call for adequate funding and the continued support of our partners to deliver this ambitious agenda.



Social care

We welcome recent progress on the reform of adult social care and children's social care services and call for progressive action to deliver for our citizens, not only improving quality of life but delivering efficiencies in our system.



Investment in technology

We welcome the beginning of the rollout of encompass, NI's first digital health and care record. We need sustained focus on implementation of our new suite of digital strategies, supported by adequate staff training, to access the considerable benefits that technology and data can offer.



Engaged patients, public and partners

Learning from international experience, we call for a cultural shift in public engagement and invite the people of NI, as well as staff and partners, to be involved in keeping people well and active at home.



Innovation and economy

Having a strong and fair economy can help improve health outcomes. There are many opportunities to more fully support the HSC to embrace innovation and contribute as partners in local economies



Net zero carbon commitments

At COP26, the HSC committed to reaching net zero as part of the global effort to tackle climate change. New action is required to proactively drive this agenda.

Introduction

This report sets out the collective views of our members and aims to inform the ongoing public debate and subsequent decisions of the incoming Northern Ireland Executive.

Northern Ireland's Health and Social Care system is under mounting pressure. A series of strategic reviews had concluded that significant service redesign, and sustained investment would be necessary to address the long-term needs of our population.² The pandemic, absence of functioning government, rising demand, and industrial action has considerably worsened the situation. Unsurprisingly, health consistently ranks as a key concern in the public's mind.³

Over the last few years, colleagues at all levels in the HSC have demonstrated exceptional dedication, compassion, collaboration and creativity to maintain services and lead change across the system. Widescale vaccination programmes, digital ways of working, and new elective care centres are all noteworthy examples of the swift pace at which change has been implemented.

As this new Executive and Assembly take up office, health and care must be the key focus in the new Programme of Government to deliver amidst what are undoubtedly immense challenges. This document sets out the priorities agreed by the Northern Ireland Confederation of Health and Social Care members.

While the challenge is truly unprecedented, our members believe that there is significant opportunity to make real progress, by delivering a bold reform agenda and placing health and social care at the heart of all we do in Northern Ireland. Our call to the public and politicians alike is to 'support us to support you', so that we can ensure our health and care system gets back on track to meet the needs of our population.

Michael Bloomfield

Chair, NICON

Chief Executive, NI Ambulance Service

**Jonathan Patton**

Vice-Chair, NICON

Chair, South Eastern HSC Trust



Our vision

Members agree that the vision that our citizens ‘lead long, healthy, and active lives’ and the four ambitions for reform set out in *Health and Wellbeing 2026: Delivering Together*⁴ remain at the core of our ambition and continue to align with international best practice.

- **Building capacity in communities and in prevention**
- **Providing more support in primary care**
- **Reforming our community and hospital services**
- **Organising ourselves to deliver**

Although we have seen significant strides to deliver in these key areas,⁵ progress has been significantly hampered, creating additional pressure and demand for services, while Northern Ireland’s waiting times continue to deteriorate. If we are to get back on track, members agree there are four core enablers, complemented by a set of eight supporting activities that must be prioritised in the new Assembly.

“This is a time of unprecedented challenge for our nations. Driving change in our health care must form a turning point to create a cultural revolution in how we deliver services.

At this very important time of restoration of the institutions in Northern Ireland, this report sets out our members’ views, based on international best practice, and calls for a revitalised national mission, system leadership and local engagement approach. I commend this report to politicians and the public alike. Tough decisions and a relentless focus on implementation are now urgently needed. The NHS Confederation and our members stand ready to play our part.”

Matthew Taylor, Chief Executive, NHS Confederation



Core priorities

To support healthcare leaders to deliver this vision at the necessary pace and scale, our members believe **four core, interrelated enablers** must be in place:

1. Investment in workforce

Workforce capacity is central to the functioning of our entire health and social care system. However, there are currently significant gaps in our medical, nursing and social care workforce. The impact of a prolonged period of underinvestment is apparent in the form of widespread industrial action, vacancies at unsustainable levels and, despite some progress, there remains an overreliance on agency staff. The pandemic and ongoing pressure has further exacerbated staff shortages, with soaring absence rates and reports of staff leaving the HSC early due to burnout and low pay being cause for serious concern.⁶

While the latest workforce statistics show a consistent increase in the number of WTE staff across virtually all groupings since 2018, this rate of growth has been outmatched by the parallel increase in demand.⁷

Such staff shortages place undue pressure on existing staff and ultimately translate into increased waiting times and reduced quality and safety. Breaking this vicious cycle and securing a highly valued and supported workforce will be key in stabilising and shaping our services for the future. We must act to **ensure we have the optimum number of staff in place** to deliver both core services and to implement the variety of new strategies that will facilitate transformation. This will require **swift resolution of pay disputes** and investment in **long-term workforce planning**. This must be robustly backed up with adequate, recurrent funding, according to the renewed action plan of the Health and Social Care Workforce Strategy 2026.⁸ In addition, we must work with partners to keep pace with emerging thinking and innovation, modernising our workforce with new roles and new ways of working.⁹

Finally, there is a pressing need to care for our workforce. We need cultural change to **ensure the HSC is seen as an attractive place to work**, wherein our workforce feel valued, supported and empowered to lead in their own service areas. Evidence indicates that placing mental health and wellbeing at the forefront of our efforts will be particularly important as we seek to deliver and transform services – something we simply cannot do without our staff.¹⁰ Given the importance of this work, we note the appointment of a Chief People Officer in other nations, and believe the creation of such a role would be helpful in Northern Ireland.

“Having the right workforce is the single biggest challenge for our system – we have made good progress on planning, but we need sustained funding to ensure we can recruit and retain our workforce for the future.”

Jacqui Reid, Director of HR, Northern HSC Trust



2. Sustainable funding

As we approach the General Election this year, there is ongoing national debate, with many calling for a wholesale reinvestment in the NHS to match the founding vision of a service free at the point of need. This also the case locally. Current estimates indicate that the HSC could be facing a potential deficit **in excess of £500 million in 2023/24** when pay uplifts are accounted for and before any additional funding is applied.

HSC leaders require an uplifted and sustained funding package to support stabilisation, prioritise waiting lists, meet rising demand and meaningfully continue the transformation journey. A three-year budgeting cycle would greatly support effective planning and implementation.

Members therefore call for early agreement and prioritisation of the health and care budget, underpinned with pump priming investment to support a rapid approach to transformation. Funding must also be viewed as an investment. Carnall Farrar's report shows that for every £1 spent there is a return of £4 in our economy.¹¹

Politicians and the public must understand that **failure to provide sustained funding**, to meet the recognised level of need within Northern Ireland **will limit progress** in key areas, such **waiting list management** and **wider transformation efforts**. The full delivery of crucial strategies such as the Cancer Recovery Plan and Mental Health Strategy will also be at risk.

Members believe that our priorities – including building workforce capacity, investing in prevention and service redesign – represent significant opportunities to ensure that funding offers the best value for money. Working collectively and using best evidence, we must ensure that future investment is used to drive efficiency and deliver improved population health outcomes.

“The funding package agreed will shape what we can realistically deliver. We need honest conversations and must ensure that we are employing all the money we have as effectively as possible.”

**Maureen Edwards, Director of Finance,
Belfast HSC Trust**



3. Redesigning services – accessing value

As has been highlighted by many reviews, the current design of our services is no longer fit for purpose; it neither offers citizens the best outcomes nor the best value for money. An honest, two-way conversation must be brokered with the public to deliberate on the changes that must take place across our health and care system. We invite politicians and the public to consider evidence-based research and international best practice setting out the benefits that service redesign can bring about for our population.

We call for a wider dialogue on this service design, which members believe will support staff to deliver the best outcomes possible, for the best value. New Decade, New Approach committed to holding a Citizens' Assembly on an annual basis as part of a wider programme of civic engagement.¹² Given the significance of the health and care system in our wider society, members call on elected representatives to commission a Citizens' Assembly or similarly robust public engagement process on this vital topic to support the process of making best use of our workforce and estates.

“During the pandemic, we saw how the system can change very quickly and effectively – we must build on this learning to redesign many of our services to secure the best value and outcomes for our communities.”

**Neil Guckian, Chief Executive,
Western HSC Trust**



4. Collaborative and empowered leaders

Change happens in large systems when leaders and at every level of our organisations are empowered and supported to lead that change. While we have made some progress by investing in collective and clinical leadership programmes, we need to step up this approach to create a much more enabling culture.¹³

This will involve working more effectively with communities, partners, and our staff, tapping into local knowledge and existing relationships to develop collective solutions. We call on the public, politicians, and partners to engage with new integrated care partnerships which provide a framework for more collaborative ways of working that can support better outcomes.

“In the HSC, as in the NHS, we know that collaborative ways of working are delivering more. We need to embrace these new ways of working by developing both systemwide and local solutions.”

**Dr Maria O’Kane, Chief Executive,
Southern HSC Trust**



Supporting priorities

1. Stabilisation and transformation

As ministers return, we must prioritise the unacceptable waiting times, while seizing opportunities for transformation to more sustainable ways of working. Members agree the need to progress the 2021 Elective Care Framework, which proposed a £707.5 million investment over five years to close the stark gap between capacity and demand driving our waiting times.¹⁴ To progress this, we welcome investment in specialist elective care, in primary care, and further development of the suite of transformation initiatives, with a particular focus on improving access to care outside of acute settings.

Members also support consideration of a regional approach to tackling waiting lists via a series of pilot projects, which would ensure a focus on equity of access. Such a project should be data driven and entail greater communication with patients and carers.

“We have a real opportunity to redesign how we deliver elective care, in a way which protects the need to improve waiting lists, be more efficient, prevent harm and lead to better outcomes. The Regional Day Procedure Centre in Lagan Valley is a real example of success and should be further developed; dedicated centres such as this will improve access to treatment for all our population.”



Roisin Coulter, Chief Executive, South Eastern HSC Trust

2. Population health approach:

Investing in prevention and addressing inequalities

Evidence shows that fairer societies deliver better citizen health and wellbeing.¹⁵ However, one in four children in Northern Ireland are living in poverty¹⁶ and those living in the most deprived areas live in “good health” for up to 15 fewer years less than those in wealthier areas.¹⁶ Members therefore welcome the new Integrated Care System (ICS) planning model, which will be rolled out in shadow form this year. We must harness this model, in which the HSC will work with local partners to plan and deliver health and social care services based on local population needs, to

Supporting priorities

provide more integrated and continuous care, create a greater focus on prevention and early intervention and address the unacceptable inequalities which drive poor health outcomes. We must now also change our commissioning processes to support this aspiration, getting closer to communities.

New ministers must also agree a Programme for Government which embraces this approach by investing in housing and education, addressing economic inactivity and other social determinants of health.

“The pandemic and cost-of-living crisis have shown in sharp relief the impact of poverty and deprivation. We call for a whole of government approach to address these issues systemically and support the new integrated care planning model to ensure that prevention and population health are at the heart of the HSC.”

**Aidan Dawson, Chief Executive,
Public Health Agency**



3. Mental health

Members welcome the political commitment to addressing mental health in Northern Ireland in New Decade, New Approach, agreeing that this supports a more preventative approach. Colleagues welcome the move to a regional mental health service, which will provide a more focused and consistent approach across Northern Ireland, and the agreement of the new Mental Health Strategy 2021-31.¹⁸ In particular, adopting a multi-agency, early intervention and prevention-based approach will be key. Members call for the 10-year strategy to be adequately funded, noting that poor mental health costs NI an estimated £3.4 billion annually.¹⁹

“We are delighted that Mental Health is receiving a much greater profile, in parity with physical health. We have engaged with many stakeholder groups to co-design our far-reaching Mental Health Strategy. We must now ensure this is appropriately funded to deliver for our citizens”.

**Petra Corr, Director of Mental Health,
Northern HSC Trust**



4. Social care

Social care is an integral element of how societies secure the health and wellbeing of citizens, but for too long, it has been treated as a ‘Cinderella service’, resulting in a poorer quality of life and additional hospital pressures. We have an opportunity to reprioritise the social care agenda, learning from others about how we engage communities in the mission to care for vulnerable people in our society. The Department of Health has engaged extensively with stakeholders through work on the Reform of Adult Social Care to develop an ambitious reform agenda for the next ten years that is aligned with international best practice.²⁰ We must work through the new Social Care Collaborative Forum to secure the urgent delivery of this long-awaited reform, underpinned with adequate funding and investment in this workforce to support a sustainable social care system. This is a challenging agenda, but it must be considered a core priority.

Similarly, following the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care Services by Professor Ray Jones in June 2023,²¹ the Children’s Social Care Services Strategic Reform Board has since been established to progress the reform programme in this area. Taking forward this crucial work and addressing the report’s recommendations will involve urgent prioritisation of workforce gaps, funding issues, and improving the design of services. Children’s social care services in Northern Ireland must be given the priority it deserves if we are to succeed in ensuring that all children have the best start in life and are equipped to achieve their full potential.

“If we are to enable all our citizens to live well and give every child the best start in life, we must invest in and value our social care workforce and ensure that sustainable funding is secured to facilitate this.”

**Patricia Higgins, Chief Executive,
NI Social Care Council**



5. Investment in technology

Significant progress has been made with the use of technology in the last decade and has been much accelerated over the last two years with the beginning of the rollout of encompass, Northern Ireland’s first electronic patient care record. There is, however, a long way to go to fully realise the potential of data and technology as an enabler.

There must be a sustained focus on implementation of our new suite of digital strategies published in the spring by Digital Health and Care NI; electronic healthcare record, cyber security, data and innovation. Staff must be provided with the training and time to engage with this work, and we must build much better relationships with our partners to accelerate and deliver innovation.

“Delivering an economically sustainable Health and Social Care service for the next generation requires breaking the linear relationship between rising demand for services and our capacity to meet that demand. While technology and data are only one part of the jigsaw puzzle, it is the one with the highest potential. Creating impact on the bottom-line through adoption of Digital is perhaps the biggest challenge and opportunity we face as leaders.”



Karen Bailey, Chief Executive, Business Services Organisation

6. Engaged patients, public and partners

The challenge ahead to recover and reshape our services is immense. In order to succeed in achieving the vision set out in Health and Wellbeing 2026, we will need energy, support, diversity of thought, as well as constructive challenge, to deliver the level of change necessary.

Building on the important co-production agenda and the HSC values, we need to strengthen and promote these open ways of working, facilitating local government input into new integrated care planning, patients and carers co-designing new pathways and more strategically engaging with and harnessing the expertise and support of the voluntary and community sector. In addition, we should explore further mechanisms to actively support families and communities to protect and enhance their own health. We welcome the opportunity to learn from effective citizen-led approaches to public health in other areas, such as Wigan.²²



“In the Northern Trust, we have been prioritising engagement for several years now and have seen significant benefits in terms of harnessing greater energy and innovation – there are significantly more opportunities to progress this agenda.”

**Jennifer Welsh, Chief Executive,
Northern HSC Trust**

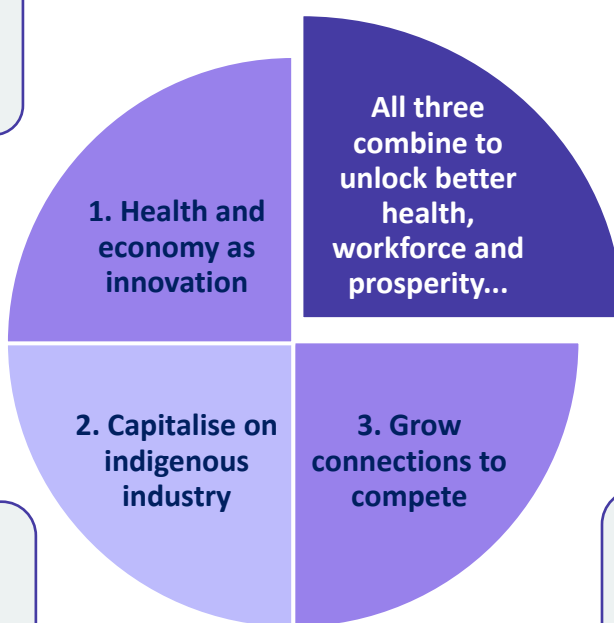


7. Innovation and economy

In the past, innovation and the economy have been perceived as bolt-on activities. However, recent evidence reiterates how investment in innovation and fostering our local economy, with HSC bodies acting as ‘anchor institutions’, can in fact act as a central pillar for recovery. The HSC must be supported to fully embrace this agenda, by working proactively with universities and partners in the health and life sciences sector and with communities to be a key partner in supporting Northern Ireland’s economy.

- Improved indigenous industry engagement with SMEs and City Deals
- HSC Adoption workflow
- Nurture local innovation

Source: Health Innovation and Research Alliance Northern Ireland (HIRANI)



- Better support for industry-academia
- Permissive culture for collaboration
- Broaden access to trials beyond medicine

- Dual UK and EU market access
- Regulatory support
- Skills and investment
- UK and Shared Island (NI +ROI)

“Closer engagement between health and economy will be fundamental to deliver benefits for the citizens of Northern Ireland. It will deliver a Return on Investment for HSC and help improve patient outcomes, drive efficiency and working as a key player in local economies can help improve health and wellbeing in our communities.”

**Dr Janice Bailie, Assistant Director,
HSC R&D Division**



8. Meeting net zero carbon commitments

Climate change is the global issue of our time, which is set to negatively impact the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our citizens in a range of ways. During the COP26 summit in Glasgow, Minister of Health Robin Swann committed the HSC to a net zero carbon target, contributing to the global mission to tackle climate change.²³

The HSC must be supported to work more proactively, both internally and with our partners, to drive this agenda. To that end, the HSC should establish a small expert unit, or at a minimum, tap into the learning from the wider NHS, ensuring milestones can be met and that we offer strong, forward-thinking leadership on this agenda.

“The HSC must join citizens and colleagues across government to become a key player in moving towards a low carbon economy. We must develop clear policies and programmes and work with our staff and partners to deliver this change.”

**Michele Larmour, Chair,
Northern Ireland Ambulance Service**



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By email

9 February 2024

Dear MLA

Firstly, we would like to offer congratulations on the return to Stormont and wish you well in your roles in the newly appointed committees.

Please find attached **Back on Track: Securing the Health and Wellbeing of our Population** which we hope will be a resource for you, given that in large part many of our population's health and care outcomes cut across the work of every government department. As you will be aware, as in the rest of the UK, Northern Ireland's health and social care system is under extreme and mounting pressure, NICON (The NI Confederation of Health and Social Care) represents all the organisations across the statutory system, and our members have come together to set out our priorities for the way ahead. Specifically, we have four core priorities, supported by a further 8 underpinning areas which require action;

- **Workforce**
- **Sustainable funding**
- **Redesigned services**
- **Empowered and collaborative leadership**

Supporting this, we must place health and wellbeing at the heart of the Programme for Government – and invest in stabilisation and transformation; development of a population health approach; implementation of mental health and social care reform; delivery of our technology strategy; engaging patients and partners; being proactive innovators to drive outcomes and the economy [Health and Wealth in Northern Ireland: Capitalising on the Opportunities | NHS Confederation](#); and supporting delivery of the net zero targets.

Whilst the challenge is truly unprecedented, our members believe that there is significant opportunity to make material progress by delivering a bold reform agenda and placing health and social care at the heart of all we do in Northern Ireland. We trust this document will be helpful and look forward to working with you in the coming weeks and months.

Kind regards

Heather

Heather Moorhead

Director

NI Confederation for Health & Social Care (NICON)

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**Northern Ireland
Confederation**
for Health and Social Care