



Ards and  
North Down  
Borough Council

# COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme



The borough of Ards and North Down is in the east of Northern Ireland and covers the Ards Peninsula, most of Strangford Lough and the southern shore of Belfast Lough. It comprises an area of 228 square miles, which combines attractive coastline, the City of Bangor, four towns (Comber, Donaghadee, Hollywood and Newtownards) and 15 villages (Ballygowan, Ballyhalbert, Ballywalter, Carrowdore, Conlig, Cloughey, Greyabbey, Groomsport, Helen's Bay & Crawfordsburn, Killinchy, Kircubbin, Lisbarnett & Lisbane, Millisle, Portavogie and Portaferry).

The council's overall purpose is to make **Ards and North Down the best place to live, work, visit and invest.**

Our vision is that **Ards and North Down will be a place to be proud of which is more prosperous, vibrant, healthy, and sustainable where people can enjoy an excellent quality of life.**



**Ards and  
North Down**  
Borough Council

# COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme

The COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme was welcomed by councils across Northern Ireland when it was introduced in 2020. The programme provided funding for the local authorities to carry out interventions in cities, towns and villages that would introduce measures to create a retail experience that was safe and welcoming while COVID-19 remained a risk.

The programme was delivered through a joined-up approach between the Department for Communities (DfC), Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) and local councils.

Each council developed a Revitalisation Plan that identified two tranches of interventions. These plans were devised working with a variety of stakeholders. Urban and Rural Recovery Working Groups were established and met on a regular basis, comprising of elected representatives, department officials, business & community representatives, and council officers.

The first tranche of funding was assigned to fund measures required immediately to allow businesses to reopen safely following the COVID-19 pandemic, and the second tranche was used to deliver medium- to longer-term business support interventions.

**Ards and North Down Borough Council was awarded £1.75M through the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme, which allowed the council to support a range of projects in our city, towns, and villages across the borough.**



The COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme had 4 strands:

## 1 Business Recovery Support

Financial assistance for businesses to carry out adjustments and improvements to their properties.

## 2 Physical Intervention and Streetscape Projects

Projects to strengthen and reinvigorate our city, towns and villages.

## 3 Support Local

Initiatives to encourage and welcome people back to our city, towns and villages.

## 4 Sustainable and Active Travel Projects

Initiatives to enable more people to choose active travel.

# Strand 1: Business Recovery Support

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR BUSINESSES TO CARRY OUT ADJUSTMENTS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THEIR PROPERTIES

### **Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme**

The Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme provided financial assistance [grants up to £2,500] to businesses to carry out adjustments and improvements to the properties that service their businesses, in order that they could continue to operate, improve their business and ensure the health and safety of their employees and their customers in response to the impact and recovery of COVID-19.

The scheme was delivered in two tranches, with priority given to businesses allocated within the commercial areas of the city, towns, and villages.

#### **Urban Areas**

347 grants issued | £714K awarded

#### **Rural Areas**

81 grants issued | £161K awarded

Businesses across Ards and North Down invested in a range of capital items including safety equipment [perspex screens, sanitiser stations, social distancing measures], outdoor spaces [furniture, awnings, heaters], technology improvements and other capital improvements.



Sunflower Sandwich Company, Bangor



Jill Hamilton Salon, Donaghadee



Mawhinneys Butchers & Delicatessen, Newtownards



Clondeboye Lodge Hotel, Bangor

**95%** of businesses were satisfied with the financial support provided under the Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**80%** of businesses agreed that the Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme positively impacted on efforts to improve footfall levels.

**76%** of businesses agreed that the Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme positively impacted on efforts to improve sales figures.

#### **Feedback:**

*'From the application process to project delivery the scheme was seamless for our business.'*

*'It was great to have this support available and it was much appreciated.'*

*'The financial support from the scheme has allowed us to make improvements in very difficult times.'*

*'Very appreciative of the support to businesses during challenging times in 2021.'*

*'The scheme enabled us to ensure a safer environment for staff and customers during the pandemic.'*

*'We were very satisfied with the financial support provided as a response to the pandemic. It had a very positive impact on our business.'*

# Strand 2: Physical Intervention and Streetscape Projects

PROJECTS TO  
STRENGTHEN AND  
REINVIGORATE OUR CITY,  
TOWNS, AND VILLAGES



## **Environmental Improvement Scheme, Copelands Court, Donaghadee**

Creating a safe and welcoming space to accommodate bespoke events with an events mini pillar and performance space. Tree planting, improved lighting, and public art representative of the town's history. Improving safety and accessibility with resurfacing, drainage solutions and an improved layout.



## **Minor Environmental Improvement Scheme, Comber**

Creating a connection from the town centre to the greenway with access to the new cycling infrastructure. Welcoming seating, litter bins and picnic area.

## **Environmental Improvement Scheme, Car Park adjacent to Comber Leisure Centre, Comber**

Providing safe and accessible linkage to the town centre including resurfacing, improved lighting, drainage solutions and enhanced layout. Future proofing with the installation of infrastructure for Electrical Vehicle Charging Points, making the car park feel safer, well-lit and useable for bespoke events.



**Subway Improvement Scheme, Hollywood**

An art led project in partnership with Hollywood Residents Association to revamp the existing subway through the imagery of literature and nature, creating a vibrant and friendly thoroughfare and enhancing the visitor experience.



**Solar Bins throughout our city and town centres**

Solar powered compacting bins that store up to 20-times more waste compared to standard bins, with the ability to send electronic messages when they are ready to be emptied. Helping to create sustainable, clean, and safe city and town centres across Ards and North Down.

**Village Gateway Signage**

High quality, bespoke gateway signage to welcome visitors to our villages and create a sense of place for the local community.

# Continued... Physical Intervention and Streetscape Projects

## **Parklets (Outdoor Resting Areas) – Bangor, Comber and Newtownards**

Transforming parking spaces into community spaces where residents and visitors can stop, rest, and enjoy our outdoor spaces. Encouraging active travel and improving our city and town centres. The parklets utilise greenery and provide seating to reinvigorate our streets.



Bangor



Comber



Newtownards



### **Enhanced Seating Area, Conway Square, Newtownards**

The welcomed addition of bespoke curved benches and chess-style tables to compliment the existing seating. Creating a piazza feel and encouraging visitors and residents to increase their dwell time in this historical, focal point of the town centre.

---



### **Enhanced Seating Area, Lemon's Wharf, Donaghadee**

This popular playpark area in the heart of the town welcomed additional picnic tables for families to rest and dine, and doubled sided benches where visitors can enjoy views of the town centre and to sea. Providing users of this area additional resting points and facilities to encourage increased dwell time.



### **Play Park Enhancement Scheme, Johnny the Jig Play Park, Hollywood**

This popular town centre play park was recently renovated with a range of new play equipment, resurfacing and signage. To enhance the renovation, public realm additions were welcomed including picnic tables, benches, litter bins and cycle stands. These additions will assist to encourage dwell time, encourage active travel, and promote a clean and safe environment.

---

### **Lighting Improvement Scheme, Castle Park, Bangor**

Promoting connectivity and improving linkages to the retail core of the city centre by upgrading the existing lighting with new, improved LED lighting. Enhancing safety and encouraging active travel for residents and visitors.

---

### **Mobile Urban Orchard, Hollywood**

A unique and movable orchard that is educational, functional, and aesthetically pleasing. Trees play a significant role in improving environmental conditions and make an attractive and pleasant place to live as well as responding to environmental issues with close proximity to the busy Bangor to Belfast A2.

# Strand 3: Support Local Projects

INITIATIVES TO  
ENCOURAGE AND  
WELCOME PEOPLE BACK  
INTO OUR BOROUGH

## **City Centre Information Screen, Bangor**

Interactive touch screen information point in Bangor City Centre to provide residents and visitors with the latest information about the city, including events, local businesses, transport links and much more. Using the latest technology to promote the city.

---

## **Artificial Christmas Tree, Holywood Town Centre**

Decreasing our carbon footprint with the welcomed addition of a further artificial Christmas Tree within the town centre. Presenting a modern, appealing, and sustainable Christmas feature to welcome visitors and residents during this peak season.



## **'Support Local' Marketing Campaign, Borough-wide**

The 'Support Local' Campaign was launched in 2020 in collaboration with local businesses and Chambers of Commerce across our city and town centres. Aimed at encouraging our residents to change their shopping habits and support their local businesses.



## **Floral Sculptures**

### **Bangor, Comber, Donaghadee, Holywood and Newtownards**

Unique, bespoke, 'living sculptures' created with living, growing grasses, vines, plants, or trees. These unique, horticultural creations were individually themed to represent a key aspect of the history, culture or folklore of the city and towns. Giving residents and visitors an opportunity to celebrate our local history and culture.

# Strand 4: Sustainable and Active Travel Projects

INITIATIVES TO ENABLE  
MORE PEOPLE TO  
CHOOSE ACTIVE TRAVEL



## **Cycling Infrastructure to Support Active Travel**

Investing in infrastructure to support active travel throughout our Borough. Welcoming high-quality cycle stands, cycle pods, scooter racks, and more, in various locations in our city, towns and villages to support and encourage cycling. The increased demand for green travel will assist to reduce air pollution, enhance health & wellbeing for our residents and visitors, whilst assisting economic recovery.



**Ards and  
North Down**  
Borough Council

COVID-19 RECOVERY  
REVITALISATION PROGRAMME

For further information please contact  
[urban.regeneration@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:urban.regeneration@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)