

April 23rd, 2024

**Notice Of Meeting**

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Wednesday, 24th April 2024 at 7:00 pm** in **City Hall, Bangor.**

# Agenda

## Agenda

[C.24.04.24 Agenda.pdf](#)

Page 1

1. Prayer
2. Apologies
3. Declarations of Interest
- 4 Mayor's Business
- 5 Mayor and Deputy Mayor Engagements for the Month of April 2024
6. Minutes of Council Meeting held on 27 March 2024

Copy attached

[C.27.03.2024 Minutes.pdf](#)

Not included

[C.27.03.2024 Minutes PM.pdf](#)

Page 4

## 7 Minutes of Committees

### 7.1 Special Planning Committee dated 21 March 2024

(Copy attached)

[SPC.21.03.24 Minutes.pdf](#)

Page 28

### 7.2 Planning Committee dated 9 April 2024

(Copy attached)

[240409 PC.09.04.24 Minutes PM.pdf](#)

Page 35

### 7.3 Environment Committee dated 10 April 2024

(Copy attached)

[EC 10.04.24 Minutes FULL.pdf](#)

Not included

[EC 10.04.24 Minutes PM.pdf](#)

Page 69

#### **7.4 Place and Prosperity Committee dated 11 April 2024**

(Copy attached)

📄 *PP 11.04.2024 Minutes.pdf*

*Not included*

📄 *PP 11.04.2024 MinutesPM.pdf*

*Page 87*

#### **7.5 Corporate Services Committee dated 16 April 2024**

(Copy attached)

📄 *CS.16.04.24 Minutes.pdf*

*Not included*

📄 *CS.16.04.24 Minutes PM.pdf*

*Page 102*

#### **7.6 Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 17 April 2024**

(Copy attached)

📄 *CWB Minutes 17.04.24.pdf*

*Not included*

📄 *CWB Minutes 17.04.24 PM.pdf*

*Page 114*

### **8. Request for Deputation**

#### **8.1 Rory Sloan**

(Report attached)

📄 *8. Deputation request.pdf*

*Page 155*

📄 *8.1 Deputation request form.pdf*

*Page 156*

### **9. Head of Strategic Transformation and Performance, Permission to attend Local Government Partnership Network 2024 (Manchester) (Report attached)**

(Report attached)

📄 *9. Head of STaP LGPN Manchester.pdf*

*Page 161*

### **10. Changes to Conducting Committee and Council Meetings and Changes to the Standing Orders**

(Report attached)

📄 *10. Changes to the Standing Orders - Committee and Council meetings.pdf*

*Page 163*

## 11. Sealing Documents

## 12. Transfer of Rights of Burial

## 13. Notice of Motion Status Report

(Report attached)

13. NoM Status Report.pdf

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NOM TRACKER LIVE.pdf

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## 14. Notices of Motion

### 14.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor W Irvine, Councillor Cathcart, Councillor Blaney and Councillor McKimm

That this Council expressing its disappointment and concern over the decision to close the Bangor PSNI station enquiry office and writes to the Chief Constable and the Policing board calling for the decision to be reversed

### 14.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Wray and Councillor Hollywood

This Council values the role that young people play in civic leadership within our Borough.

Council will engage with Ards and North Down Youth Voice and local members of the NI Youth Assembly, with the view to providing use of our Council Chamber and resources to enable them to conduct an annual meeting. The agenda for the meeting should be decided by the young people with the Mayor chairing the proceedings.

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

## 15. Bangor Waterfront Ballyholme Yacht Club and Watersports Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT) Award – for approval (Report attached)

(Report attached)





15. Bangor Waterfront BYC ICT Award.pdf

Not included

## **16. Bangor Waterfront Ballyholme Yacht Club and Council's Legal Agreement – for approval (Report attached)**





(Report attached)

Appendices to follow

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| <a href="#"> 16. BYC Legal Agreement.pdf</a>                               | <i>Not included</i> |
| <a href="#"> 16 Appendix 1 -Deed of Variation of Lease Final Draft.pdf</a> | <i>Not included</i> |
| <a href="#"> 16 Appendix 2 - Development Agreement Final Draft.pdf</a>     | <i>Not included</i> |
| <a href="#"> 16 Appendix 3 - Key Performance Indicators.pdf</a>            | <i>Not included</i> |



## **17. Call in of the Council Decision to Amend its Flag Policy to include the Flying of the Union Flag at every War Memorial all Year Round**

(Report attached)

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| <a href="#"> 17. Call in of the Council decision to amend its flag policy.pdf</a> | <i>Not included</i> |
| <a href="#"> 17. Appendix 1 - Call in requisition form.pdf</a>                   | <i>Not included</i> |
| <a href="#"> 17. Appendix 2 CFR - Misc Advice - ANDBC (2024 final).pdf</a>       | <i>Not included</i> |
| <a href="#"> 17. Appendix 3 - Legal advice from Fiona Cassidy.pdf</a>            | <i>Not included</i> |

## **18. Request from NIE for Wayleave over land at Castle Park**

(Report attached)

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| <a href="#"> 18. Request from NIE for a Wayleave - land at Castle Park.pdf</a> | <i>Not included</i> |
| <a href="#"> 18. Appendix 1 - Request for a wayleave Castle Park.pdf</a>       | <i>Not included</i> |

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

17 April 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a meeting of Ards and North Down Borough Council which will be held at the City Hall, The Castle, Bangor on **Wednesday, 24 April 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 April 2024 (Copy to follow)
6. Minutes of Council meeting dated 27 March 2024 (Copy attached)
7. Minutes of Committees (Minutes attached)
  - 7.1 Special Meeting of the Planning Committee dated 21 March 2024
  - 7.2 Planning Committee dated 9 April 2024
  - 7.3 Environment Committee dated 10 April 2024
  - 7.4 Place and Prosperity Committee dated 11 April 2024
  - 7.5 Corporate Services Committee dated 16 April 2024 (Copy to follow)
  - 7.6 Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 17 April 2024 (Copy to follow)

8. Request for Deputation
  - 8.1. Rory Sloan (Report attached)
9. Head of Strategic Transformation and Performance, Permission to attend Local Government Partnership Network 2024 (Manchester) (Report attached)
10. Changes to conducting Committee and Council meetings and changes to the Standing Orders (Report attached)
11. Sealing Documents
12. Transfer of Rights of Burial
13. Notice of Motion Status Report (Report attached)
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**\*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\***

15. Bangor Waterfront Ballyholme Yacht Club and Watersports Integrated Consultancy Team (ICT) Award – for approval (Report attached)
16. Bangor Waterfront Ballyholme Yacht Club and Council's Legal Agreement – for approval (Report attached)
17. Call in of the Council decision to amend its flag policy to include the flying of the Union Flag at every war memorial all year round (Report to follow)
18. Request from NIE for Wayleave over land at Castle Park (Report attached)

### MEMBERSHIP OF ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

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



## ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Ards and North Down Borough Council was held at the City Hall, The Castle, Bangor, on Wednesday 27 March 2024 commencing at 7.00 pm.

<b>In the Chair:</b>	The Mayor (Councillor Gilmour)	
<b>Aldermen:</b>	Adair	McAlpine
	Armstrong-Cotter	McIlveen
	Cummings	Smith
	Graham	
<b>Councillors:</b>	Ashe	Kerr
	Blaney	MacArthur
	Boyle	Martin
	Cathcart	McCollum
	Cochrane	McCracken
	Douglas	McKee
	Harbinson	McLaren
	Hollywood	McRandal
	S Irvine	Moore
	W Irvine	Morgan
	Irwin	Rossiter
	Kennedy	Smart
	Kendall	Wray

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

### 1. PRAYER

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

### 2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend were received from Alderman Brooks, Alderman McDowell and Councillors Creighton, Chambers, Edmund and McKimm.

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were notified.

**4. MAYOR’S BUSINESS**

As mentioned at a previous meeting, the Mayor highlighted that the Council had been successful in attaining the NILGA Councillor Development Charter Plus Status. That day, the Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services and herself had been presented with the glass award and certificate. She thanked all Members who had taken part in that process and the Officers who had helped diligently with the work involved.

Following the last Council meeting, the Mayor highlighted that she had received notification from the Chief Executive of his intention to take early retirement. The Council meeting in April would be the Chief Executive’s final meeting.

The Mayor congratulated Donaghadee who had won an Ulster in Bloom award for the third year running.

The Mayor also congratulated Bangor Academy who had won the High School’s Rugby Cup and she invited Councillor W Irvine to make a comment in that regard.

Councillor W Irvine highlighted the significant achievement for Bangor Academy’s Rugby Team beating Dunclug College 30 to 17 points. Their campaign had been unbeaten, and he praised the work involved in that regard.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Blaney, that the Mayor writes a letter of congratulations to Bangor Academy on behalf of the Council and holds a small Mayoral reception to mark the achievement.**

**FURTHER RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Armstrong-Cotter, seconded by Councillor Kerr, that the Mayor’s Business is noted.**

**5. MAYOR AND DEPUTY MAYOR ENGAGEMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH 2024**

(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- List of engagements for the month of March 2024.

The Mayor referred to her list of engagements and wished to highlight a few of those:

- Food Hero Awards – an enjoyable evening recognising the award-winning food businesses across the Borough.
- Volunteering had been an important theme this month and she advised that she had hosted volunteers who had carried out litter picks in conjunction with the Council’s Community Safety Team. Along with a volunteer event having been held with the Community Development team.
- Blair Mayne Bursary Awards had been awarded and she made mention of Rhys McClenaghan who had taken time to speak to the young people at that Awards Ceremony.
- Young Musician of the Year Competition – The evening had been an excellent evening of music and she wished to put on record the Council’s congratulations

to Cameron Moody, Pupil of Bangor Grammar School who won the U16 Section and Harry Douglas who had been a finalist.

In finishing, the Mayor thanked the Deputy Mayor for her assistance during the month.

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor Smart, seconded by Councillor Martin, that the information be noted.**

## **6. MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING DATED 28 FEBRUARY 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Councillor Douglas, that the minutes be approved and adopted.**

## **7. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

### **7.1 Planning Committee dated 5 March 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

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

### **7.2 Environment Committee dated 6 March 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

Proposed by Councillor Morgan, seconded by Councillor Wray, that the minutes be approved and adopted.

In respect of Item 12 – Removal of Carcasses from Foreshore; Alderman Adair felt the report should have been about removing dead seals and carcasses from beaches in a safe and timely manner instead the headline that came out of the meeting was ‘seal carcasses clear up sparks an angry response from a Councillor’. He was of the view that he bore the brunt of that anger and outlined his disappointment in that regard. Alderman Adair alluded to issues which he had experienced with his iPad which resulted in him telephoning the relevant Council Officer in relation to the deal seal. The Cleansing team had documented his numerous phone calls which were all recorded and could be seen in the document he had before him. Alderman Adair felt he needed to raise this issue as he would not have anyone question his sincerity or his constituency work. He worked night and day for his constituents and always raised the issues that mattered most to them. Alderman Adair stated that seal lay for 14 days. He had made representation in the time required and stated that that could not be questioned by anybody.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Morgan, seconded by Councillor Wray, that the minutes be approved and adopted.**

### **7.3 Place and Prosperity Committee dated 7 March 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

Proposed by Councillor Blaney, seconded by Councillor McCracken, that the minutes be approved and adopted.

In respect of Item 12 – Kinnegar SOC; Councillor Kennedy wished to raise the item in the exclusion of the public/press.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Blaney, seconded by Councillor McCracken, that the minutes be approved and adopted (with the exception of Item 12).**

### **7.4 Corporate Services Committee dated 12 March 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

Proposed by Councillor Moore, seconded by Alderman Graham, that the minutes be approved and adopted.

In respect of Item 6 – Scheme of Allowances; Councillor Boyle wished to be recorded as disagreeing with the decision. He felt the decision left the Council out of step with other Councils. He believed that all Councillors should be treated equally. He thanked the proposer and seconder for bringing forward the amendment that evening. The proposal was cost neutral as the savings had been made within the past four years. Councillor Boyle stated that the Members should not be treated as second-class Councillors in a second-class Council. He voiced his frustration that Members in parties were supportive of the amendment brought forward but had not voted that way. He referred to Members that were on a basic allowance and he felt those Members had been forgotten about. The report that had been presented was brought forward in a document with a departmental recommendation. He alluded to the media reports that had not outlined that Members had gone without a rise for 4 years. Councillor Boyle stated that he had the highest respect for the party leaders but felt they that had called this decision wrongly and they should have done the right thing to even satisfy their own Members who were on a basic allowance.

Alderman McIlveen was pleased that Councillor Boyle had stood up to outline his view as he had been frustrated on behalf of the two independents that had been used to bring forward the amendment when Members were aware of the position of the DUP. The proposal that was put forward to Members was to back date the allowance and raise the mileage rate. Alderman McIlveen outlined that he had been clear that the DUP were not interested in back dating. He explained that the Council had made a democratic decision the previous year not to raise the allowances and believed a decision to back date allowances would be undoing a promise that Council had made to the electorate. The Council chose not to take an increase for four years, all of the DUP Members were happy with the position taken to realign the allowances.

Councillor Kennedy concurred with the comments of Alderman McIlveen. He stated that he was one of the Councillors that Councillor Boyle referred to who solely relied on his income from the Councillor allowance and this was through his choice to raise his young family. He was elected to represent the people, not to grab as much money as possible and not to make a commitment one year and renege the next.

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

#### **7.5 Community and Wellbeing Committee dated 13 March 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

Proposed by Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the minutes be approved and adopted.

In respect of Item 18: Leisure Transformation – Councillor Kendall noted that seconded to the proposal was noted as Councillor Irwin when it was herself that seconded the proposal.

In respect of Item 15: Social Supermarkets – Councillor Cathcart wished to raise the item in the exclusion of the public/press.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor Irvine, that the minutes, as amended, be approved and adopted (with the exception of Item 15).**

#### **7.6 Audit Committee dated 19 March 2024**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McLaren, seconded by Councillor Hollywood, that the minutes be approved and adopted.**

### **8. CHANGES TO CONDUCTING COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL MEETINGS AND CHANGES TO THE STANDING ORDERS** (Appendices II - IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive attaching letter from Department for Communities 1 March 2024, letter from Department for Communities 12 March 2024 and draft legislation.

Section 78 (local authority meetings) of the Coronavirus Act 2020 (“CVA”) contained provision to provide councils with the flexibility to hold meetings by remote or hybrid means during the Coronavirus emergency. This included an enabling power for the Department to make subordinate legislation regarding remote/hybrid meetings and the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 were subsequently made and came into operation on 1 May 2020.

Council was informed in a letter from the Department for Communities that the current extension Order (S.R. 2023 No. 140) ceased to have effect by virtue of section 96(7) of the Coronavirus Act after 6 March 2024. This meant that the provisions which enabled councils to hold remote/hybrid meetings fell and legislation reverted to the position before the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (NI) 2020 were made meaning meetings must be held in person after 6 March 2024.

It should be noted that a further letter and draft legislation were received on 12 March 2024 and Council Chief Executives were asked to examine the draft regulations and respond by 26 March 2024 with any comments. On examination, it was deemed that it was not necessary to make any comments.

### **Changes to Standing Orders**

As a result of the current legislative position, Standing Order 30 and Annex 2 of the Standing Orders were currently redundant. Standing Order 30 of the Standing Orders, Version 10, February 2024 was written as follows:

#### **30 Remote Attendance**

##### **30 1 Definition of remote attendance**

In line with the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020, any reference in these Standing Orders to a Council or Committee meeting is not limited to a meeting of persons all of whom, or any of whom, are present in the same place and any reference to a "place" where a meeting is held, or to be held, includes reference to more than one place including electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers.

##### **30 2 Elected Member remote attendance**

An Elected Member in remote attendance attends the meeting at any time provided they are able: (a) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard, and where practicable be seen by, the other Members in attendance; (b) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, any members of the public in attendance in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting; and (c) to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public in attendance.

##### **30 3 Press and public remote attendance**

Any reference in these Standing Orders to a member of the public or press being present at a meeting includes such persons attending by remote access, and the reference in Standing Order 8 1 to every meeting being "open to the public and press" includes through enabling remote access.

##### **30 4 Voting when attending remotely**

Any vote that would otherwise be taken by a show of hands in line with Standing Order 21 4 will, if any of the Elected Members entitled to vote are in remote

attendance, be taken by way of a verbal confirmation from each Member as to whether they are for or against the motion.

### 30 5 Miscellaneous remote attendance provisions

References in Standing Orders 10 and 28 to excluding the public and press from the Council Chamber or removing them from the room, shall be read as removing their remote access where their attendance is, or would be but for their exclusion, remote attendance.

There was no requirement for an Elected Member in remote attendance to stand when addressing the Presiding Chairperson in line with Standing Order 20 6.

A Presiding Chairperson in remote attendance shall call a meeting to order, rather than rise to do so, in line with Standing Order 20 19.

It is recommended that Standing Order 30 as above and Annex 2 of the Standing Orders Version 10, February 2024 was revoked. If Council was instructed by the Department for Communities that new legislation was in place to allow hybrid meetings, a report regarding a new Standing Order would be brought to Council.

### **Stand Down Standing Orders**

Members should be aware when making these decisions, that 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 will be ratified at the meeting.

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

RECOMMENDED, that Council notes the draft legislation and notes the recommended changes to the Standing Orders as set out and agrees that they are stood down without debate for one month, being brought back to the Council meeting in April 2024.

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

(Alderman Adair withdrew from the meeting – 7.29 pm)

## **9. ARTS AND HERITAGE MANAGER PERMISSION TO ATTEND BUCKINGHAM PALACE GARDEN PARTY (FILE RDP36)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the Arts and Heritage Manager had been invited to attend a Garden Party at Buckingham Palace, London, on Tuesday 21 May 2024.

Long-serving Arts and Heritage Panel member and Vice Lord Lieutenant, Catherine Charley nominated the Arts and Heritage Manager for attendance under guidelines seeking people who carry out public work or contribute to public life. The event was in recognition of front line or key individuals within a public organisation, rather than a CEO or Senior Manager.

The Arts and Heritage Manager requests permission to attend and that the cost of attending the Garden Party was covered by Council and would seek the best value flights and accommodation available.

**Return Flights:**

BHD - LGW £78.98 (at time of report)

**Hotel x 1 night:** £150-£160 (approximately)

**TOTAL COST:** <£275 (allowing for fluctuation in current prices)

RECOMMENDED that Council approve the Arts & Heritage Manager to attend the Buckingham Palace Garden Party in May 2024.

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

**10. REQUEST FOR LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM  
NEWTOWNARDS MASONIC CENTRE AND  
COMMUNITY HUB (FILE RDP36)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place detailing that representatives from the Newtownards Masonic Centre and Community Hub gave a presentation to the Place and Prosperity Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2024.

They detailed their plans for the regeneration of the facility which was currently used by both the Masonic fraternity and the wider community, outlining a two-phase approach. Phase one was to make the building waterproof and to replace the rendering on the B1 listed building. Currently an application was being developed for the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to cover the costs of that work and to assist with employing a part time outreach officer who would work in the wider community to promote the facility as a community venue. Phase 2 would be a substantial extension to the facility, but that would be considered at a later date.

The representatives requested a letter of support from the Council for their application to the HLF for funding for Phase 1 works. Officers believed that the facility did provide community facilities and that the application should be supported.

RECOMMENDED that the Council agrees to write a letter of support for the Newtownards Masonic Centre and Community Hub’s application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Smart, seconded by Councillor Kennedy, that the recommendation be adopted.**



## **11. NOMINATION TO ALL PARTY GROUP ON CLIMATE ACTION**

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

Following the resignation of Councillor Woods from Council, a place had now become available on the All Party Group on Climate Action. The Council was represented by two Members, the other Member being Councillor Rossiter.

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

RECOMMENDED that Council nominate a Member to All Party Group on Climate Action.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McKee, seconded by Alderman McIlveen, that Council nominate Councillor Kendall to the All Party Group on Climate Action.**

## **12. THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME PILGRIMAGE 2024 (FILE CX181)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Chief Executive detailing that the Council had participated annually in the commemorative events and wreath laying at the Thiepval Monument, Ulster Memorial Tower and the Memorial at Guillemont, to mark the anniversary of the Battle of the Somme on 1 July.

That had usually also included wreath laying at the Menin Gate, Ypres, a visit to the Island of Ireland Peace Tower at Messines and lay a wreath in the honour of Edmund de Wind VC, from Comber, at the Pozieres British Cemetery. In addition, a visit to the Sir John Monash Centre at Villers-Bretonneux, where the Australian National Monument of the Great War was located. There had been the opportunity to view this Centre as a case study for the planned redevelopment and investment in the Somme Museum, Newtownards.

In line with previous years, it was recommended that the Council approved the attendance at the commemoration events departing on 29 June and returning on 3 July 2024 of the Mayor (or if unable to travel, the Deputy Mayor), another Member and an Officer. Nominations for the Member were now sought.

RECOMMENDED that the Council approves the attendance at the annual Battle of the Somme Commemorations in 2024, as set out in this report, of the Mayor (or Deputy Mayor) plus one additional Member to be nominated by Council, and an Officer.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Smith, seconded by Councillor Smart, that the recommendation be adopted and that Councillor Hollywood be nominated to attend.**

### **13. FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH - NORTHERN IRELAND AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services detailing that at the Council meeting in October 2023, it was agreed:-

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

Since then, a number of meetings had taken place between Officers and Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service (NIFRS) officials.

A point of agreement had now been reached for the conferral of the Freedom of the Borough ceremony, which was to be held on Saturday, 14 September 2024 in the Council Chamber, Bangor Castle, following normal protocols and concluded by dinner. The event would commence at 6pm.

The event would include: -

- Drinks reception
- Formal proceedings with Members robed
- Speech of Conferral – The Mayor of Ards and North Down
- Recitation of the resolution – Chief Executive
- Signing of the Honorary Book of Burgesses by the Mayor, Chief Executive and the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
- Presentation of Illuminated Certificate
- Response speech from the Chief Fire and Rescue Officer
- Dinner

#### **Wording for Certificate**

It was proposed that the certificate be worded as follows:-

*To: Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service*

*Greetings*

*Whereas the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the Borough of Ards and North Down in the County of Down being sensible of the exceptional and outstanding service to the community over many years; being desirous of recognising the unwavering dedication, selfless service and bravery in the face of danger; and expressing appreciation, support and admiration for lives saved and protecting our community with great honour and distinction.*

*Do by these presents confer upon you the Freedom of the Borough of Ards and North Down.*

*In witness thereof the Common Seal of Ards and North Down Council is affixed hereto this 14 September 2024.*

**Display – Saturday, 14 September – 3pm-6pm (Timings to be agreed)**

It was planned, that NIFRS would stage a display at the City Hall, Bangor on the afternoon of the conferral. The event would be geared towards the public although members are welcome to attend. The exact format of the event was still at the discussion stage.

RECOMMENDED that the Council

1. Adopts the plans for the conferral of the Freedom of the Borough on Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service as outlined in this report;
2. Agrees the above wording for the Certificate to enable the calligraphic illumination to be commissioned; and
3. Agrees the outline plans for the display.

Proposed by Councillor Moore, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendations be adopted.

Councillor Moore was delighted to propose the recommendations. Everyone would agree with the importance of the work carried out by the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service. She made mention of the recent fire at Cordners Shoe Shop, The Square, Newtownards which showed how important and vital the work of the service was and commended the efforts from those firefighters involved that day.

Councillor W Irvine highlighted the importance of the civic element and that would be viewed by the public.

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

**14. STONEBRIDGE, GREEN ROAD, CONLIG**

(Appendices V - IX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity attaching letter from Andrew Muir MLA dated 14 March 2024, letter from Chair of Infrastructure Committee dated 15 March 2024, letter to Andrew Muir MLA from Planning 28 September 2022, DFI Roads Abandonment Order, map of proposed abandonment area and Maps/Orthos/Streetview Images.

The report detailed that 'Stonebridge' was a road-over-former railway bridge located off Green Road, Conlig, Bangor, which formed part of the Belfast and County Down Railway (BCDR) Branch Line, Comber – Donaghadee. It was immediately adjacent to an existing housing development known by the same name, but outside of the

designated settlement limit of Bangor, thus in the countryside. The railway line was closed in 1950 and, in this particular location, that was the only remaining feature.

The Historic Environment Division (HED) had surveyed the site twice but had not listed the structure as it did not meet its requirement for listing under Section 80 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011. It was, however, recorded as Industrial Heritage on the Department's Industrial Heritage Record.

The Industrial Heritage Record listed more than 16,000 industrial sites, however, there was no corresponding regional planning policy to ensure protection; rather it was envisaged that such sites would be afforded protection via either listing or designation as an archaeological site and monument, to which regional planning policies apply.

Further to the Green Road having been realigned under permissions granted in 2006 and 2011, the Department for Infrastructure previously issued a consultation on its intention to abandon 1358m<sup>2</sup> of road on the basis that the road was no longer required for traffic purposes; however, further to local objection in the form of a petition to the abandonment, the matter had since been stalled.

It had been confirmed that DfI Roads originally made contact with the Council in September 2019 to advise that it had received an inquiry from a developer (subsequently confirmed as Boland Reilly Homes Ltd) seeking abandonment of a portion of old road/bridge at this site, in order to incorporate the site into its adjacent Stonebridge development. The majority of the affected area was confirmed as unregistered, but the bridge was registered in private ownership. DfI roads was seeking comments, and further to internal consultation no comments were returned in respect of the information. DfI Roads had since confirmed that it would be shortly writing to the Council again in respect of the proposed abandonment.

The map detailing the portion of the road proposed to be abandoned was included as Appendix 3.

### **Letter to Chief Executive**

More recently the matter of the proposed abandonment was tabled before Members of the NI Assembly's Committee for Infrastructure on 13 March 2024, at which Members agreed to write to the Council to make further inquiries. Immediately following that session, Andrew Muir MLA wrote to the Chief Executive outlining the background to the case, and expressing concern that should the Abandonment Order proceed, the bridge could be demolished. Mr Muir's letter was attached as Appendix 1, and Mrs Deborah Erskine's (MLA and Chair of Infrastructure Committee) letter was attached as Appendix 2.

As could be read within Mrs Erskine's letter the Committee agreed to ask Council to consider options to address concerns raised by objectors and within a petition against the proposed abandonment order, specifically with consideration of the option to purchase the section owned by DfI and steps that could be taken to preserve and maintain the bridge structure in the event it was purchased by a third party.

## Brief Background to Road Abandonment

Article 68 of the Roads Order enabled the Department (by Order) to abandon any road as it considered necessary to prevent or restrict access to the road by traffic, including if it was of the opinion that the road was not necessary for road traffic purposes. An Abandonment Order would remove public rights from the structure and eliminate Departmental liability. As the improvement scheme undertaken by the Department on Green Road, Conlig, in the early 1990s provided alternative road facilities, which ran adjacent to the disused road, bypassing the old Stonebridge, abandonment was therefore deemed appropriate as the road was no longer required for road traffic purposes. In addition, it was Departmental policy to dispose of assets which were no longer required for the effective functioning of the road network to reduce its liability and maintenance costs and the Department had no plans to utilise this section of old superseded road.

If an Abandonment were successful ownership of the bed and soil would revert to the registered owners or in the case of those unregistered areas to the legal owners.

At its meeting on 13 March 2024 the Infrastructure Committee **did not** agree the procedure (the 'SL1') to Make the Order. The Committee also confirmed the SL1 would be reviewed at a later date so at this present time the Order had not been made.

## Potential Protection

The Council's Planning Service had previously issued advice to Mr Muir setting out that it could not consider issuance of a 'Building Preservation Notice' (BPN) in respect of Stonebridge. That was due to the fact that a BPN would only afford protection for a period of six months, during which the Department for Communities' Historic Environment Division (HED) would be responsible for assessing the site for potential listing. Given that HED had twice reviewed the site and ruled it out of any listing, any Building Preservation Notice would be pointless.

In order to afford any protection via the Local Development Plan (LDP) process, Mr Muir was also advised that the Council would take account of 'non-designated heritage assets' which were of local significance to the community, in its policy preparation. Should monitoring identify the need to afford particular protection to such assets, the creation of a 'local list' and accompanying policy may be reviewed at the Local Policies Plan, which was the second document/stage in the Local Development Plan process. Given the draft Plan Strategy forms the first stage in the LDP process and was currently at an advanced stage in the process toward public consultation, it not expected that Stonebridge could be afforded any current protection in the short-medium term.

## The request by Mr Muir / Infrastructure Committee

As Members would read in Mr Muir's letter, he was seeking the Council to explore options for the Council, or a heritage group, to acquire the bridge, either through the

Local Development Plan (LDP) or presumably purchase if the abandonment goes ahead.

The timeframe for dealing with the matter through introduction of a 'local list' via the LDP was set out above, and not considered appropriate in the current circumstances, if the issuance of the Abandonment Order was imminent.

The other option Mr Muir had raised was for the Council, or potentially a sponsored heritage group, to acquire the old railway bridge, or as first right of refusal if the abandonment goes ahead. As set out above, if the Abandonment Order was successful ownership of the bed and soil would revert to the registered owners or in the case of those unregistered areas to the legal owners.

Given the passage of time since Boland Reilly Homes Ltd made the original request for abandonment, and the fact that the site lay outside the development limit and therefore of limited development value (in respect of restrictive planning policies relating to development in the countryside) it was uncertain if Boland Reilly Homes Ltd was still interested in pursuing the abandonment for its own purposes. Regardless of the restrictive planning policies in place, demolition of the bridge was not precluded as it would not require planning permission given it was unlisted.

The Council was in the process of preparing its feasibility study in respect of the Conlig to Donaghadee greenway and there was potential that this site could be incorporated into that route.

The Council was not in possession of any evidence regarding the current structural integrity of the bridge or what associated works would be required to ensure its integrity, in the interests of safety, if the Council were interested in acquiring the site.

It was not fully understood how interest among heritage groups in acquiring the site and maintaining could be achieved at this present time. It was considered therefore that the most appropriate way forward would be to make contact with Boland Reilly Homes in respect of its land ownership in the first instance and review the position when DfI Roads writes to Council shortly.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council approves the Chief Executive to respond to Mr Muir and the Infrastructure Committee to advise that the Council will consider the site in respect of its proposed Conlig to Donaghadee Greenway and will make contact with Boland Reilly Homes to establish whether its interest in the site is still relevant, alongside which elements are in its ownership, to further guide consideration of the request. A report will be returned to Council when more information is known.

The Director of Prosperity provided Members with an update advising of the current position. She advised that she had contacted a representative from Boland Reilly Homes to understand the ownership of the site. Back in 2019, Boland Reilly Homes had first approached DfI in respect of gaining a roads abandonment order. At that time, they had approval for a site with two semi-detached dwellings however they had amended that to a detached dwelling. Boland Reilly Homes had advised they had no further interest in acquiring the land as it was outside the development limit and therefore not related to the current development of Stonebridge. The Director

further explained that Boland Reilly Homes had confirmed that it did own the land directly under the bridge whilst the DfI owned the bridge and the road over it.

Councillor McRandal was content to propose the recommendation with the Boland Reilly Homes element omitted as given the Director's update that contact was no longer required.

(Councillor Blaney withdrew from the meeting – 7.34 pm)

Proposed by Councillor McRandal, seconded by Councillor Harbinson, that the Council approves the Chief Executive to respond to Mr Muir and the Infrastructure Committee to advise that the Council will consider the site in respect of its proposed Conlig to Donaghadee Greenway. A report will be returned to Council when more information is known.

Councillor McRandal felt the recommendation was sensible in the circumstances. He did not feel the Council had the money to purchase the site. However, it was a site of industrial and archaeological significance as listed by the Historical Environment Division. The site was of significant local interest with the nearby Stonebridge having been named after it and in 2022 'the save Stonebridge railway bridge' petition received over 500 signatures.

(Alderman Adair re-entered the meeting – 7.35 pm)

Continuing, Councillor McRandal highlighted that the Council was limited on what it could reasonably do. Exploring the possibility of the site being incorporated into Greenway plans had some potential.

Councillor Harbinson concurred with the points of Councillor McRandal, noting that it was easy to get rid of such structures yet difficult to build on the history they had.

Councillor Cathcart was happy to support the recommendation to gain further information as it was clear there was local community interest.

(Alderman Adair withdrew from the meeting – 7.35 pm)

Referring to the comments made by the Director, Councillor Cathcart noted that the site was outside the development limits and therefore the potential to put a house on the site was unlikely to achieve planning permission. He also wondered if DfI were to abandon the site would they then proceed to demolish the bridge.

Referring to PPS21 and development in the countryside, the Director noted how restrictive such policies were and achieving planning permission for a dwelling would be unlikely as it was not associated with a farm, it was not associated with a cluster nor did not have a built-up frontage.

(Alderman Adair re-entered the meeting – 7.36 pm)

Continuing, she explained that through the abandonment order, DfI Roads would have to undertake a D1 process. She did not believe they had any plans to demolish

the bridge but were seeking to abandon the road so that they had no further requirements on the protection or maintenance of the right of way.

Councillor Cathcart referred to the risk to the asset and given the response and that the asset was outside the development limit that site was not as valuable as some people may have thought.

Alderman McIlveen noted that part of the proposal was considering tying the area into the Council's Greenway proposal for the area. He questioned if that would involve a redesign of the Greenway proposal and given the site location he wondered about the practicalities of that.

The Director stated that the Greenway was at the feasibility stage. Given the location of the site, consideration of the route would be required however that would need to be examined in detail in the report.

Alderman McIlveen added that he had looked at the site on street view and he was unsure if that would be workable however was content for that to be examined further.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McRandal, seconded by Councillor Harbinson, that the Council approves the Chief Executive to respond to Mr Muir and the Infrastructure Committee to advise that the Council will consider the site in respect of its proposed Conlig to Donaghadee Greenway. A report will be returned to Council when more information is known.**

## **15. SEALING DOCUMENTS**

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Alderman Graham, that the Council seal and affixed to the undernoted documents:-**

Renewal of Cloughey Beach Lease  
Car Loan Agreement – D Roddy  
Contract for sale of land at the rear of 28a Beverley Crescent, Newtownards  
Grant of right of burials D40377- D40416.

(Councillor Cathcart withdrew from the meeting – 7.40 pm)

Alderman Adair welcomed the news of the renewal of the Cloughey Beach Lease and paid tribute to the late Eric Rainey for his work in that regard. He hoped the Council could proceed with the plans in making the beach accessible for the summer.

**NOTED.**

(Councillor MacArthur withdrew from the meeting – 7.40 pm)

## **16. TRANSFER OF RIGHTS OF BURIAL**

The following transfer were received:



Gary Edward Roath – Meave Duffin  
Ballyvester Cemetery section G plot 109

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Kerr, seconded by Alderman Graham, that the transfer be approved.**

## **17. NOTICE OF MOTION STATUS REPORT**

(Appendix X)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Chief Executive attaching 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.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

In respect of NOM 599 – Community Grants; Councillor Cathcart sought an update.

(Councillor Blaney re-entered the meeting – 7.41 pm)

(Alderman McIlveen withdrew from the meeting – 7.41 pm)

In response, the Director of Community and Wellbeing advised that a meeting of the Community Grants Working Group had been called and that Group would consider the way forward.

(Councillor MacArthur re-entered the meeting – 7.42 pm)

Councillor Cathcart welcomed progress on the matter and urged for work to continue on the other elements.

In respect of NOM 550 – Bins on Pavements; Councillor McKee noted that a lot of correspondence had been received regarding the matter and asked when an update would be forthcoming to the Environment Committee.

(Alderman McIlveen re-entered the meeting – 7.43 pm)

The Director of Environment advised that the Council had been liaising with DfI who initially offered to support the Council in lobbying for enforcement powers to deal with the matter. After a long delay, the Council was then re-directed to DAERA as the relevant department. A positive letter had recently been received from the DAERA Minister suggesting a course of action that Councils collectively might wish to take lobbying DAERA in relation to that matter. An update would be provided in the coming weeks.

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

## **18. NOTICES OF MOTION**

18.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Graham and Councillor Martin

That Council brings a report with a view to implementing a “dogs on leads” policy on that part of the Coastal Path which traverses the private road serving the properties 91 to 117 Station Road, Holywood inclusive.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor Martin, that the Notice of Motion be referred to Environment Committee.**

18.2 Rescinding Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Wray, Councillor Kerr, Councillor Boyle, Alderman McAlpine, Councillor Edmund and Alderman Adair

The undersigned wish to rescind part of the resolution in relation to the decision made at the October 2023 Community and Wellbeing Committee and subsequently ratified at the October Full Council meeting.

The full decision read as follows:

“AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Alderman Cummings, that the recommendation be adopted and that Council proceed with:

- The delivery of the upgrade to the play park at The Green Kircubbin (shore)
- Close Parsonage Road and explore the alternative uses as suggested by the consultation and the possibility of turning the site into a sensory garden for the Ards Peninsula.
- The delivery of a Multi Use Games Area at The Green Kircubbin.
- and that Council should not proceed with delivery of a Multi Use Games Area in Holywood at this time. Instead, Council will explore other options for location of a suitable facility, including at locations not currently owned or managed by Council. Council will also undertake further consultation with young people in Holywood, including engagement with local schools, in order to ascertain desirable facilities and desirable locations.”

We wish to rescind the following portion of this decision:

*‘Close Parsonage Road (playpark) and explore the alternative uses as suggested by the consultation and the possibility of turning the site into a sensory garden for the Ards Peninsula.’*

We propose that Council agree to replace this with the following:

“Work on upgrading the playpark at Kircubbin Green should continue as planned. Council defers plans to demolish the Parsonage Road Playpark in Kircubbin until an officer’s report is brought to the Community and Wellbeing Committee for

consideration and debate. This report should detail costs attributed to the demolition of the park, and both the installation and maintenance of the Sensory Garden. The report should also detail costs attributed to the maintenance of the Parsonage Road playpark in its current form.

Further to that, Members will have the opportunity to evaluate the original consultation process and consider feedback from the community.”

Proposed by Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Kerr, that the rescinding Notice of Motion be adopted.

(Councillor McLaren withdrew from the meeting – 7.47 pm)

Councillor Wray read out the Motion and provided background to the matter. He spoke about the consultation, the outline consultation took place in September with a consultation event having taken place in October. He had concerns regarding that consultation process which were with regard to the software used with the on-line consultation system meaning someone not living in the area could vote on the playpark on a number of occasions and believed that was not a good way to undertake consultations. Minutes of the October Community and Wellbeing Committee meeting showed the school beside the Kircubbin Green, St Mary's Primary School was consulted however oddly the school beside the playpark on Parsonage Road was not.

(Councillor McKee withdrew from the meeting – 7.49 pm)

76% of respondents were in favour of option A which was to close Parsonage Road Playpark and upgrade the Green. The top comment from respondents was that Kircubbin needed two playparks and residents should not be put into a situation where they had to decide. During the consultation process there was no consensus. Councillor Wray stated the rescinding Notice of Motion was not about blaming Council, Council Officers or any process. Instead, it was about reflecting on what the community needed and wanted. He felt the play provision in Ards and North Down was one of the best offerings by the Council.

(Councillor McLaren re-entered the meeting – 7.50 pm)

Continuing, Councillor Wray stated that there was an aspect of Council's strategy that made him feel slightly uncomfortable and that was giving Members of a community two options; to close a park and upgrade one or to upgrade both of them to a lesser extent. In this instance, that had created a toxic environment putting one side of the community against another. He outlined that in Kircubbin there was a main road through the centre of the village and parents/carers had said they had felt uncomfortable using the other park which was at the other end of the village. In terms of the decision taken around the sensory garden, that had not been discussed as part of the consultation therefore the community had no input into that. There was already a sensory garden in the village which had not been maintained, was overgrown and the community did not want it. Parents were concerned that if the area was left it would attract anti-social behaviour which was an issue in the near-by

area. The playpark had started to be demolished and Members had not been informed.

Councillor Wray explained that Chris Atcheson had taken the lead on the campaign on behalf of the parents, families and users of the park. He had done an incredible job which showed his tenacity that change could be made. The petition had been signed by 400 people therefore clearly showing that the people wanted the park to remain open. Councillor Wray was uncomfortable that the residents felt that the Council were valuing visitors before them. Councillor Wray highlighted that he wanted to see the sensory garden stopped as on reflection Members felt it would be a bad idea. Work should continue around the new playpark at the MUGA, The Green and a report with costings be brought back on the way forward for Parsonage Road. The residents did not want a fancy upgrade noting that there may be a cost associated with maintenance. Councillor Wray stated that the Motion was about listening to the public, reflecting on what they were saying and making the best decisions for everyone and further reports with detailed costs would assist with that. He welcomed that the Peninsula Councillors had worked together on the issue.

(Councillor McKee re-entered the meeting – 7.55 pm)

Councillor Kerr spoke in favour of the Motion advising that he had met with the residents of Parsonage Road along with other Members. He paid tribute to the work of Chris Atcheson on the petition which had over 400 names.

Alderman McIlveen expressed concern regarding the Council's Play Strategy and the work that the Consultants had carried out in that regard. The Council's decision was based on the Consultants' report and then further consultation was taken on the outworkings of that report. His concern was in relation to the integrity of that play strategy and he wondered if it would be worthwhile revisiting the Play Strategy. He questioned if that Play strategy was up to the standard given that now 400 residents had come forward for two playparks to remain in Kircubbin. He paid credit to his party colleague, Alderman Adair, who was trying to save the Sensory Garden from the previous recommendation. The decisions coming forward were based on the Play Strategy and if now the Council was considering those decisions as wrong then the Strategy needed to be revisited.

Councillor Boyle stated that when the decision was taken to close the playpark at Parsonage Road no one would have anticipated the uproar that had caused. He had many serious conversations with residents regarding the matter and felt the Council had made the wrong decision. The Motion sought a report to be brought back and then there would be further decisions to be made. Councillor Boyle felt it was a mistake that the Integrated School had not been consulted.

Alderman Adair questioned why so many people within the village were not part of the original consultation. At the time Council was going with the information that was supplied that 76% of over 200 respondents were supportive of the closer to Parsonage Road Playpark. With regards the sensory garden, Alderman Adair explained that the recommendation before the Committee was to close and dispose of the Parsonage Road Playpark. He had brought forward the proposal to retain the Sensory Garden to have something retained in the area, he did not wish to see the

land sold off. It was untrue that no one wanted a Sensory Garden and he did not believe the Sensory Garden about which Councillor Wray was referring to was a Sensory Garden by his definition and referred to those in the Mid and East Antrim Council area. He agreed with Alderman McIlveen that the Play Strategy needed to be revisited, the Strategy should deliver for children and young people across Ards and North Down. He commended Chris Atcheson who had led the campaign and he thanked him for his tireless efforts. He advised that he had been contacted by Mr Atcheson to advise that the contractors were on site to demolish the playpark. Councillor Kerr was able to stop the contractor while he contacted the Chief Executive.

Alderman McAlpine felt it was important that the group of Peninsula Councillors worked together on the matter. There was an issue with the consultation, the park was used regularly yet the users did not see the consultation signs. Looking at the super output areas on the NI Multiple deprivation measures, Kircubbin was one of those most deprived and it was important to bear that in mind. The Council should not be taking away services from an area particularly where there was deprivation of income.

Councillor Wray believed everything had been said on the matter and he hoped an outcome could be achieved for the community.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Kerr, that the rescinding Notice of Motion be adopted.**

### **18.3 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor McCollum and Councillor Irwin**

That this Council recognises the significant opportunities which the redevelopment of Donaghadee Harbour could bring to the local economy in terms of leisure sailing and tourism and thus instructs officers to work with local groups to scope potential operational facilities which could enhance the offering in the Harbour and further brings back a feasibility report on the various options, including costings and possible funding streams.

Further, that this Council recognises the issues associated with high winds and coastal change and reviews the original 2020 Harbour Study conducted by RPS including the necessity for an offshore breakwater and agrees to bring back a report in time to be presented to Council in September 2024, outlining the budget required to undertake this work, any key considerations, next steps and identify which stakeholders would need to be involved.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McCollum, seconded by Councillor Irwin, that the Notice of Motion be referred to the Environment Committee.**

(Alderman Adair withdrew from the meeting – 8.08 pm)

### **Circulated for Information**

#### **(a) Anti-Poverty Strategy**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy correspondence in relation to the above.

**NOTED.**

The Mayor wished to publicise her Charity Concert which was being held to support her three charities. The Concert would be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024 in Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church. The evening would involve choirs from across the Borough. Tickets were priced at £12 and could be purchased from Democratic Services.

(Councillor Holywood withdrew from the meeting – 8.05 pm)

(Alderman Adair re-entered the meeting – 8.05 pm)

**EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

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

**7.3 MINUTES OF PLACE AND PROSPERITY COMMITTEE DATED 7 MARCH 2024 CONTINUED...**

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

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

**7.5 MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE DATED 13 MARCH CONTINUED...**

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

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

**19. REQUEST FROM QMAC CONSTRUCTION LIMITED TO USE PART OF HIBERNIA STREET SOUTH CARPARK**

(Appendices XI - XIII)

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

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

**SCHEDULE 6:3 – 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 to QMAC Construction Limited in relation to land at Hibernia Street South Carpark. It was recommended that the Council acceded to the request.

**20. TENDER FOR PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE AT EVENTS (FILE TO/EV134)**

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

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

**SCHEDULE 6:3 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

This report presents the procurement process and recommended award for the provision of infrastructure at events, which contains commercially sensitive information.

**21. PROTECT DUTY – MARTYN’S LAW - HOME OFFICE CONSULTATION - STANDARD TIER (LESS THAN 800 PERSONS)  
(Appendix XIV)**

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

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

**SCHEDULE 6: 4 - CONSULTATIONS OR NEGOTIATIONS**

Council was asked to note the contents of a public consultation questionnaire completed by officers on behalf of Ards and North Down Borough Council.

**22. KINNEGAR LOGISTICS BASE - D1 PROCESS (FILE RDP37)  
(Appendices XV – XVII)**

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

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

**SCHEDULE 6:4 - CONSULTATIONS OR NEGOTIATIONS**

This report provided an update on the recently released D1 process for Council’s consideration.

**23. APPOINTMENT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE POST 2024  
(Appendices XVII - XVIII)**

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

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

Schedule 6:3. Exemption: relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.

The Council was asked to approve the process for the appointment of a Chief Executive to replace the current Chief after his retirement.

## **24. APPOINTMENT OF AN INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE 2024**

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

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

### **SCHEDULE 6:3 EXEMPTION: RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON.**

The Council was asked to approve the process for the appointment of an Interim Chief Executive to cover the role until the permanent replacement Chief Executive is appointed.

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

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

### **TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 9.01 pm.



## ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A Special meeting of the Planning Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards on Thursday 21 March 2024 at 7.00 pm.

### PRESENT:

**In the Chair:** Alderman McIlveen

**Alderman:** Graham

<b>Councillors:</b>	Cathcart	McKee
	Creighton	McLaren
	Harbinson	McRandal
	Kendall	Morgan

**Officers:** Director of Prosperity (A McCullough) and Democratic Services Officer (R King)

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Alderman McDowell (Vice Chair), Alderman Smith, Councillor Martin, Councillor McCollum and Councillor Wray.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

#### **3.1 LA06/2023/2434/F - Lands South of 37-77 Court Street and 1-11 Canal Row, situated within Bawn Wall and bounded by the canal, Newtownards.** (Appendix I)

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

**DEA:** Newtownards

**Committee Interest:** A major planning application

**Proposal:** Proposed residential development of 95 dwellings (reduction in density from 108 dwellings approved under LA06/2019/0603/F) to include roads, parking, infrastructure, landscaping and retention of Bawn Wall. Vehicular access to site will be from Castlebawn Drive.

**Site Location:** Lands South of 37-77 Court Street and 1-11 Canal Row, situated within Bawn Wall and bounded by the canal, Newtownards

**Recommendation:** Grant Planning Permission

Outlining the Case Officer's Report, the Director of Prosperity thanked Members of the Committee for acceding to a Special Meeting of the Planning Committee in order to determine the above planning application which was in the Major category of development, and which was subject to crucial funding deadlines. The Director commended the planning officer for bringing this major proposal to recommendation in just 16 weeks.

The current application was for 95no. dwellings, which was a developer-led Land, Design & Build scheme to be delivered in conjunction with Radius Housing.

The Housing Executive's Development Programme Group (DPG) has responsibility for the delivery of the Social Housing Development Programme (SHDP) on behalf of the Department for Communities. That Programme's Budget for the 2023/24 year was c. £159m, which could support the delivery of the agreed target of 1,500 new social housing Starts across Northern Ireland.

Radius Housing was working to secure budget for this specific scheme this year. In order to achieve this, it needed to enter into a Development Agreement with the developer, thus requiring Planning Approval to be issued before the end of March 2024, which in turn was why a recommendation was being presented at this Special Planning Committee meeting.

The Housing Executive had also endorsed its support for this scheme.

Slide 1 set out the location of the site, which was located within the historic bawn walls, south of Court Street and accessed via Castlebawn Drive which also served the retail developments of Castlebawn Retail Park and Lidl store and recently developed Drive Thru restaurants.

Planning permission was previously approved by Planning Committee at its meeting of September 2021 for a general residential development of 108no. dwellings. The layout as approved was shown on Slide 2. This scheme was for a lesser number at 95no. dwelling units.

The proposal consisted of the following house types:

- 12 No 2 person 1 bedroom general needs apartments
- 21 No 3 person 2 bedroom general needs houses
- 34 No 5 person 3 bedroom general needs houses
- 11 No 6 person 4 bedroom general needs houses
- 4 No 5 person 3 bedroom generic wheelchair houses
- 2 No 5 person 3 bedroom generic wheelchair bungalows
- 3 No 6 person 4 bedroom generic wheelchair bungalows
- 8 No 3 person 2 bedroom Cat 1 apartments

The Housing Executive has also specified that the scheme will assist in addressing a growing gap in supply (especially in respect of 2- and 3-bedroom dwellings) and provide sustainable homes for families in this urban area. The proposed new road layout had

been designed to current DFI Roads standards with in-curtilage car parking and adequate visitor parking available.

Dwellings were set back from footpaths to allow for in curtilage parking and grass/shrub planting.

The open space provision to the southwest corner and linear path through the centre with tree planting along the streetscapes would provide an attractive place to live.

A new internal continuous perimeter path would be provided to create a scenic route of historic interest along the Bawn Wall.

The development had been designed to deter crime and promote safety throughout. The back-to-back relationship between dwellings enhanced security and aimed to alleviate antisocial behaviour.

Dwellings overlooking the communal open space and the perimeter path had been designed to passively supervise these areas through secondary kitchen and lounge windows.

It was proposed that a section of the perimeter path and the central linear open space would be kept locked in the hours of darkness to help prevent antisocial behaviour.

The proposed development was predominantly characterised by 2 storey dwelling houses/apartments with a few single storey bungalows which respected the surrounding wider residential context.

The proposed dwellings would respect the surrounding built context in terms of material finish, rhythm, and scale. The proposed finishes were light toned through coloured render, red brick, and feature panels of Scrabo stone.

The proposed development aimed to redevelop this vacant historic town centre site and bring it back to life, enhancing the sustainability of the surrounding area which included many local businesses and larger retail parks.

A further slide indicated the landscape proposals for the scheme which had been assessed in detail, as per page 8 of the Case Officer's Report and was considered appropriate. Another slide provided an idea of the contextual elevations of the development.

The proposal also involved a scheme of significant repairs to the historic listed bawn wall and turrets, the details of which could be viewed in the Schedule of Repairs on the Portal which was assessed in detail by Historic Environment Division, and which was content subject to inclusion of conditions.

A further slide provided an example of the southwest tower in respect of repairs proposed.

Longer serving Members on the Committee would be familiar with the issue of flood inundation from a reservoir which had an impact on the Queen's Parade redevelopment

proposal and resulted in significant delay to the application being determined, whilst the Department's then Minister considered if the application required to be called in for its determination. The Director added that the relevant parts of the Reservoirs Act had still yet to be commenced/supplemented with subordinate legislation.

DFI Rivers had drawn attention to the fact that part of the site lay within the flood inundation zone of the Wildfowlers' Pond which was located some distance north of the site off Mountain Road.

A final slide provided detail of the flood zone, in the event of an uncontrolled release of water from the Pond. As detailed on pages 14 and 15 of the Case Officer's Report, Planning was satisfied that no dwelling units lay within the zone. Additionally, whilst recognising the harm that the policy proposes to protect against, it was considered that any risk was far outbalanced by redevelopment of this derelict site for social housing.

As such Planning Service was content to recommend this proposal to Members for full planning approval. The Director sought delegated authority to further refine the proposed conditions in conjunction with the developer to address the fact that there is legitimate fallback position.

The Chairman invited questions from Members to the Officer for clarification.

Councillor McRandal referred to the Flood Risk Assessment addendum which had proposed flood mitigation methods including flood resistant and resilient construction to a level of 4.27mOD. He asked why those had not been conditioned as part of the recommended approval and the Director explained that those requirements could be conditioned if the Committee was content to grant delegated authority to officers to do so.

Councillor Morgan asked what the reasoning was for the reduction in housing units from 108no. in the previous application to 95no. dwellings in the current proposal, and the Director explained that the initial planning approval had related to a private scheme but the application now reflected the preference of the Housing Association, Radius, in what was a social housing development.

Councillor Cathcart sought clarity on the arrangements for lockable gates to prevent antisocial behaviour at a linear path within the proposed scheme and the Director explained that the arrangements would be clarified with the developer and Housing Association and could be conditioned in the approval if considered appropriate.

Councillor Cathcart queried what further conditions would be added to the application and the Director explained that conditions that were already in place on the existing approved scheme were being replicated on this one and being changed from pre-commencement to pre-occupation in order to address the fact that a number of existing conditions had already been discharged.

As an example, the Director explained that in order to aid the developer getting onsite quickly the conditions around roads had been changed from pre-

commencement to pre-occupation given that the single road access to the site had no impact on existing roads while the development was being constructed.

Councillor Cathcart asked why the scheme had been conditioned for social housing given that it had previous approval for general housing and wondered what the necessity of that condition was for. The Director explained that it was common practice to include the condition where it was known that an application was going to be for social housing in order to ensure it contributed to meeting the social housing needs of a particular area.

Returning to the flooding risks, Alderman Graham asked if the only risk related to potential overflow from the pond at Mountain Road and the Director explained that a Drainage Assessment had been reviewed by DfI Rivers. In order to manage any flood risk in relation to potential exceedance of the network, there would be final drainage assessment required as part of the conditions. Other than that there was no other flooding risk identified beyond a widespread catastrophic incident that would affect most of Newtownards.

Referring to the archaeological elements of the application, Councillor McLaren noted that the proposed scheme sat within a designated Area of Archaeological Potential. She queried the archaeological conditions that had been included in order to satisfy Historic Environment Division Historic Monuments (HED HM) and queried what the potential archaeological problems could be.

The Director advised that it was usual practice to include three conditions in urban developments such as this. This would include asking the developer to submit a programme of archaeological works. This would be done by a qualified archaeologist and required identification and evaluation of any remains within the site, mitigation of impacts through a licenced excavation recording or by preservation of remains in situ. Finally, a post excavation analysis was required. The Director explained that process to ensure that remains were appropriately protected, documented or recorded. There were no site works allowed to commence until that was approved by HED. As the Bawn Wall was listed as a scheduled monument, separate consent was required to carry out works to that, too.

In terms of flood risk, Councillor Kendall noted that a section of the proposed development in the west of the site was located within the hazard rating considered as low. However she also noted that it went on to state that the proposed development was not bespoke or intended for any vulnerable groups and therefore should remain compliant. She asked for further clarity on that whilst also wondering if, as social housing, vulnerable people may take up some of the accommodation.

The Director explained that the comments were made under a policy of which there was no subordinate legislation to ensure compliance. The pond sat to the north of the site at a higher level and if there was uncontrolled release from it, it would take out all of the buildings between the pond and the site before reaching the site, and though the location of this site was considered to be at low risk, it had been the desire to ensure that none of the house types that were wheelchair friendly were within that zone. Those factors had also been balanced against the positive regeneration of the site.

Councillor Creighton asked what would happen in the event of an archaeological find and if works would stop immediately. This was confirmed by the Director who added that the programme of works would need to be submitted and reviewed by the Planning Service and HED. If HED was content, then a licence would be issued for archaeological works to be completed before the development works were able to recommence. It was a pre-commencement condition that would need to be discharged, but typical in areas such as this.

The Chair invited David Donaldson (agent), Ruairi Mussen (applicant) and Denise Quinn (Radius Housing Association) to come forward after Councillor Cathcart indicated that he wished to ask some questions.

Councillor Cathcart referred to a small section of open land that was not included in the development and asked for further information about the condition of it, feeling that it may have been useful for it to be included as part of the development.

Before answering the question, the Planning agent thanked the Committee for hearing the application at a special meeting and explained the importance of it to Radius Housing. They appreciated the work of officers in processing the application to this stage.

The area related to the outside of the Bawn Wall, between the Bawn Wall and the canal and was a grass bank. The area to the north within the site was where part of the wall had been demolished and this area was within the applicant's ownership and the opportunity was being taken there to link a pedestrian pathway to the Canal Row and on to Court Street.

Returning to Councillor Morgan's earlier queries around the reduction of dwellings from the existing approval, Councillor Cathcart put this to the agent, who advised that Radius Housing had opted to reduce the number of apartments previously approved on site in order to meet its social housing needs. This had led to the new application. The representative from Radius Housing advised that the scheme met required standards and had the approval of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive.

There were no further questions and the speakers returned to the public gallery.

Proposed by Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the officer's recommendation be adopted, and planning permission be granted. This would include delegated authority for officers to include any additional conditions in relation to the discussion and refinement of proposed conditions as requested.

The Chair sought agreement and Members indicated as follows:

**FOR (10)**

**Aldermen:**

Graham

McIlveen

**Councillors:**

Cathcart

**AGAINST (0)**

**ABSTAINED (0)**

**ABSENT (6)**

**Aldermen:**

McDowell

Smith

**Councillors:**

Kerr

PC 21.03.2024

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Creighton  
Harbinson  
Kendall  
McKee  
McLaren  
McRandal  
Morgan

Martin  
McCollum  
Wray

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the officer's recommendation be adopted and planning permission be granted. This would include delegated authority for officers to include an additional condition in relation to the proposed flood mitigation risks within the report.**

### **TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 7.26pm.

## ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Planning Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards on Tuesday 9 April 2024 at 19:00.

### PRESENT:

**In the Chair:** Alderman McIlveen

**Aldermen:** Graham  
McDowell  
Smith

<b>Councillors:</b>	Cathcart	McRandal
	Creighton	McKee
	Harbinson	McCollum
	Kerr	McLaren (19:09)
	Kendall	Morgan
	Martin	Wray

**Officers:** Director of Prosperity (A McCullough), Principal Professional & Technical Officer (C Blair), and Democratic Services Officer (S McCrea)

### 1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Morgan declared an interest in Item 4.1: LA06/2023/1505/F at 19:15.

### 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF PLANNING COMMITTEE 5 MARCH 2024

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of the above minutes.

NOTED.

### 4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

4.1 LA06/2023/1505/F - Development of three self-catering cottages (conversion and extension of existing building and new build) and associated changes to parking layout, including retention of car park barriers, The Old Inn, 15-25 Main Street, Crawfordsburn.



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 three self-catering cottages (conversion and extension of existing building and new build) and associated changes to parking layout, including retention of car park barriers.

**Site Location:** The Old Inn, 15-25 Main Street, Crawfordsburn.

**Recommendation:** Approval

The Planning Officer (C Blair) explained that the application was before members as a local development application which had attracted six or more separate individual objections that were contrary to officers' recommendation.

This was an application for the development of three self-catering cottages (conversion and extension of existing building from offices to two cottages and a new build to create a third cottage) and associated changes to parking layout, including retention of car park barriers.

The existing office building, which fronted onto Main Street, was located to the east of the main hotel building with an existing parking area to its rear.

The existing office building was sandwiched between two vehicle access points, one an entrance and the other the exit. There was an automatic barrier across each access point, the aim of which was to prevent external use of the car park by those not using the hotel. This application sought their retention.

Members were asked to note that consultation responses from DfI Roads, the Historic Environment Division (HED) and Environmental Health had no objections to the proposal. NI Water considered the application should be refused on sewerage capacity issues however a negative, pre-commencement, condition would be attached should Members approve the application to deal with this issue.

A significant number of objections had been received concerning this proposal which had been considered in detail in the case officer's report and Addendum report. The main points of objection related to the use of the vehicle barriers at the entrance, the proposed third self-catering cottage, a potential loss of a single tree in the existing car park, on-street parking and deliveries to the hotel and loss of residential privacy through overlooking.

The site was located within the Crawfordsburn Settlement Limit and formed part of the existing Old Inn hotel site. The site was not zoned for any particular use within the North Down and Ards Area Plan 1985 and draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015. The site was located within the draft Area of Village Character. It had been stated by a number of residents that the car parking area had been previously used as an area of open space for community gatherings for local residents; however, as the Google Earth images on slides 3 to 5 demonstrated, the area to the rear of the

proposed development of three self-contained cottages had been used solely for parking for in excess of five years.

In terms of policies ATC 1 and ATC 3 of the Addendum to Planning Policy Statement 6, this policy only related to designated Areas of Townscape Character or Areas of Village Character, which had been set out by the Planning Appeals Commission. This site fell within a draft Area of Village Character under draft BMAP 2015 and therefore this policy context could not apply. Nevertheless, the overall character of the area was still a material consideration, and the proposal had been considered under this context.

The existing buildings on the site presently in use for office accommodation were to be converted, with an extension to the building to accommodate a third cottage. The proposal did not result in the removal of any building; however part of the front boundary wall would be removed. The removal of this small section of wall did not detract from the character of the area, nor did it adversely impact the visual amenity of the draft Area of Village Character and did not result in the loss of any special architectural or historic feature. Members were asked to note that the Historic Environment Division (HED) offered no objection to this or the proposal as a whole.

The proposal complied with the requirements of PPS 16 'Tourism' in that the development was located within a site for existing tourist accommodation inside the settlement limit. In terms of the development's proposed design, Members were asked to note from the upcoming plans and site photos that the proposed extension to the existing office accommodation was subordinate in size and scale and was in keeping with the existing character of the area in terms of proposed design and finishes. In fact, the design, which included two dormers in the front roof slope, was similar to existing frontages on the opposite side of the road.

As also could be seen from an existing street scene photo, the existing properties were not uniform in size or height, with varying ridge heights. It therefore could not be argued that the proposed design of the extension to the existing office accommodation to accommodate a third self-catering cottage was out of keeping with the character of the surrounding area.

To the rear, two storey returns were proposed to provide a dining room with bedroom extension and terrace above. Two bedrooms were proposed to be provided in each of the two converted units. It was proposed that each unit would have an enclosed courtyard area (enclosed by a 1.5m high wall) to assist privacy into and out of the units. At first floor level, a small terrace was proposed to be accessed from the master bedroom.

It was noted that the proposed work would result in the removal of two small trees located in the car park area. These trees had no historic value or merit; they were not a rare species, nor protected by a Tree Preservation Order and they were not clearly visible due to being located behind the existing office building. The dense, mature band of trees to the rear of the hotel site was unaffected by this proposal.

However, it should be noted that views of these existing trees from existing dwellings or premises on Main Street was not a material consideration and loss of view did not hold determining weight to warrant a refusal of this application.

In terms of residential amenity, the proposed development fronted onto the existing Main Street with the roadway located between the front façade of the proposal and the front façade of existing properties, which was a distance of 12.5 metres.

In terms of the adjacent dwelling at No.11 Main Street to the east of the site, there was no direct overlooking of its private amenity area, which was the first 3-4 metres of rear garden space behind a dwelling or overlooking into private habitable rooms given the orientation and siting of the proposal.

Prior to the erection of the car park barriers, the Old Inn facilitated 60 in-curtilage parking spaces. The retention of the barriers and proposed building works associated with the self-catering cottages would result in 45 available spaces; a loss of 15 spaces. However, it had been confirmed that the Old Inn's lower ground floor 100+ seater function room closed in December 2023 with no further social events of any nature taking place. At 180 square metres net floorspace approximately and the Parking Standards document recommending 1 space per 5 square metres this equated to 36 spaces.

Planning Service had recommended a condition, which was included on the Case Officer's Report preventing any future use of the former function room. This condition was considered enforceable. This was outlined in the Case Officer's Report. The cessation of the function room and, having taken this into account, this proposal resulted in an overall betterment of over 20 available spaces within the curtilage of the hotel site, which adequately enabled provision for the proposed three self-catering holiday cottages under this planning application. As such, the proposal did not rely on the need for on-street parking or off-site valet parking as was originally proposed. This element had been withdrawn from the scheme and there was adequate in-curtilage parking available within the site, given the permanent removal of the function room space.

Dfl Roads had no objections regarding available in-curtilage spaces for this proposal. In terms of the car parking barriers that had been erected within the site: these were installed to enable the use of the car park for hotel guests/users, as previously, the applicant stated that the car park was being utilised as a public car parking space in the village. Dfl Roads was consulted on the positioning of the barriers with no objection having been raised. The entrance barrier was set 5 metres back from the roadside and 4 metres from the footpath. This provided an adequate depth to allow one car to wait clear of the footway, for the entrance barrier to open. The site was located off a narrow street within a 30mph zone where road traffic was slower to move through the Main Street. The barriers did not prevent the flow of traffic through the village. The proposal was in keeping with Policy AMP 7 – Car Parking and Service Arrangements of PPS 3 'Access, Movement and Parking' and the Parking Standards advice document.

The Planning Service had fully considered all concerns raised by objectors. It was the Planning Service's recommendation to approve the application subject to specific conditions as the proposal was compliant with the local development plan and retained planning policies.

The Chair invited questions from Members to the Officer.

Councillor McRandal's primary concern was with regard to parking issues and congestion. He was curious why the report only referenced parking spaces in relation to the function room's change of use and not the needs of the hotel as a whole. The Officer advised that the application was for three self-catering units and the parking requirement for that particular proposal. It was deemed that there was betterment within the curtilage due to the closure of the function room with parking deemed as adequate thereafter for the hotel as a whole. The function room itself was not part of the planning application but its associated parking spaces were related and as such, a condition would be added if the application was approved to prevent further use of the function room space without additional planning applications. Councillor McRandal suggested that business owners were unlikely to reduce business on square meterage and would likely have a change of strategy on the use of the function room which in turn would require for Members to look at the bigger picture. The Officer advised that Officers could not act hypothetically but that the room had ceased use as a function room and as parking was made available from the change, it was taken into account when assessing the planning application.

Councillor Cathcart noted several objections had been received and continued to be. That, alongside an addendum being added to the report made him question if Officers were confident that no new planning material considerations had been voiced and whether car park barriers would have required planning permission if it had not been for the three self-catering cottages that had been proposed. The Principal Planner had the opportunity to review objections as well as those received after the addendum and was able to state that none of them had raised any new issues, instead focusing on concerns of parking and road safety within the village. The Officer explained that Officers had not looked into it, but given that the barriers extended above two metres, they would have required planning permission. The car park had already been established on the hotel site and so the application was solely with regard to the proposed cottages and car parking at the site as a result of those. If the Committee was to vote against the application, the developers would have the option to appeal through the Planning Appeals Commission.

Councillor Martin referred to NI Water's recommendation to refuse the application and whether it was common for a statutory consultee to do so. The Officer advised that NI Water's stance was due to sewerage capacity but that was an issue that could be dealt with prior to the commencement of any development works via a negative condition that would be applied. NI Water tended to recommend refusal across the board, however, the Council had sought legal advice on such matters, and it was deemed that negative conditions could be applied, but that the responsibility lay with a developer to meet the condition. Councillor Martin asked if he was correct in thinking that 60 spaces were on site with the proposed buildings dropping the number to 45 but being uplifted by 36 with the closure of the room. The Officer advised that 60 had existed in the main car park with a further 13 to the rear.

With the proposed cottages and disuse of the function room, the car park would stand in overall betterment of 20 spaces. Councillor Martin had experienced the busy nature of the car park in recent times and suggested the function room being brought into the equation would be a solution to get around parking issues. That said, he was concerned that the function room's future use could be used as a non-function room, such as a dining room which in turn would create issue with the parking dilemma. The Officer reminded Members that the developers had already indicated the function room's use had ceased and that the condition mentioned previously would prevent social events or ceremonies taking place. Though the space could be used by hotel guests, it could not be used for social events for those who were not staying in the hotel. Councillor Martin was not satisfied that the solution to the planning application was predicated on spaces freed up by a room that could be repurposed in the future.

(Councillor McLaren joined the meeting at 19:09.)

Alderman Graham believed the barriers were imposing on the street due to their bright red lights. The Officer directed Members to photographs of the barriers and explained that the entrance barrier was well set back from the street and if vertical, it wouldn't be seen at all whilst the exit barrier was behind a pillar. The views were restricted however, this being an urban setting with an established car park and vehicles, the area already was subject to noise and lighting which would mean the barriers were not of a dominant nature.

As Councillor McLaren stood to speak, the Chair (Alderman McIlveen) asked if the Member was well enough informed to speak on the matter given a late arrival. Councillor McLaren advised that she was familiar with the area and had spent time reading over reports. She, like Alderman Graham was concerned over barrier lights and recalled local residents' concerns before being elected with lights shining through bedrooms in the vicinity and asked if such an effect had been considered.

The Officer stated that they had been as part of a full planning application through objections. DFI Roads had no objections whilst no complaints had been put through to Environmental Health in regard to light pollution. He reiterated that the urban setting of existing street lights and regular traffic both passing through and entering the car park had been taken into consideration as well, leading to the conclusion that barrier lights did not appear to be dominant. Councillor McLaren suggested those present in the gallery would no doubt issue light pollution letters after today's meeting and, as the barriers were part of a retrospective planning application and caused problems with villagers including delivery lorries that, instead of entering past barriers, instead parked illegally on the road which caused further trouble and asked who would police such parking. Upon being told that illegal parking was a police matter, Councillor McLaren stated that car parking had been devolved to, 'redcoats,' and that police would not enforce car parking issues if they wouldn't attend a burglary with expedience.

The Chair (Alderman McIlveen) reminded Members that this part of the meeting was for questions as opposed to statements.

Councillor Kendall asked how frequently the function room had been used previously, citing PPS3 5.46 and the importance in rural areas/towns/villages where public transport was limited that there was adequate provision for car parking. Given the infrequency of bus routes travelling through Crawfordsburn and the closest station being Helens Bay, she believed that there was limited public transport. The Officer advised that the proposal was for self-catering cottages on a hotel site and that Policy AMP7 in relation to car parking and service arrangements had been met and was within full compliance with the car parking arrangements. Councillor Kendall believed the function room and associated spaces was a focal point upon which the planning application balanced and asked if there was no difference made in car parking use/requirements before the room's closure and after, how it could be used as the reasoning for recommending approval. The Officer advised that the proposal was in line with parking standards; a function room of approximately 180sqm ceasing use freed car park capacity.

Councillor McCollum asked if parking for the function room had been ringfenced or if it was generally available to anyone that used the car park. The Officer explained that barriers had been placed to prevent general public use of the car park and that the spaces associated with the room were part of the car park for use by patrons. Councillor McCollum queried if those spaces were dedicated, and the Officer advised they were not.

Alderman McIlveen asked if any assessment had been carried out in relation to car park users using the facility for off-street car parking as opposed to hotel patronage. As no assessment had been carried out in respect of this application, Alderman McIlveen suggested that as barriers were a part of the application, an evidence base would have been useful for such information.

In the absence of no further questions for the Officer, the Chair invited Mr Mike Davidson from the public gallery to join the meeting and was advised that he had five minutes to present his argument against the proposal.

Mr Davidson spoke of residents' experience that the in-curtilage capacity of the car park had been substandard and observed to operate at maximum capacity in peak times. Though the report stated that 36 spaces were freed due to the closure of the function room, these were historical spaces and not factored into the operational requirements of the Old Inn's activities. Work was already underway on the room to repurpose it. With carparking requirements changing, a baseline would need determined based on the Department for Infrastructure Parking Policy which stated that if a development incorporated more than one use, combined figures were applicable. Policy AMP7 stated that there should be adequate use of space for parking and manoeuvring to do so. With the Department for Infrastructure's requirement of one space per bedroom plus for every 5sqm, one space per three staff, lorry space and coach space, even without the function room, minimum spaces were well above figures implied in the planning application. Any reduction in on-site car parking would increase street parking and have an effect on road safety and the flow of traffic which would be in contravention of AMP2, AMP7 and the Department for Infrastructure Parking Policy.

Mr Davidson advised that the applicant had met with Councillors in relation to double yellow lines on one side of the street which he suggested would impact traffic flow and likely increase speed in the area; elements which appeared to have no mitigation considered. The barriers were already causing congestion on the road as well as health and safety concerns with cars parked on a blind corner beyond. There were no provisions made for delivery vehicles which was also in contravention to AMP7.

There would be a loss of two trees with the creation of three new cottages and the last open vista of greenery in the village would be blotted out. For over 40 years, residents had enjoyed the area cited for the cottages for use of Christmas tree celebrations and carol services which would conflict with the SP1 and SP4 of the Belfast Open Space Strategy. There should be a stipulation for hotel windows to be opaque for neighbour privacy whilst residents were concerned with access to daylight and the redirected noise from new properties. Mr Davidson asked the Council to ensure appropriate in-curtilage parking existed with the exact number of spaces as would actually be required and how the Department for Infrastructure policies would be met.

Councillor Cathcart asked if, since barriers were placed, had the car park been at full capacity often. The application also sought retrospective planning for the barriers. If the barriers were being used currently and the car park was for hotel use only, he wondered if people who used the hotel just parked on the street and made the situation worse. In addition, if approval could not be met, the function room would continue to exist and be used as such, raising issues for all.

Mr Davidson understood the reasoning behind barriers being installed but advised they did not take into account car park capacity, allowing more cars through than spaces available which had resulted in cars parking outside of designated spaces which partially blocked appropriately parked cars or indeed, the rear entrance to the hotel for deliveries. He explained a general awareness in the community of the applicant wanting to repurpose the function room and a lack of understanding as to why a hotel would remove spaces from a car park when the car park was already struggling with demand. If the function room's associated spaces in the car park were already regularly used whilst the function room had ceased operations, he asked where those 15 cars would park. Residents already had to place cones at entries to houses and developments to stop parking and it was likely the lost space would result in further difficulties here and on the street.

The Chair (Alderman McIlveen) reiterated Councillor Cathcart's question, asking if it would not be better for the proposal to be approved and have a condition on the use of the space for external social purposes rather than it remain open due to a refusal.

Mr Davidson understood the condition but believed it would slowly erode as applications would be made in future for it to be used for guests and more applications atop that. He was aware of the function room being repurposed as a fitness suite.

Alderman Graham asked if parking was the main issue and, as a local resident, if Mr Davidson had noticed any change since cessation of the function room in December

2023. Mr Davidson had not noticed an improvement but advised it did depend on the time of day as well; if the car park was full when the village was at the quietest time of day, and, whilst being used as a through-road for Bangor-Belfast commuters, how bad it could be with a reduction in car parking spaces.

Mr Davidson returned to the public gallery and Mr David Mountstephen of Fleming Mountstephen Planning and Mr Colin Johnston, Managing Director of Galgorm Collection, were invited to join the meeting to speak in support of the application; both being advised of the five minute time limit.

Mr Mountstephen explained that the application had been submitted in February 2023 and was subject to assessment. All statutory consultees, save NI Water were content which could be addressed by a negative condition, and they had now moved to an advanced stage of delivering a solution. Last week, objections had been received from nine addresses and letters of support had also been received. The SPPS set out that sustainable development within settlement limits should be permitted. The Tourism policy for development in settlement was permissive and supported the planning application. The proposal fell with an in-positive policy context. Its design was informed and in keeping with the village without adverse effect. There was no impact on residential amenity whilst barriers produced less light than street lights. Car parking provision and management were deemed acceptable and took into account the entirety of the hotel. As the function room had ceased operation, as would offices to account for the proposed three cottages, overall betterment was reached. The function room would be subject to a proposed negative condition in the event of approval, being subject to future planning control. The proposal would not increase deliveries and its management was subject to review. There were 19 suppliers with deliveries being undertaken within the curtilage of the site, but waste collection remained on-street at off-peak times. It would be a quality development and appropriate to context whilst being subject to a robust process.

Mr Johnston explained that the site had been purchased in April 2021 during the Coronavirus closures for £3.5m with £2.5m having already been invested in areas such as the bar, reception spa and five rooms. Future investment was projected to be around £3m bringing total investment up to £9m. Future plans included refurbishment of 25 more bedrooms, private dining, four treatment rooms and the three cottages which would take the premises to five star. The Old Inn was in the blue Book, only one of five in Northern Ireland. It had a £2.2m wage bill which was projected to increase to £3m as the team increased to 95. Over the last 12 months, £10k had been raised for local sports clubs and rates were set to £95k per year. The closing of the function room would be a loss of revenue. If the Committee decided to refuse planning permission, the business would rethink its strategies and return to the old model which would include 150+ weddings and dinners per year which the company felt was the wrong decision for both their business and the local village. Mr Johnston asked Members to note that when Templeton was bought over, it had previously had 12 weddings per year which they had increased to over 160.

Councillor Creighton asked if street furniture and the Christmas tree would be retained to which Mr Mountstephen advised, yes, whilst Mr Johnston explained that he did not understand why the Christmas tree had become an issue as it was never



mentioned, as well as the fact that the Old Inn funded the event at Christmas and ensured the car park was as empty as possible to facilitate it.

Councillor Cathcart asked if facilities such as the spa would be available to the general public or limited to residents only, as well as what considerations or alternatives had been made when erecting the barriers. Mr Johnston explained that spa use was for residents only. Some meetings had taken place with local residents with some issues being worked through. The lights up barriers were the recommendation received from the Health & Safety Officer of the hotel group, and though he was not against the use of reflectors and turning the lights off, a local MLA had reiterated the need for lights. Unless he received word that it was okay to do so and safe, he could not turn the lights off. The Galgorm's intention was to manage the car park, however that could be done.

Councillor McLaren asked if investment in the property would detract from the character of the village, referencing a wall recently built to enhance the area and if they could do anything to make deliveries to the premises better, as what was on the application wasn't necessarily the experience that villagers had. Mr Johnston believed the application would not detract from local character. The design of the scheme was informed and enhanced character. Design features reflected the character on the main street, such as the recent wall erection. From minutes of meetings with residents, it could be shown that the company was trying to work through a list based on level of importance. To date, there were 19 delivery companies whilst waste collection operated between 11:00-13:00 whilst everything else was, through agreement, delivered to the back of the building. One supplier had refused, leading to the Galgorm group moving suppliers. He was happy to circulate the list of works from meetings if required.

Councillor McRandal suggested that, as the report included the closure of the function room, it should also consider any other changes that may have taken place in the hotel since it was taken over and asked if a holistic approach would have been more appropriate. Mr Mountstephen advised that a baseline had been established with all hotel facilities/uses considered into the total number of spaces available. With office space and a function room being removed, that would be two less sources of parking and what would be in its place was essentially a smaller development which in turn meant a smaller requirement. The focus was to be on a low volume/high spend product with an aim to move to five-star, increase spend and rosette awards. Due to this, weddings were not seen as part of the right combination but if planning permission was refused, they would have no option but to revisit that model.

Councillor Martin directed attention to the development being predicated upon the function room ceasing to operate and asked what the future intentions were for a 100+ seating space. Mr Johnston advised that as some legal proceedings were ongoing, he could not speak on the subject as a whole, save that £200k had been spent on the sub-floor and ceiling with the likely idea to be a hotel gym. Mr Mountstephen added that nothing was of any material consideration at this time as any plans would first require permission in the event that the application was approved.

Alderman Graham asked if the Galgorm Group saw car parking as a problem and if the crux of the issue was to reduce car parking spaces in favour of accommodation space. Mr Johnston agreed that car parking had been an issue long before the Galgorm Group had taken over and continued to be, but that their intention was to be part of the solution, hence the suggestion of double yellow lines if it helped. They had also distributed 1000 discount cards to local residents in the general area.

The Chair (Alderman McIlveen) asked if those staff displaced by closing of offices would be relocated within the site. Mr Mountstephen advised that office staff would no longer be present on site as the Galgorm Group had some centralised functions whilst Mr Johnston explained that this had led to nine less staff on site. Alderman McIlveen asked if any assessments had been made in relation to public use of the car park and, in the event of refusal, how many weddings might take place alongside associated traffic. Mr Johnston explained that the property was bought over in April 2021 and did not open until September as they had decided to begin work straight away on refurbishment. When the hotel was not open, they were able to see that the car park was used by the general public but did not have figures. With a 100 person function room, it was likely a large proportion of any who attended a function would be driving hence the Department for Infrastructure's analysis of one parking space per 5sqm relating to 36 spaces. Using the Templeton example from earlier in the meeting (12 weddings up to 160+ after purchase of the hotel), he believed that option evidenced the reasoning behind closing of the function room for the betterment of the village and the product.

Alderman McIlveen paused proceedings to ask the public gallery for quiet, advising that it was important for Members to not be distracted in order to listen and provide the most balanced decision.

Mr Mountstephen and Mr Johnston returned to the public gallery and questions of clarification to the Officer were opened to the room. Councillor Kendall noted the Department of Infrastructure consultation that resulted in the distance of barriers set back from the road to allow for cars to wait without impeding pedestrians, asking if any consideration had been given to larger vehicles like delivery vans and their impact upon the space provided. The Officer advised that the Department for Infrastructure had been advised on that very issue and they were content that, on the basis of anything accessing any site, there was always a possibility of temporary stoppage for a small period of time, but once barriers opened, the vehicle could enter, out of the way of other traffic and pedestrians.

The Director of Prosperity pointed out to Members that, as Mr Mountstephen had previously referenced, they had negotiated with delivery companies and provided assurance by changing suppliers who refused to deliver via the car park.

Alderman Smith wished to confirm that, in the event of the function room being repurposed, that a planning application must be submitted, and a review of parking would occur once again. The Officer agreed, advising that as with any proposal as part of a planning application, which would be part of the process and would require consultation with the Department for Infrastructure, being assessed on material considerations including planning history.

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

Alderman Smith agreed that the issue of traffic was contentious and well known whether local to the area or not. He understood the objective of the applicant and the concerns regarding barriers and changes to the car park capacity. He believed there were two key issues; that the Department for Infrastructure was content, a statement Members had to take at face value and that car parking capacity had been calculated as required based on facts.

Councillor Cathcart's opinion had swayed in both directions as he listened to speakers and the supporting evidence. He was concerned of the consequences of refusing the application given that no restriction would exist for the hotel and function room which would likely mean an increase in traffic. He hoped the applicants would continue to work on issues such as the barriers and residents' concerns as well as being proactive in finding long-term solutions. In addition, a refusal could also mean the removal of barriers which would lead to an open forum carpark which in turn could displace patrons, causing spill-out of parking on the streets.

Councillor McRandal had similar experiences to his colleague in relation to concerns if the application was refused. With the evidence supplied, and the fact that Members had to judge a planning application against relevant guidance led to his agreement that approval was the right approach.

Councillor Kendall understood points made by her colleagues but could not support the recommendation from a purely planning perspective, suggesting the decision was based on the technicality of the function room.

Alderman Graham felt the Department for Infrastructure's calculations were based partly on the function room ceasing to exist which created more of a theory than practice approach. The function room's space would have a commercial use of some sort in the future that would attract footfall which in turn would increase traffic. In addition, though it may have been the PSNI's responsibility to police dangerous parking, they had to base attendance at many different incidents based on importance/ severity which may mean a lack of ability to attend infractions at Crawfordsburn. His view was emphasised by Mr Davidson (speaking against the application) stating that there had been no difference to car parking levels since closure of the function room.

As there was a divided opinion amongst Members, the Chair called for a vote.

In a non-recorded vote with 9 FOR, 5 AGAINST and 1 ABSTENTION, the proposal passed, and planning approval was granted.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman Smith, seconded by Councillor Cathcart, and a vote of 9 FOR, 5 AGAINST and 1 ABSTENTION that the recommendation be adopted, and that planning permission be granted.**

(Councillor Morgan returned to the meeting at 20:38 following conclusion of the item.)

#### 4.2 LA06/2023/1573/O – Dwelling, approximately 70m East of No.18 Hillsborough Road, Comber

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's Report

**DEA:** Comber

**Committee Interest:** A local development application "called-in" to the Planning Committee by a member of that Committee – Ald McDowell – for the following reasons

1. The application may not be contrary to Paragraph 6.73 of the SPPS and Planning Policy Statement 21, Policy CTY10, as these pertain to demonstrating a six-year duration of agricultural activity associated with a Business ID.
2. The proposal may not be contrary to the SPPS and Planning Policy Statement 21 Sustainable Development in the Countryside and Policies CTY1, 10, 13 and 14 as this is an outline planning application and will take due consideration of all sustainability requirements at full application stage.

**Proposal:** Dwelling

**Site Location:** approximately 70m East of No.18 Hillsborough Road, Comber

**Recommendation:** Refusal

The officer explained that the application was before Members as it was a local development application "called-in" to the Planning Committee by Alderman McDowell for the reasons set out above.

Members were asked to note that there had been no objections from Consultees with DfI Roads content. No representations had been received either in support of or objecting to the proposal. The site formed part of a larger agricultural field and located immediately adjacent to No.18 Hillsborough Road, which was owned by the applicant.

It was proposed that the site would be accessed via a new laneway which was 278 metres in length traversing flat land from the public road to the north. There was an area of existing trees along the rear and eastern boundaries of the site, however the front northern boundary was undefined. Hedging and post and wire fencing defined the remaining site boundary.

The proposed laneway did not follow the existing site boundaries cutting through the middle of the fields to access the site.

In terms of the Local Development Plan, the site was located within the countryside as defined in the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015. No designation or zoning affects the site, so the relevant policy is the SPPS and PPS 21 'Sustainable Development in the Countryside'.

This application was a proposal for a dwelling on a farm.

In terms of CTY 10 criterion (a) which stated that the farm business should be currently active and had been established for at least 6 years - in this case, the applicant had submitted a farm business ID which related to a farm business at 58 Glenstall Road, Ballymoney. The farm business was established at 58 Glenstall Road, Ballymoney on 14 March 2012.

However, and critically important to this application and to the Planning Department's opinion to refuse, this farm business only took ownership of the land at this site on Hillsborough Road in Comber in April 2022.

Members were also asked to note that the applicant had confirmed that the farm in Ballymoney, which consisted of a non-residential shed and yard, was sold in 2021. Therefore, the applicant could not meet the key six-year policy test under criterion (a) for the land at Hillsborough Road. In fact, this could not be met until 2028.

It was evident that the applicant did not have evidence of an active and established farm business at this Hillsborough Road address.

This was the same position that was taken by the Planning Appeals Commission. The Principal Planner referred to Appeal 2016/0047, which was relevant. An extract of this appeal decision was shown on the next slide which contained PAC Appeals 2016/0047 & 2021/A0133.

Members were asked to note that both of the appeal decisions were dismissed. These appeals were for very similar situations with the most recent appeal decision in June 2023 particularly current. In both instances the appeal site was added to an existing Farm Business ID where the farm itself was in an entirely different location. For example, in the 2016 appeal, the appeal site was in Belfast and added to the farm ID in May 2015 with the Farm Business in Seaforde, Co Down before then. In the 2021 appeal, the appeal site was added to the farm business in 2019, and the Commissioner made it clear that the appeal site could not have been a part of an active and established farm business for at least 6 years as required by policy. In this current application the farm business ID was from Ballymoney with this site bought in 2022 on Hillsborough Road. It was clear that the application site had not been part of an active and established far business for at least 6 years as required by criterion (a) of policy CTY 10.

Criterion (c) indicated that wherever possible, access to a new dwelling should be obtained from an existing lane. However, the applicant was proposing the construction of a new lane measuring 278m long. This was despite an existing lane accessing No.18 Hillsborough Road, which was immediately adjacent to the site and owned by the applicant.

Criterion (d) of policy CTY 13 stated that a new building would be unacceptable where its ancillary works did not integrate with their surroundings. Paragraph 5.72 of the Justification and Amplification to the policy, as was shown on the next slide, advised that for a new access, if it could not be provided via an existing lane, should as far as practicable run unobtrusively alongside existing hedgerows. However, the proposed lane would cut through the middle of the open field to the application site.

The proposed access lane did not integrate into the landscape and would be a prominent feature. Furthermore, the ancillary works would result in a detrimental change and erode the rural character of the area, subsequently failing to comply with policy CTY 14 of PPS 21 on 'Rural Character'.

In conclusion, the officer recommended refusal of the application.

Councillor Cathcart understood the six-year refusal reason and asked if the other three were based on the laneway as this was only at outline application stage. The officer explained that the proposed site location plan was for the access lane to go through existing fields rather than run unobtrusively, hence the decision to look at other elements of refusal.

Alderman McDowell summarised the issues as interpretation of the business and CTY regulations regarding the laneway. He believed there was some difficulty in making a decision based on how the six-year rule was interpreted especially in circumstances where a farm buys land but cannot transfer operating history to include the new land. The officer explained that, ultimately, outcomes were based on PAC decisions. The argument was not that a farm ID existed for six years, but that the farm was based in Ballymoney, not Comber and that the land could not be shown as part of an active farm for six years, hence it did not meet criterion (a) of CTY10. Alderman McDowell suggested similar issues must have occurred in the past and if Officers' interpretation of the policy was the actual intent of it or a proposed intent. The Director of Prosperity advised that it was not for the Planning team to establish intent but to base any assessment upon most recent appeal decisions which set precedent. The same situation had been debated at the Planning Committee in the past whereby a farm in Lisburn bought land in Ards and North Down. In that instance, it was determined that a field would not be classed as having a six-year active business history based on purchase and the new owner's history; a judgement that the PAC had come to in another case. Unless such PAC decisions had been challenged, as established by Wm Orbinson KC, those decisions were material, and if the Committee changed direction with the current application, it could cause difficulties moving forward.

Councillor McCollum asked if it were the case that the proposed laneway was too long and if she was right that the report stipulated that an existing laneway could have been used as an alternative route. The officer agreed, stating that from roadside to the site was fairly open and that the proposal did not carry alongside existing boundaries which in turn meant it did not integrate into the countryside setting. The applicants had proposed to use a new lane as opposed to the existing one.

Mrs Lestas (applicant) and Mr Scott Caithness (agent) joined the Committee from the public gallery to speak whilst being reminded that she had five minutes to speak.

Mrs Lestas explained that she, as applicant, had been questioned on purchasing land in 2022 that could not be part of a six-year portfolio, a position she wished to counter. The appeal cases that had been mentioned were irrelevant and CTY12 was referenced, not CTY10 that was in the current application. Mrs Lestas referred to

other cases relating to CTY applications; one being from Stewartstown that had an active farm I.D. of 13 years but had only acquired the appeal site two years before their application. In this instance, the PAC agreed to the six-year rule and granted planning. The second case was for an Antrim farm where CTY10 was applied to the farm business and not in regard to land ownership. The Officer had questioned the active status of the farm given no single payment grants had been claimed. Mrs Lestas had provided DAERA documents which showed a 2014 farm I.D. for farm land in Ballymoney. As for active farming, DAERA had set out categories 1 to 3 for farming. The category 2 I.D. had been transferred from Ballymoney to Hillsborough Road in 2022 and changed from category 2 to category 1 with over £17k woodland scheme resulting in 2100 trees that covered the proposed laneway. They had provided documentation of category history dating back to 2014. Quoting DAERA that, 'farming is defined as enjoying the decision making power, benefits and financial risks in relation to agricultural activity taking place on the land declared,' Mrs Lestas explained that they had been operating in such a way since 2014.

The agent, Mr Scott Caithness, in relation to items 2-4 in the policy, explained that PPS21 and CTY10 were satisfied as the site was linked and sited to a cluster as confirmed in the report, set back 270m from the Hillsborough. A roadside entrance was already existing, so no works were required at the roadside. The area was of low elevation in the landscape and as such was sympathetic to the landscape and its character. The proposed site was lower than existing buildings and would be sympathetic to PPS21. As had been previously mentioned, 2100 trees had been planted over 1.5 hectares in the field between the road and field which would cover the laneway. These would mature and transform the landscape and habitat whilst screening the proposed dwelling and lane. Ancillary works were not highlighted in discussions during the planning process as a concern until receipt of this evening's report. The design would reference department guidance for the countryside and all consultees were satisfied with no objections raised.

Alderman Smith referenced planting of trees which would screen the proposed laneway but queried why the applicant would not use the laneway that already existed. Mrs Lestas explained that planting trees meant the lane would be more attractive and that whilst the existing lane did pass by the proposed dwelling site, they were never asked to reconsider the laneway but regardless, tree planting should negate any issues.

The meeting was brought to recess at 21:01, recommencing at 21:18.

Alderman McDowell questioned the examples of PAC decisions made by the Officer and Applicants. Mrs Lestas advised that there were two cases in the Officer's report, one of which she was not aware of until this evening's meeting. Her own examples consisted of Stewartstown where it went to appeal for the same issue despite having a farm I.D. for 13 years and only owning the site for two years before applying for planning. The PAC ruled in favour of the applicant advising that the farm business holding being active was the main concern as opposed to land ownership. In the Antrim case, the PAC ruled that CTY10 applied to the farm business and was also not concerned with land ownership.

Mrs Lestas provided references for both cases; 2014-A0269 Stewartstown and 2018-A0210 Antrim. She believed decisions on these matters were important to all farmers across the country in relation to planning permission and farm I.D. Both she and the agent returned to the public gallery.

Alderman McDowell asked which cases were most applicable in terms of their judgement. The Director of Prosperity explained that the Planning Department based decisions on the most recent PAC outcomes. Whilst the applicant had quoted a 2014 case, the most recent case the PAC was involved in was for June 2023, Gransha Road South. In relation to the 2018 case quoted by the applicant, it was an application for a dwelling on a farm that had been refused. The PAC decision had been in 2019, stating that the applicant owned the land and that CTY10 related to the business, not land ownership and though this was not fatal to the proposal, it referenced self-assessment tax returns and land rented out from 2012. In that case, it was about maintaining land in good agricultural activity which the landowner had done for the renter as well as invoices that were supplied but not beyond 2017.

Alderman McDowell believed it was difficult to reach an informed decision until the PAC outcomes had been reviewed. In discussion with the Chair (Alderman McIlveen), Alderman McDowell came to the conclusion that a deferral for one month would allow for the four PAC cases mentioned to be investigated further. The Director of Prosperity added that Officers should also bring forth other relevant cases to provide as accurate a report as possible in terms of PAC decisions.

Proposed by Alderman McDowell, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that the decision be deferred for one month to await a report on related PAC outcomes.

Councillor McCollum as seconder believed it was unfair for the Director of Prosperity to sift through PAC outcomes during the meeting and that Members would be better placed to make a decision when they had full oversight of related PAC outcomes.

Councillor Wray asked if there was any way for such information to be assessed earlier to which the Director of Prosperity advised she was unaware if the PAC decisions referred to had been included in the speaking notes provided before the meeting. The Chair (Alderman McIlveen) advised that a mechanism was in place to allow for Committee to ask for more time or information as required.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McDowell, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that that a decision be postponed, and that LA06/2023/1573/O be deferred for one month to await a report on past PAC decisions.**

**4.3 LA06/2022/0930/F - Infill dwelling, garage, and associated site works (in substitution for approvals LA06/2018/1123/O and LA06/2023/1878/RM), Lands 70m south of No. 38 Springvale Road, Ballywalter**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's Report

DEA: Ards Peninsula



**Committee Interest:** A local development application “called-in” to the Planning Committee by a member of that Committee – Cllr Kerr –

The main reason is the road safety aspect, which is still of concern to objectors given the speed of the road.

Also raised is the consultation response from Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group

'Marine Conservation Branch has reviewed the additional information provided by the applicant and would note that our concerns regarding the potential impact of coastal erosion on the site, highlighted in our previous consultation response (dated 20th October 2022, remain).

After assessing the recently concluded Northern Ireland Historical Shoreline Analysis Survey we understand that this section of coastline has been historically eroding at a rate of between '0.01 and 0.03m' per year. As was stated in our previous response, dated 20th October 2022, we would advise that erosional issues faced at this site may be exacerbated with climate change and sea level rise further increasing the risk.

In addition, the results of the 'Coastal Bedrock Geology' project, which was undertaken by GNSI, indicate that the bedrock geology found along this section of coastline consists of 'wacke and mudstone' which is soft and therefore may be susceptible to the impacts of erosion.

Given this evidence we would advise that this section of coastline may be vulnerable to the impacts of erosion in the future, especially under climate change scenarios, and consequently we would have significant concerns should planning permission be granted.

'If this development, as well as the adjacent proposed development (LA06/2022/0928F) are allowed to progress, this will likely restrict the potential for this section of coastline to naturally adapt to climate change, increasing the pressure on this largely rural area and therefore may increase the need for future sea defences, which are not guaranteed, in this location to protect this application. Furthermore, as stated in our previous consultation response (dated 20th October 2022) this proposal will alter the use from agricultural to domestic therefore increasing the development along a section of relatively undeveloped coast which is contrary to SPPS Section 6.35.'

**Proposal:** Infill dwelling, garage, and associated site works (in substitution for approvals LA06/2018/1123/O and LA06/2023/1878/RM)

**Site Location:** Lands 70m south of No. 38 Springvale Road, Ballywalter

**Recommendation:** Approval

The Officer advised that the application was before Members as it was a local development application “called-in” to the Planning Committee by Councillor Kerr; he reasons being that objections had been raised regarding road safety given the speed of the road, and the potential impact of coastal erosion on the site, through concerns raised by the Marine Conservation Branch consultation response.

Members were asked to note that DfI Roads had no objections to the proposal subject to conditions. With the exception of NIEA Marines and Fisheries section, the remaining consultees had no objections to the proposal. The Marines and Fisheries division considered the application should be refused.

Members were also asked to note that three letters of objection were received from two separate addresses. The main points of objection related to road safety and

flooding. In regard to flooding, it should be noted that in the DfI Rivers consultation response, it stated that the Coastal Floodplain was not applicable to this site and as such they had no specific reason to object to the proposal.

The application site was located on land between Nos. 38 and 40 Springvale Road, Ballywalter. The site formed part of an existing agricultural field, which was relatively flat by the road frontage and then sloped down towards the coast to the south. The site history was particularly relevant and a material consideration regarding this proposal. Whilst the NIEA Marine and Fisheries Division considered the application should be refused, Members were asked to consider this against the principle of development which had been already established on this site. As per slides shown, Members could see that there was an extant approval under LA06/2023/1878/RM following Outline Planning Permission granted under LA06/2018/1123/O. This Reserved Matters was only very recently granted on 1 September 2023. The Marine and Fisheries division did not offer any objection to the Reserved Matters application in its consultation response dated 28 June 2023.

The legal fall-back through this extant Reserved Matters remained in place on the site until 2025. Given this, the principle of the dwelling remained appropriate, and the proposal was considered to be in general compliance with the SPPS. As such, the Planning Department had to set aside these comments from Marine and Fisheries, as the applicant could proceed to build a new dwelling in practically the same siting under the granted Reserved Matters. The main change in terms of siting was the repositioning of the driveway to facilitate a separate access to the adjacent site, also approved under a separate reserved matters application.

DfI Roads was consulted and had no objection to the proposed change in access layout. As per the Reserved Matters the current proposal included a garage, car port and space for two in-curtilage parking spaces. The driveway slope was also deemed acceptable. Objections related to the 60mph speed of the road and potential for serious accidents, however, as per the granted Reserved Matters, DfI Roads considered the proposed access safe. The proposed design of the dwelling included use of high-quality materials to enhance the rural character. The proposed terraces and balconies, as also included in the previous approved scheme did not have an adverse impact on neighbouring residential amenity.

The current application proposed a minor increase in ridge height to 6.8 metres from 6.49m granted under the Reserved Matters, a change of 31 centimetres. Furthermore, there was a change to the rear of the site with between the approved and proposed dwelling in that the ground level at the rear of the site was to be raised by 900mm.

As outlined previously, DfI Rivers stated that the site lay outside the coastal floodplain and as such there was no adverse impact on the change to the ground levels, which could impact flooding.

Based on the information presented and taking account of the reasons for this application to be called-in to the Planning Committee, approval of the application was recommended.

Mr Andy Stephens (agent) joined the Committee from the public gallery to speak in support of the application whilst being reminded of the 5 minute time limit. Mr Stephens advised Members that the subject site and adjacent lands had a detailed planning history as had been presented in the report before Members. The net effect of this history was that extant planning permission had been granted on site until 31 August 2025 with the applicant having a legal fallback position which meant that only net differences between the outlying and reserve matters application and that which was in the current full application could be assessed. The differences between the extant permission and proposal were an amalgamation of existing access serving No. 38 and the access under reserved matters approval. The proposal sought to provide a single access regress to serve No. 38 and the application site alongside the adjacent, approved dwelling; something that would reduce the number of accesses onto the Springfield Road to what had previously been approved. The position and access of the egress would constitute as an enhancement as it provided better visibility toward Ballyhalbert due to being located further from the bend. Some changes had also taken place with regard to house design in reserved matters as the Officer had outlined. The Department for Infrastructure had no objections and no objections had been received from third parties. The Department for Infrastructure also had no objections to previous outlying or reserved matters applications or the three applications on adjacent lands. NIEA Fisheries may have objected to this application, but it was noteworthy that they had not objected to the outlying application on the site or the reserved matters. Mr Stephens fully supported the Officer's recommendation and all elements considered within the report.

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

Councillor McRandal noted NIEA Marine and Fisheries recommendation of refusal but given the factor of extant planning was in place, he was willing to propose.

Councillor Wray agreed, stating the two main concerns were road safety which had been addressed by the consultee.

Councillor Kerr asked for concerns to be noted of coastal erosion in the area of 0.1-0.3m per year and as such could not support the proposal.

In a vote of 14 FOR, 1 AGAINST and 1 ABSTAINING, the proposal was passed, and the planning approval was granted.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McRandal, seconded by Councillor Wray, and a vote of 14 FOR, 1 AGAINST and 1 ABSTAINING that the recommendation be adopted, and that planning permission be granted.**

**4.4 LA06/2023/2012/F - Dwelling (change of house type from approval W/2011/0015/RM) Land between 3 and 4 Sheridan Grove, Helen's Bay**

Item 4.4 was deferred to a later Planning Committee meeting.

**4.5 LA06/2023/1946/F - Lighting, planting and renewal of street furniture, Kircubbin Promenade, (to include land immediately adjacent to**

**Strangford Lough and to rear of 1-15 Main Street, the Village Green Carpark, Kircubbin Presbyterian Church and Kircubbin Playpark).**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Case Officer's Report

**DEA:** Ards Peninsula

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

**Proposal:** Lighting, planting and renewal of street furniture.

**Site Location:** Kircubbin Promenade, (to include land immediately adjacent to Strangford Lough and to rear of 1-15 Main Street, the Village Green Carpark, Kircubbin Presbyterian Church and Kircubbin Playpark).

**Recommendation:** Approval

The officer advised that the application was before Members as it was an application made by the Council.

This proposal related to land at Kircubbin Promenade, primarily to the rear of 1-15 Main Street, Kircubbin Presbyterian Church and Kircubbin Playpark. The existing site was a mix of car parking, public walkways, benches, playpark and informal open space. The proposal complied with the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 and there was no adverse visual impact on Strangford and Lecale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

There was no impact on existing areas of parking or vehicular accesses. DfI Roads and Environmental Health had no objections to the proposal.

In terms of residential amenity, one objection was received regarding 4m high lighting columns, which were part of the existing scheme. These had been subsequently changed to low-level bollard lighting adjacent to the rear of the residential property. No further objections were subsequently received and the amended lighting within the scheme would not adversely impact neighbouring residential amenity.

There were no objections from NIEA and Shared Environmental Service was also content.

Given the existing area had been used as a promenade for many years and the scheme was for environmental improvements including updating street furniture and lighting, it was not expected that users would experience any additional consequences of flooding and climate change as a result of the development.

Based on the above, the officer recommended approval of the application.

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

Councillor Kerr welcomed the work for Kircubbin whilst Councillor Wray noted the report mentioning the promenade not being frequented regularly, but with new works as well as a new playpark and multi-use facility, he believed it would be an attraction for visitors.

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

## **5. SERVICE PLAN**

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

Since 17/18 Service Plans had been produced by each Service in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context;
- Provide focus on direction;
- Facilitate alignment between Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities;
- Motivate and develop staff;
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice;
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes;
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

A draft plan for 2024-25 is attached, which had been developed to align with objectives of The Big Plan for Ards and North Down 2017-2032; the draft Corporate Plan 2024-2028 and the draft Annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The Plan would also support delivery of the ITRDS. The agreement of the plan would also aid toward achievement of the Council's performance improvement duties under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

The Service Plan highlighted where the service contributed to the Corporate Plan and, where this was the case, sets out the objectives of the service for the 2024-25 year. It further identified the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service would try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The plan had been developed in conjunction with staff, officers and management and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.

The plan was based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g. due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP) the plan may need to be revised.

The Committee would be provided with update reports on performance against the agreed plan.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council adopts the attached Planning Service plan.

The Director of Prosperity explained that all committees received annual service plans for units which set out business for the upcoming year. There was not much change to last year as key performance indicators for Planning are set in legislation. An additional area included was carrying out recommendations from the NI Public Ombudsman regarding trees reported to previous meetings of Planning Committee.

Councillor Cathcart referred to page 17 and the figure of 15.8 believing Council were under the target and asked for any additional information as well as updates on staff turnover and whether the ability existed for prioritisation of issues with regeneration abilities above other applications. The Director of Prosperity explained that 15.8 weeks was the most up to date figure that could be supplied as statistics were published at the end of Q3. Year to date was 17.2. With regard to staff turnover, there had been issues of staff shortages due to sickness and staff taking up secondments or moving to other jobs. The same difficulties existed across councils with retention and attraction of workers with the correct skillsets. With more resources and new staff trained up, it was hoped to use some overtime to tackle the backlog potentially with a specialised team who could work on it without distraction. It was an issue to balance the management of many cases with new cases that needed acting upon within the timeframe whilst also awaiting information on older cases as to not miss overall targets. The Department did prioritise those cases and by way of example, a Special Planning Committee was held last month for social housing or those subject to grant funding and the National Museums application was brought forth due to their own funding deadlines. Any case that contained regenerative capabilities or economic benefits was prioritised subject to how front-loaded they were and consultee responses.

Councillor McRandal asked for more information regarding comments on page 8 of 93 weeks average processing on major applications and page 11's mention of weaknesses/challenges for the years ahead and protocol with Building Control. The Director of Prosperity explained that, though it may not look good on paper, if Members drew their attention to Q3 statistics where the Department received 3 majors and decided 2 with 93.2 weeks processing though the target was 30 weeks. That consisted of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, which was determined in 25.3 weeks, but the other was Phase 3 of the Rivenwood development on Movilla Road, Newtownards, which required an amendment to the previous Section 76 agreement with Fraser Houses in terms of the land and phasing of development. Within Phases 1 and 2, he had an approval that NI Water would honour with regard to a connection to sewers but as phase 3 was coming in, both he and other developers of other pieces of land were required to put in ring sewer which required much negotiation in the background with other landowners and developers and have the Council's legal team amend the legal agreement. This led to 139 weeks of processing which skewed the average processing times across the board. Statistics stated it was a median calculation though this would likely have meant a slightly lower figure. With regard to the second query, an Officer in the Enforcement Section had access to the Building Control database to view new applications coming in. This was to investigate where some people have planning approval for something but applied to Building Control for something different. It was hoped that the department could be proactive and notice these differences before building began. The Enforcement Officer would look for applications at the address to look for

inconsistencies. The Building Control application forms had been edited to notify members of the public that enforcement checks were in place, but it had not proven to be overly successful and as such, the decision was made to stop and allow the Officer to focus on Enforcement cases. However, it could be revisited again in the future if needs be.

Councillor McKee referred to page 7, factors against effectiveness and asked of legalities of TPOs (Tree Protection Orders). The Director of Prosperity advised that around 150 TPOs were transferred from the historic DoE where Officers were unable to discern if issues existed due to data loss during transfer or because of old record keeping. When a provisional order was put on land, it required one signature and if modified after six months or confirmed, a second signature would be added. A few of these cases did not have a second signature meaning the TPO may not necessarily be legal and as such, the team were working through such issues and re-serving where necessary. Unfortunately during the drafting of tree regulations by the historic DoE, Councils had not been granted power to revoke TPOs served by the previous planning authority. This was flagged under the review of the Planning Act, discussed at professional officers' group and was being raised with the Department.

Councillor Wray, in regard to the performance table on page asked how they could manage or evaluate effectiveness if the average processing time information for Enforcement was not available. The Director of Prosperity advised that the statutory enforcement indicator for enforcement cases was that 70% of cases were concluded within 39 weeks. Concluded meant that if a retrospective planning application was submitted, or a court summons or notice issued, the issue had been migration from the previous planning portal system so the statistics branch were unable to extract data, instead manually investigating individual cases in an attempt to put closure dates in to extract information; an issue since the new system's inception in 2022. It was hoped that, following discussions, the information may be fully available for the past year in July. There were weekly and monthly reports regarding target processing times, and they were dealt with as soon as possible, especially priority #1 cases where unauthorised works were being carried out to trees or buildings or resulted in environmental harm.

Alderman McDowell asked if, in relation to Building Control, the public were advised that plans could be checked, and spot checks were carried out as not finding any issues in recent checks might show that the public were understanding of warnings. Historically there had been issues of plans being approved that did not match the completed build and there had been few cases where planners had asked for buildings to be taken down. The Director of Prosperity advised that no reference had been made to not finding issues, but that it was a resource intensive task with the number of applications Building Control received and their various stages. Plans may be received, be looked at on the ground and not match the plans but be approved if it matched building regulations. As an example, HMRC had informed the department of a tax rebate on a disabled dwelling where planning permission had been passed for a single storey dwelling but the application to Building Control was for a two-storey dwelling. In respect of the comment regarding planners not asking for buildings to be removed, decisions were made by Council, not through single Officer determinations. Sometimes, applications that were reviewed did involve enforcement notices being served and the development to be removed, and the Planning Appeals

Commission had upheld such Notices requiring demolition. The Director reminded Members of a current situation whereby the Planning Service had been seeking demolition of a dwelling that was not in the correct location for some considerable time.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor McRandal, seconded by Alderman Graham, that the report be noted, and the Service Plan be adopted.**

## **6. UPDATE ON FUNDING FOR LIVING WITH WATER PROGRAMME**

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

### **Background**

When it became clear that the drainage infrastructure across Belfast was unable to meet the requirements expected of it, the Northern Ireland Executive approved the development of a Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Plan (SDIP) for Belfast to:

- **protect against flooding** by managing the flow of water through a catchment from source to sea;
- **enhance the environment** through effective wastewater management and the provision of enhanced blue/green spaces to benefit local communities; and
- **grow the economy** by providing the necessary capacity in our drainage and wastewater management systems to facilitate new development projects including house building.

“Living With Water in Belfast”, WAS the Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Plan for Belfast £1.4bn 12-year investment plan approved by the NI Executive and published by DfI Minister November 2021.

The Plan aimed to address the increasing demands on the city’s wastewater and drainage network caused by population growth and increase in commerce, as well as the more frequent extreme weather events resulting from climate change.

The Plan can be viewed here <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/topics/living-water-programme/living-water-belfast>.

### **Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs)**

CSOs WERE a growing public concern across UK - being informed by the increased level of information that was being made publicly from ‘Event Duration Monitors’ (EDMs)

NIW had advised that Greater Belfast was much worse than any part of UK due to decades of under investment. Its predecessor organisations were forced to create overflows to reduce out of sewer flooding of homes and businesses, which resulted



in bacteria contaminating watercourses and sea, and the unsightly Sewage Related Debris (SRD) found along watercourses after rainfall, with tons accumulating in certain coastal locations.

Of 270 CSOs, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency had determined that 80% are unsatisfactory – five times the average for England.

In order to grow the economy, we needed necessary capacity in our drainage and wastewater management systems to facilitate new development projects, including house building.

To fully ease constraints NIW had advised that sustained investment was required over 12 years of the Living with Water Programme (and may extend further due funding constraints).

Inflationary costs in the construction industry since November 2021, along with some changes to project scope, had impacted programme costs.

### **Infrastructure Committee**

Upon return of the Executive, at a recent meeting of the Infrastructure Committee, the Chief Executive of NIW, alongside NIW's Director of Finance, addressed the Committee. They set out that its Price Control 21 (PC21) six-year investment plan was designed to reduce pollution and facilitate continued connections to NIW's network. However, NIW was at a crossroads, whereby the agreed plan was at risk. Budget constraints had been introduced in the current financial year, and further constraints were being discussed, meaning that the LWWP may be put on pause for a number of years.

**Implementation of the LWWP** Belfast Plan would facilitate **economic growth** by:

- Relieving development constraints;
- Reducing flood risk;
- Improvement in water quality; and
- Shellfish industry increases production – further improving water quality.

**Deferral of investment** in the LWWP Belfast Plan will have the resultant impact of:

- Non-compliance forcing further development constraints;
- Further flooding;
- Further water quality deterioration;
- Potential collapse of the shellfish industry;
- Potential infraction proceedings;
- Further marked deterioration in water quality; and
- Economic and reputational damage – whereby recovery requires further increased investment & operational expenditure.

### **Impact on ANDBC**

A major upgrade to Kinnegar Wastewater Treatment Works was proposed, whereby submitted its Proposal of Application Notice in December 2023. Submission of the

planning application was imminent; however, potential deferral of investment would put the delivery of this vital upgrade at significant risk.

NIW senior officials highlighted to the Infrastructure Committee how the infrastructure and services it provided had a pivotal role in protecting the environment and enabling economic growth, alongside the stark message that Northern Ireland's waste water system was simply not fit for purpose. It was undersized and could not meet the new environmental standards that the public demanded.

NIW had recognised the situation and had done the preparatory work of completing the designs and studies and putting in place a supply chain, on the basis that commitment was given when it entered the PC21 period but since December 2023 NIW's shareholder (DFI) had signalled a move away from that enabling plan – for which the resulting impact would be widespread and felt across Northern Ireland.

## Conclusion

It was considered that it would be appropriate for the Council to write to the Minister for Infrastructure highlighting the impact such withdrawal of funding would have on our Borough as a whole in terms of enabling investment, impact on our economy and tourism industry and meeting environmental regulations.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the content of this report, and the attached minutes of the Infrastructure Committee meeting of 21 February 2024, and writes to the Minister for Infrastructure seeking assurances that the monies committed to NIW for infrastructure projects, particularly the planned upgrade of Kinnegar Wastewater Treatment Works, will be reinstated forthwith.

The Director of Prosperity explained how the Minister was considering the issue of NI Water the previous day at the Executive regarding its inability to raise money to cover historical underinvestment since its takeover in 2007. With regard to the application submitted for Kinnegar Wastewater Treatment Works south of the MoD site, monies had been approved as part of the Living with Water program and design team/contractors in place subject to achieving planning approval (the application having just been submitted) and the potential suspending of that funding for three years would put it at severe risk of being delivered. With regard to upgrading of combined sewers, there were issues relating to mussel beds in Belfast Lough and related economic drivers. Council had written to the Minister before the NI Assembly fell asking for NI Water to receive proper funding or ability to take on appropriate loans to make upgrades. Members were aware of the Council imposing negative conditions on planning approvals to allow builders to negotiate with banks for money to assist with sewerage works for their sites and on that basis, the recommendation included writing to ask for assurances that monies be made available.

Proposed by Councillor McRandal, seconded by Councillor Martin, that the recommendation be adopted, the report be noted and write a letter to the Minister for Infrastructure.

Councillor McRandal spoke of the importance in upgrading Kinnegar and that pressure should be applied to get it delivered given the various economic and environmental impacts of not doing so. Councillor Martin shared the same sentiments.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Alderman McRandal, seconded by Councillor Martin, that the recommendation be adopted, the report be noted and to write a letter to the Minister for Infrastructure.**

## **7. UPDATE ON RESOURCING ISSUES WITHIN DFI ROADS**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity detailing the undernoted:

### **Background**

Members would have been aware that the Council was required to consult with DFI Roads as a statutory consultee in relation to a large volume of planning applications. In addition, there was recognition through the Public Accounts Committee Report on Planning in Northern Ireland that resourcing and capability within a number of statutory consultees was causing a considerable negative impact on the processing of such applications. This, alongside a number of other issues, led to the implementation of the Regional Planning Improvement Programme, being delivered collaboratively between councils and the Department for Infrastructure under the new Minister.

### **Detail**

The responsible Divisional Roads Office serving the Ards and North Down area was Southern Division, based in Rathkeltair House, Downpatrick, which also served the Newry, Mourne and Down council area.

Further to writing to one of its senior officers recently in respect of delays being experienced on a significant major application, and seeking expedition accordingly, it was confirmed that the Divisional Office had extremely limited resources.

Its senior officer advised that budgetary pressures over the last two years and the associated Departmental cost savings measures required, had prohibited the recruitment of the multiple staff resource required to meet the Development Management agreed staff structure. As such, its Development Management service was still operating with high staff vacancy levels (despite recent recruitment exercises) as were other sections within DFI Roads that provided indirect inputs into planning application consultations, such as Traffic and Section Offices.

Additionally, it was understood that DFI Roads had withdrawn from responding to any Pre-Application Discussion requests in order to focus resource on planning applications.

Senior officers within Planning would be meeting with DFI Roads officials to discuss how we could request prioritisation of particular applications; however, the current situation was untenable and required urgent intervention, via correspondence to the Minister for Infrastructure in respect of appropriate resourcing, if the Regional Planning Improvement Programme was to succeed in respect of speeding up the planning process.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council notes this report and writes to the Minister for Infrastructure seeking urgent attention to the matter of resourcing in the Department's Southern Division Office and other related offices with responsibility for planning responses.

The Director of Prosperity advised Members of the 2019 John Irvine report about the effectiveness of statutory consultees in the planning process. It had highlighted that prior to RPA a Voluntary Exit Scheme occurred where a lot of experience and knowledge was lost particularly in respect of the department hosting Roads and Rivers. A Public Accounts Committee report into Planning in March 2022 identified that there were still resourcing issues. More recently it had been determined that the divisional roads office that processes the borough's applications, based in Downpatrick and part of the Southern division, was refusing to take part in pre-application discussions for which applicants found useful to see what they needed to be aware of before submitting a major planning application. They were prompted recently in regard to a school application at Redburn as it had been 13 months without a substantive response. Their senior officer advised of staffing issues which led to asking approval to write to the Minister of the Department for Infrastructure.

**RESOLVED**, on the proposal of Councillor Martin, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that the recommendation be adopted, the report be noted and to write a letter to the Minister for Infrastructure.

## **8. UPDATE ON PLANNING APPEALS**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity detailing the undernoted:

### **Appeal Decisions**

1. The following appeal was determined on 25 March 2024 with the Enforcement Notice being upheld by the Commission.

PAC Ref	2023/E0011
Enf Case ref	LA06/2020/0130/CA
Appellant	Eddie Lennie
Subject of Appeal	Service of Enforcement Notice alleging: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unauthorised change of use of land and vehicle access to serve private golf range;</li> <li>Unauthorised erection of 5.5m high safety netting;</li> </ol>

	iii. Unauthorised erection of two floodlight columns; iv. Unauthorised metal shed erected; and v. Unauthorised erection of unauthorised polytunnel
Location	Lands north of 60 Ballyrogan Road, Newtownards

An appeal against an Enforcement Notice could be brought on any of the following grounds:

- a) that, in respect of any breach of planning control which may be constituted by the matters stated in the notice, planning permission ought to be granted or, as the case may be, the condition or limitation concerned ought to be discharged;
- b) that those matters have not occurred;
- c) that those matters (if they occurred) do not constitute a breach of planning control;
- d) that, at the date when the notice was issued, no enforcement action could be taken in respect of any breach of planning control which may be constituted by those matters;
- e) that copies of the enforcement notice were not served as required by the relevant section of the Planning Act;
- f) that the steps required by the notice to be taken, or the activities required by the notice to cease, exceed what is necessary to remedy any breach of planning control which may be constituted by those matters or, as the case may be, to remedy any injury to amenity which has been caused by any such breach;
- g) that any period specified in the notice falls short of what should reasonably be allowed.

This appeal was brought on grounds (a), (c), (d) and (f).

Ground (c) of the appeal related to the access only. The appellant referenced two planning applications (X/2008/1069/F & X/2007/0517/F), which showed the vehicular access referenced as an existing farm access on land outlined in blue on associated drawings. It was found that whilst this demonstrated that there may have been an existing farm access at the location at time of the planning applications, this did not demonstrate that the lane in itself had planning permission. As such the Ground (c) appeal failed as it could not be demonstrated that the matter did not constitute a breach of planning control.

In relation to ground (d) the Commissioner concluded that the private golf range element (excluding the floodlighting and netting) was constructed in May 2013. It was also considered that the above access was a composite part, which had been used in connection with the private golf range for a similar period of time. Therefore, both the private golf range (excluding the netting and floodlighting) and access were immune from enforcement action and the appeal succeeded under Ground (d) to that extent.

Ground (a) relates to the Deemed Planning Application. The remaining issues considered under this ground were the floodlighting columns, the netting, a metal shed and the erection of a polytunnel.

The above development was compliant with the policies of the extant Ards and Down Area Plan 2015. As there were no conflict between the SPPS and the retained policies, PPS 21, PPS 2 and PPS 8 (as the netting and floodlight columns are ancillary development associated with the immune private golf range) applied.

During the hearing the Council advised of no objection to the granting of permission for the metal shed and polytunnel subject to specific conditions. As such the appeal succeeded under ground (a) in respect of these two elements subject to specific conditions.

The Commissioner concluded that the 5.5m high safety netting was acceptable on planning merits.

In terms of the floodlighting, it was located within 50 metres of a tree and hedgerows where there had been bat roosts present. The Commissioner was not satisfied that it was demonstrated that the floodlights would not cause less than 1 lux of light spill onto these features. Policy OS3 of PPS 8 and policies NH2 and NH5 of PPS 2 stated that development should not have an adverse impact on features of importance to nature conservation and the impact on bats in their status as a statutory protected species. It was concluded that the appellant could not demonstrate that the floodlights were not likely to harm the local bat population and the Council's reason succeeds in this regard.

Finally, the Commissioner concluded that the floodlighting columns did not have any adverse impact on neighbouring residential amenity given that the nearest residential properties were around 80 metres to the southwest and 120 metres to the west. As such the council's objection in this regard concerning the floodlights was not sustained.

To conclude the metal shed, polytunnel and netting were considered acceptable and deemed planning permission granted subject to conditions. However, the two floodlighting columns did not succeed under ground (a) on the basis that it could not be demonstrated that there was no significant adverse impact on the local bat population. As such planning permission was not granted for this development and the Enforcement Notice was upheld on this breach of planning control only.

Ground (f) was an administrative ground which states that the steps required by the Notice exceeded what is necessary to remedy the breach of planning control. The only element that remained were the two floodlighting columns. It was concluded that the ground did not need to be restored to the condition before the breach took place and therefore the PAC had amended the remedy in this regard to the following – "Remove two floodlight columns (edged in orange on the accompanying map)."

2. The following appeal was allowed on 06 March 2024.

PAC Ref	2022/A0123
Application ref	LA06/2021/1451/F
Appellant	John Furnie
Subject of Appeal	Refusal of planning permission for an attic conversion to incorporate new dormer window
Location	82 Ward Avenue, Bangor

The Council refused planning permission on 20 June 2022 for the following reason:

- The proposal was contrary to Policy ATC 2 'New Development in an Area of Townscape Character' of PPS 6 Addendum, in that it failed to maintain or enhance the character of the Bangor East Area of Townscape Character.

Given that the Bangor East Area of Townscape Character (ATC) was only a draft designation within the Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP) the quashing of its adoption in 2017, the Commissioner considered that Policy ATC 2 was not relevant to the appeal proposal as it only refers to designated ATCs.

The Council considered that draft BMAP was a material consideration given that no objections had been submitted in relation to its proposed designation, therefore it would likely be confirmed in any lawfully adopted BMAP. Notwithstanding the Commissioner's conclusions in respect of Policy ATC2 of APPS6, the potential impact of the appeal development on the proposed ATC designation remained a material consideration in this appeal.

The Commissioner considered that the proposed dormer did not present as an obtrusive feature in the row in opposition to the existing street scene. Rather, she found the elevated and prominent row to be of diverse character, including modern flat roof designs which 2343 part of its appearance. The proposal respect3e the built form of the area and is contextually appropriate as viewed from Seacliff Road.

As such the appeal was upheld, and the decision was appended to this report.

### **New Appeals Lodged**

3. The following appeal was lodged on 15 March 2024.

PAC Ref	2023/A0109
Application ref	LA06/2023/2156/O
Appellant	Mr Horner
Subject of Appeal	Refusal of Outline Planning Permission for 2No. Dwellings.
Location	Between 2A and 4 Coach Road, Ballyloughan, Comber

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

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the report and attachments.

The Principal Planner advised of two decisions since the last meeting; one relating to an appeal against the serving of an Enforcement notice and the other was relating to a planning application. The first related to alleged unauthorised private golf range with netting, floodlighting columns, metal shed, access and polytunnel. The PAC upheld that the directional changes to floodlighting columns be removed, the private range excluding the netting, floodlighting and associated access were immune from enforcement action. The netting, polytunnel and metal shed subsequently received planning permission. The second issue was with regard to a dormer window where it was considered that the dormer did not present an obtrusive feature in the street given the diverse character of roof designs in area and it also respected build form. Finally, one new appeal had been lodged.

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

## **9. PUBLICATION OF NI PLANNING STATISTICS 2023/2024 THIRD QUARTERLY BULLETIN**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity detailing the undernoted:

On 28 March 2024 the Department published its report on the volume of planning applications received and decisions issued in the third quarter of 2023/24. This bulletin reported on activity and performance following the transfer of planning powers to councils in April 2015.

The bulletin had been attached, and the press release and detailed tables could be viewed on the Department's website here <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-planning-statistics-october-december-2023>.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes this report and attachment.

The Director of Prosperity apologised that Committee should have received a report that month which reported on the second half of the year in respect of the current Service Unit Plan but would be presented next month.

In detailing the highlights from Quarter 3 as detailed in the latest statistics, in Q3, 3 majors had been received, totalling 5 to date with 2 decided. 93.2 weeks was the average processing time, affected by the major applications mentioned earlier in the meeting. 181 local apps had been received with 187 decided. The target was 15 weeks, the third quarter processing times was 17.2 weeks with the year to date figure being 15.7, down 47 applications on the same period as last year. The same trend has been noted in other Council areas and was perhaps due to NI Water issues and the rising costs of construction.

**RESOLVED, on the proposal of Councillor Martin, seconded by Councillor Kerr, that the recommendation be adopted, and that the report be noted.**



**TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 22:16

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

A meeting of the Environment Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards, on Wednesday, 10 April 2024 at 7.00 pm.

### **PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Morgan

**Aldermen:** Armstrong-Cotter    McAlpine  
                  Cummings

**Councillors:** Blaney                    Harbinson  
                  Boyle                        Kerr  
                  Cathcart                    McKee  
                  Douglas                    Smart  
                  Edmund                    Wray

**Officers:** Director of Environment (D Lindsay), Head of Waste and Cleansing Services (N Martin), Head of Assets and Property Services (P Caldwell), Building Control Services Manager (R McCracken), and Democratic Services Officer (H Loebnau)

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors McKimm and Rossiter.

**NOTED.**

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

There were no declarations of interest.

**NOTED.**

### **REPORTS FOR APPROVAL**

### **3. 2024-25 SERVICES PLANS**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Environment detailing that since 2017/18 Service Plans were produced by each Service in accordance with the Council’s Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context
- Provide focus on direction

- Facilitate alignment between Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities
- Motivate and develop staff.
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice.
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes.
- Better enable us to recognise success and address under performance.

Draft Service Plans for 2024/25 year were attached for the following areas:

- Waste and Cleansing Services
- Asset and Property Services
- Regulatory Services

The plans had been developed to align with outcomes of the Big Plan for Ards and North Down and with the Council's draft Corporate Plan 2024-28, 'Towards a Sustainable Borough'.

The Service Plans highlighted where the services contributed to the Corporate Priorities as set out in the draft Corporate Plan 2024-28 Towards a Sustainable Borough and, where that was the case, sets out the objectives of the service for the 2024/25 year. It further identified the performance measures used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service would try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The Service Plans also identified key risks to the services along with analysis of those and necessary actions to mitigate/manage risks. Key risks impacting the services were mapped to the Corporate Risk Register.

The plans were based on the agreed budget for 2024/25. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g., due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the community planning legislation) the plans may need to be revised. The Committee would be provided with half yearly update reports on performance against the agreed plans.

RECOMMENDED that the Council adopts the attached plans.

### **3.1 Waste and Cleansing Services**

(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Waste and Cleansing section.

It was noted that the report was not displayed correctly on Decision Time during the meeting, although it had been available earlier. Therefore, while the report was discussed it was suggested that a decision on the recommendation be taken at the full Council Meeting later in the month.

Alderman Cummings queried the figures being presented and Members desire to have comparisons to allow progress to be monitored or problems identified and

asked the Director if that would be the case going forward. In response the Director of Environment explained that the report set out the high-level key objectives for the incoming year and those would be compared with trends in previous years where relevant.

Councillor Smart thought that it was good to see progress being made in that area of work and highlighted that one of the challenges going forward for the Council was the old Household Recycling Centre (HRC) estate, some of which was not fit for purpose. He asked for a timeframe on how that would be taken forward and the Head of Waste and Cleansing stated that there was as yet no exact plan for that but that a review was proposed within the next twelve months and details of that would come before the Committee in due course.

In response to some questions from Councillor McKee the Head of Service explained that a new market had been found for recycling hard plastics which looked feasible, and recommencement of this recycling option would initially be at the Balloo site with possible expansion as quickly as possible to some other sites. The Council was still engaged with WRAP and was going through a process of consultation to look at and identify markets for certain recyclables. The Officer also explained that a section of the Greenway was closed currently for widening but over Easter the Council had received requests to have parts of the path cleaned. That had never been a task of the Council and was something that would need to be considered further.

Councillor Cathcart referred to the landfill targets for the coming year and asked if that was the Council's own internal target and the officer stated that it was, in the context of increasing the Council's recycling rate, but that if everything went to plan the Council's landfill would fall to zero this year if it got a new residual waste contract in place. He went on to explain that the current landfill contract through Arc 21 would end next January, and therefore finalisation of an alternative outlet for residual waste disposal was a pressing issue. The Director explained that the Council was working towards targets set out under legislation and the first priority was to extract as much high-quality recyclables during waste collection operations as possible; whilst sending residual waste for incineration was a more favourable option than landfill, it would still be a last resort after recycling potential had been exhausted.

Councillor Wray discussed the Litter Order and clean neighbourhoods along with route planning and asked how often towns and villages were cleaned. The Head of Waste and Cleansing described the zoning and frequency of cleaning in different areas throughout the Borough. There was liable to be some slippage in the schedule at times due to operational pressures, but street cleansing operations were generally carried out in a timely way in accordance with planned zonal frequencies.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Cummings, seconded by Councillor Smart, that the recommendation to approve the Waste and Cleansing Service Plan be considered at the full Council meeting later in the month due to a technical difficulty with the viewing of the report on Decision Time.**

(Alderman Armstrong-Cotter left the meeting at 7.20 pm)

### **3.2 Assets and Property Services** (Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Assets and Property Services section.

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

Councillor Cathcart had a question in terms of staffing and asked if the Council was now fully back to inhouse staff rather than having to rely on agency workers at weekends. The Head of Assets and Property Services said that progress had been made in that respect and while there were several vacancies for tradespeople there was anticipation that those positions would soon be filled.

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

### **3.3 Regulatory Services** (Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Waste and Cleansing Section.

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

Councillor Cathcart said that he had raised previously the suggestion that Apps to report dog fouling could be used by the Council and the Building Control Services Manager said that the Council would consider any Apps that were available, and which met the requirements of the Department.

Alderman McAlpine had found the reports of the Environment Directorate interesting but thought there was a slight difference in the level of detail provided and wondered if there was a way to standardise that. In response the Director said that it very much depended on the objective the service was setting and at times there was no historical data available to populate all the columns in the standardised templates used.

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

## **4. GRANT OF ENTERTAINMENT LICENCE**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that an application had been received for the Grant of an Entertainment Licence as followed:

**E Carty & Sons Ltd (The Maypole) 55 High Street, Holywood**

**Applicant:** Brian Joseph Carty, 73 Princess Gardens, Holywood

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

**Type of entertainment:** Dancing, singing or music or any other entertainment of a like kind.

There were no objections to the application.

RECOMMENDED that the Council grants the application.

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

**5. GRANT OF STREET TRADING LICENCE**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that an application had been received for the grant of a **Stationary Street Trading** Licence to trade at designated sites within the Borough:

**Applicant:** Natasha Irwin

**Address:** 6 Coulters Hill, Kircubbin, BT22 1DS

**Goods to be supplied:** Fruit, Vegetables and Eggs.

There were no objections to the application.

RECOMMENDED that the Council grants the Street Trading Licence.

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

Councillor Boyle asked about the terminology of mobile licences and designated street licencing and the officer's understanding was that mobile licences were given to premises on wheels that moved around the Borough and traded for short periods at multiple locations, such as ice cream vans.

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

**6. UPDATE ON NEW OFF STREET PARKING ENFORCEMENT CONTRACT**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that as Members would be aware, the Council agreed a new contract with Marston

Holdings Ltd for the provision of car parking management/off street parking enforcement and penalty charge processing in December 2023. That would replace the current Agreement with the Department for Infrastructure from 1 April 2024.

The new contract would see a number of changes in service provision:

1. Traffic Attendants patrolling and enforcing in Council car parks would now wear a blue uniform. The Department for Infrastructure “Red Coats” Traffic Wardens would now only carry out on street parking enforcement duties. The “Blue Coats” would have the same powers to issue Penalty fines as the “Red coats”, but only within the Council’s car parks.
2. Council Officers would now be dealing directly with Marston Holdings Ltd which would allow for greater ability to change patrols to focus on problem areas, access to more in-depth reports, ad-hoc reports suited to each Council request and a significant saving on costs incurred from the old contract with Department for Infrastructure.
3. There would be no change to car park tariffs associated with the new contract, and the season ticket format would continue to operate in the same way as previously.
4. The new contract would also see a move away from the current online parking payment provider ‘Just Park’. Instead, ‘Ring Go’ would now be used by the consortium as the option for on-line payments. Within our Borough, the uptake was about 23% for online payments. Signage provided by Ring Go would appear on the Council’s Pay and Display machines advising the public of the new service provider, how to download it and to ensure it was used going forward. There would be a week, 2-5 April 2024, whereby both parking apps would run to ensure the public were aware of the change and no PCNs would issue if the incorrect app was used during the change to the new provider. It was possible a note would be left by the Traffic Attendant on the windscreen as a polite reminder. Marston Holdings Ltd would continue to monitor that. The ‘go live’ date for the new contract was Tuesday 2 April 2024.

Press releases would inform the public of the new changes and the Council would continue to promote on its own social media outlets. Those updates to the public had commenced by all Councils to ensure anyone travelling across different Boroughs was aware of the new arrangements.

#### **The New Contract would:**

1. Ensure the Council’s Pay and Display car parks and off-street parking continued to be patrolled and enforced with a seamless changeover from the Department for Infrastructure to Marston Holdings Ltd.
2. Allow greater access to information to assist with reports, gathering data and monitoring of KPIs.

3. Result in significant savings from the current Department for Infrastructure contract.
4. Not affect existing car parking tariffs currently in place.
5. Result in processing of PCN's and any subsequent challenges being dealt with by Marston Holdings Ltd.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

Councillor Smart was content to propose and thanked officers for the work undertaken to date and it appeared that the public was gradually getting used to the new system although some concern had been expressed about paying up front. He had attended a town steering group earlier in the day and had been informed that while the group had been engaged in the consultation it would have been helpful if they had been briefed on the implementation and that should be noted for the future.

While Councillor Edmund recognised that App innovation for parking fees was useful, he said it would not be suitable for everyone within the Borough and hoped that the facility to place money in the machine would remain. The Director stated that at no point was any indication given that the ability to pay using cash would be removed and he assured the Member that the cash payment option remained.

Councillor Cathcart expressed some concern around the communication of the implementation and the need to prepare people in advance of changes to avoid misinformation being spread. The Director assured him that there had been a detailed public statement communicating the changes but that it was often difficult to predict the unfounded concerns the public would express, although he understood the Member's sentiment.

Councillor McKee had observed the temporary plastic signage being used in the car parks and that it would not be permanent. He thought of infrequent car parkers who may not be aware of the changes and continue to use the Just Parking App. The Director explained that there was a budget for new permanent car park signage in the current financial year which it was intended would incorporate all necessary messaging.

Councillor Boyle queried the parking charges via the App, and the Director informed the Committee that the those were made pro rata using the agreed tariff for each car park.

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

**7. NOM REPORT – GREYABBEY STREET LIGHTING**  
(Appendices IV & V)



PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that in December 2023 the Council agreed a Notice of Motion stating:

*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 to ask for the decorative lamp posts on Main Street, Greyabbey, to be repainted to ensure they are maintained as a feature of this historic village; and writes to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to seek funding to deliver a mini public realm or streetscape project in Greyabbey.*

Assets and Property Services took forward the action regarding writing to the Department for Infrastructure (appendix) whereas the letter to DAERA was referred to Regeneration for follow up.

A response from the Department for Infrastructure had been received and was attached (appendix).

RECOMMENDED that the Council note the response, as the Council has no budget to carry out this work and a request to DAERA to consider a mini-public realm scheme is already underway.

Proposed by Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that an alternative recommendation be made;

The Council notes the response from the Department of Infrastructure. Council works with Greyabbey Community Association in relation to repainting the decorative lamp posts. Further to this Council brings a report to this committee on the feasibility and costings of completing this work in partnership with the community.

Councillor Wray thanked officers for their work in bringing the report forward and unfortunately this was the response that the Council had expected, and it seemed that the Department did not consider the lampposts to be a priority. Members were aware of the importance of the appearance of Greyabbey in terms of tourism and the community there was asking for a feasibility study including the costings to paint the lampposts. There was an argument as to why the Council would not do it and he was aware that it potentially set a precedent but stressed there were only three areas of the Borough that had a similar type of lamp post and this work would be carried out in cooperation with the Greyabbey Community Association.

Seconding the amendment Councillor Edmund said that he was happy to support and that Greyabbey was an iconic village on the Peninsula whose community group was prepared to work with the Council to bring positive changes to the village.

Councillor Cathcart praised the enthusiasm of the community to make improvements but stressed that these lampposts did not belong to the Council. He pointed to

many improvements that could be made across the Borough but were not within the remit of the Council and was concerned that funding would be required from the Council's core budget. He would not however stand in the way of the amended recommendation but was mindful that a precedent could be set and encouraged the sourcing of external funding.

Alderman McAlpine was also concerned about raising a precedent and wondered if the community could raise the funding themselves, but she supported what was being suggested.

Councillor Wray recognised the difficult position the Council found itself in and thought that it may be possible for the community group to raise the funds but they would need an indication of expected costs. He said he would be happy to support similar projects in different areas across the Borough.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Wray, seconded by Councillor Edmund that the Council works with Greyabbey Community Association in relation to repainting the decorative lamp posts. Further to this Council brings a report to this committee on the feasibility and costings of completing this work in partnership with the community.**

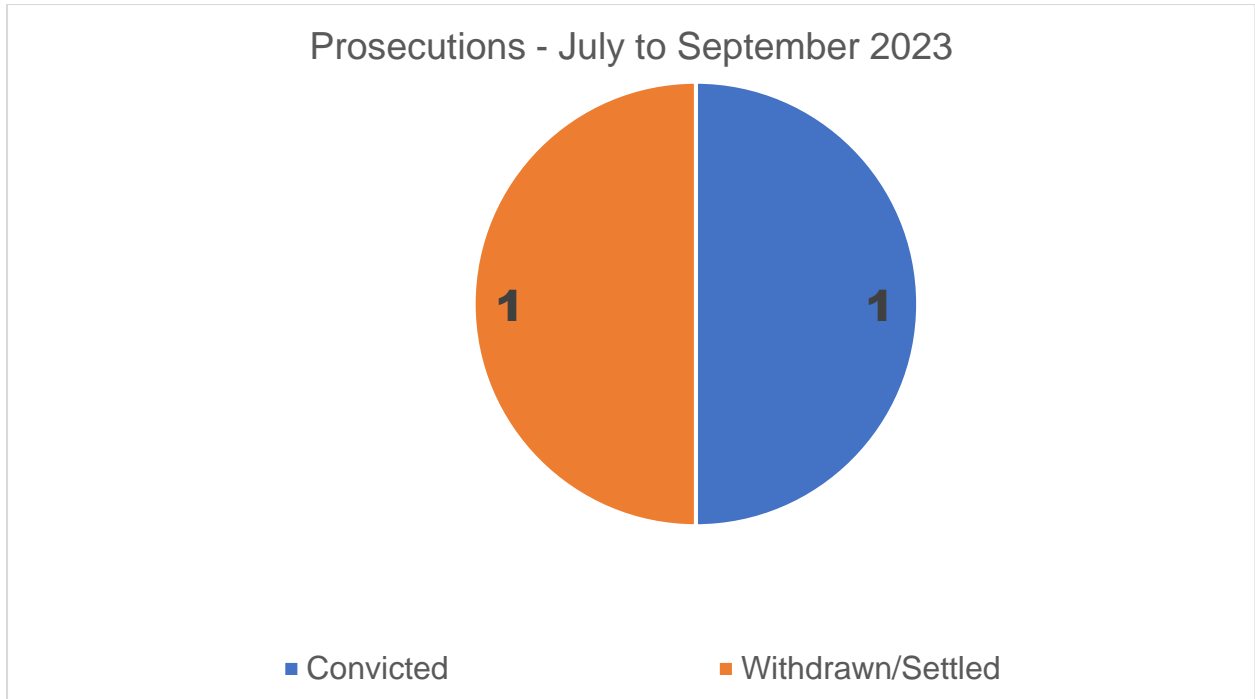
## **REPORTS FOR NOTING**

### **8. RESULT OF COURT PROCEEDINGS (JULY 2023 TO SEPTEMBER 2023)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that the following convictions were secured at Newtownards Magistrate's Court between 1 July 2023 and 30 September 2023. (Appendix attached).

In accordance with the instructions of the Resident Magistrate, the Council's solicitor would notify defendants upon first appearance in court in response to a summons, that they may seek to have the matter withdrawn upon payment of legal costs and any fixed penalty notice previously offered.

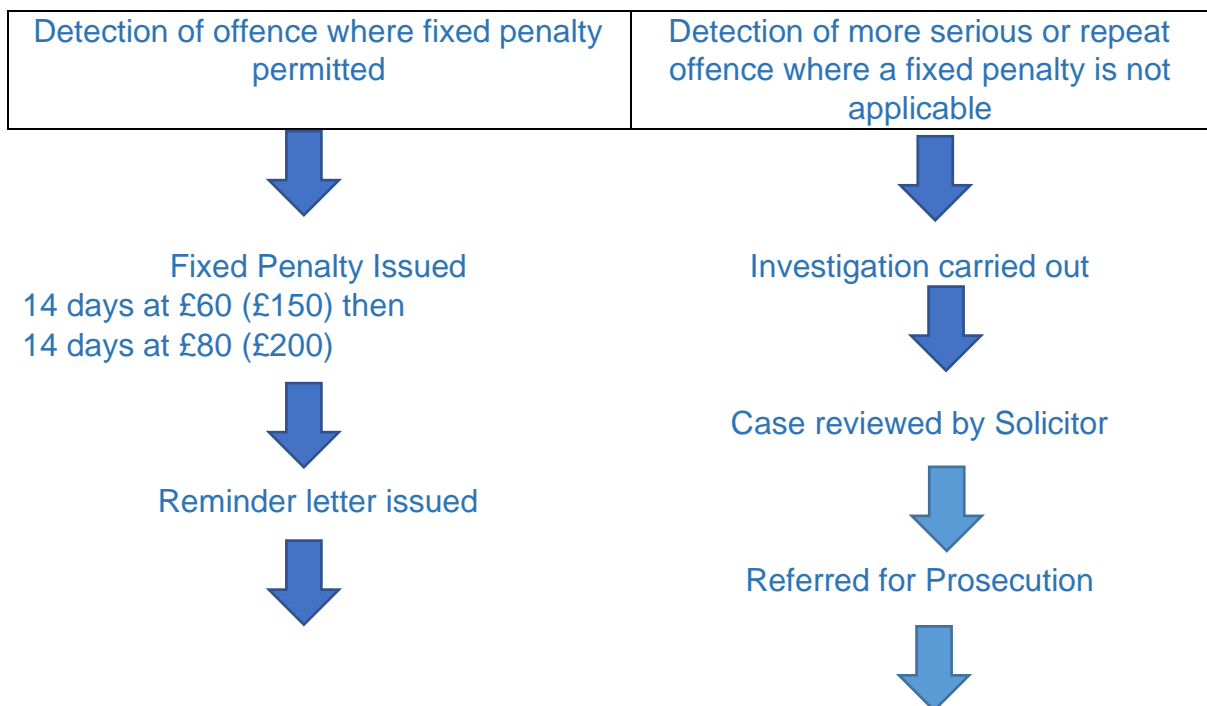
The cases were then adjourned to permit a further opportunity for payment. That had resulted in a number of cases being settled on the day of court upon payment of all costs and fines.

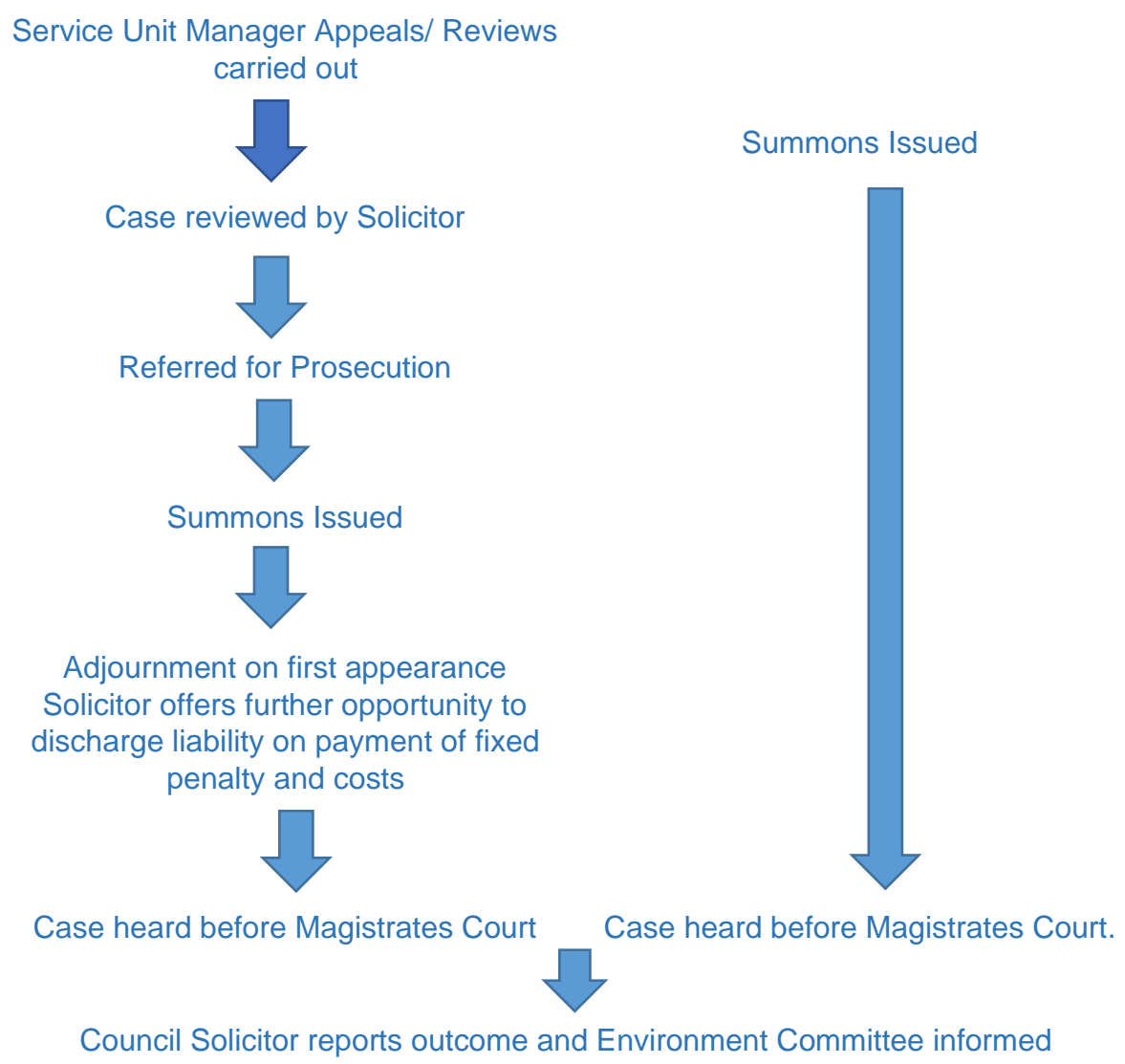


The above pie chart outlined two prosecution cases which were disposed of during the period of the report. Convictions were secured against one defendant during this period. Please note there was court recess in July 2023.

Only one case was heard for a littering offence in which the defendant was fined a total of £385 and a second case was withdrawn as the defendant had moved away and summons was unable to be served.

The enforcement process carried out by the Neighbourhood Environment Team was as followed:





RECOMMENDATION that the Council notes the report.

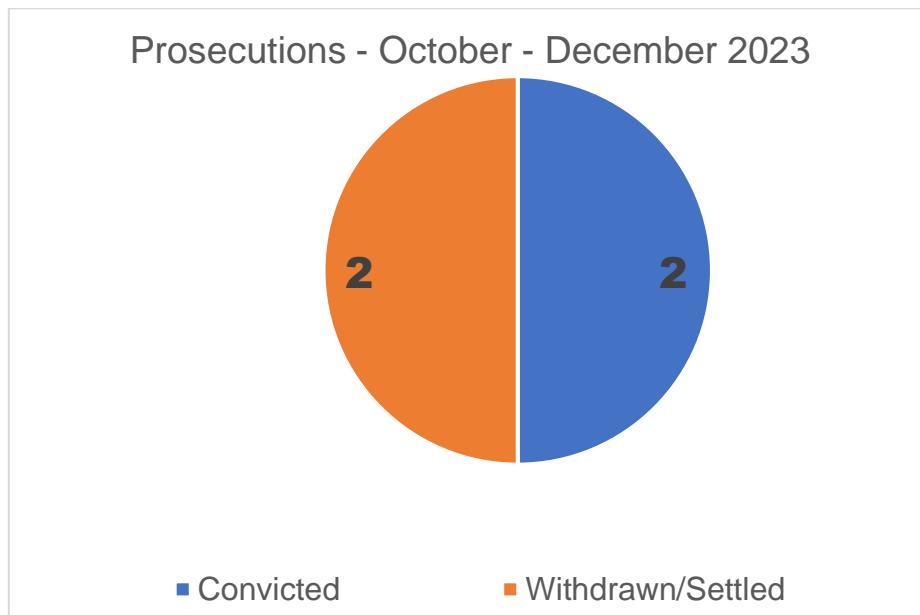
**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Cummings, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the recommendation be adopted.**

**9. RESULT OF COURT PROCEEDINGS (OCTOBER 2023 to DECEMBER 2023)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED: Report from the Director of Environment detailing that the following convictions were secured at Newtownards Magistrate’s Court between 1 October 2023 and 31 December 2023. (Appendix attached).

In accordance with the instructions of the Resident Magistrate, the Council’s solicitor would notify defendants upon first appearance in court in response to a summons, that they may seek to have the matter withdrawn upon payment of legal costs and any fixed penalty notice previously offered.

The cases were then adjourned to permit a further opportunity for payment. That had resulted in a number of cases being settled on the day of court upon payment of all costs and fines.



The above pie chart outlined two prosecution cases which were disposed of during the period of the report. Convictions were secured against two defendants during the period.

One case was settled prior to hearing and withdrawn. A second case was withdrawn due to an extremely serious medical condition of the defendant and it was not within public interest to continue with the case.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the report.

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

**10. NOTICES OF MOTION**

**10.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Graham and Councillor Martin**

That Council brings a report with a view to implementing a “dogs on leads” policy on that part of the Coastal Path which traverses the private road serving the properties 91 to 117 Station Road, Hollywood inclusive.

Proposed by Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor Cathcart, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.

Alderman Graham began by stating that many people believed that dog fouling was a relatively trivial matter that had been with society for a long time but for those inconvenienced by this it was not trivial.

This was a matter that had been brought to his attention leading to him bringing the Motion above. He had spoken with the Enforcement section already within the Council and was aware that this particular road was not straightforward, however, the residents living close to the coastal path should be protected from the nuisance of significant dog fouling within the boundaries of their properties. He believed that the only way to address the matter was to have dogs on leads on that particular part of the coastal path and suggested that there may be merit extending that to other parts of the path also.

Councillor Cathcart was happy to second that and reported having his own dog out for a walk on St Patrick's Day along the section from Bangor to Holywood. His dog was off the lead and on the described section his dog also headed for the driveways of the houses, and he could see how that could be an issue for residents in that place. While he was generally cautious of dogs always being controlled by leads he knew the location had a narrow piece of road and so thought that it would be useful to have dogs on leads at that point and so viewed this Motion as a sensible proposal.

Councillor Smart welcomed the proposal and admired Alderman Graham's determination to resolve the issue for his constituent and he agreed that with consultation other parts of the coastal path could be considered where there were similar issues.

Councillor McKee also thanked Alderman Graham for the Motion and although he was unfamiliar with the part in question, he thought the area might have unique challenges but had concerns about how viable 'dogs on leads' would be to enforce. He was happy to support a report and see where this could go.

Alderman Graham thanked Members for their support and in no way was he taking away from the good work already being undertaken by enforcement officers. He pointed to the success of the signage at Crawfordsburn and while he took on board Councillor McKee's comments about the difficulty of enforcement he said that all laws were not kept at all times, but he hoped that this could be a deterrent to make the lives of the residents in that area more comfortable.

**AGREED, on the proposal of Alderman Graham, seconded by Councillor Cathcart, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.**

## **10.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor McCollum and Councillor Irwin**

That this Council recognises the significant opportunities which the redevelopment of Donaghadee Harbour could bring to the local economy in terms of leisure sailing and tourism and thus instructs officers to work with local groups to scope potential operational facilities which could enhance the offering in the Harbour and further brings back a feasibility report on the various options, including costings and possible funding streams.

Further, that this Council recognises the issues associated with high winds and coastal change and reviews the original 2020 Harbour Study conducted by RPS including the necessity for an offshore breakwater and agrees to bring back a report in time to be presented to Council in September 2024, outlining the budget required to undertake this work, any key considerations, next steps and identify which stakeholders would need to be involved.

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

Councillor McCollum began by referring to the harbour at Donaghadee as 'An Iconic Harbour Under Threat! She said that was the battle-cry coming from the residents of Donaghadee, who had produced the impressive report which had been circulated to Members of the Committee. The report had been launched the previous week to Councillors, the Chief Executive, Director of Environment, MLAs and Stephen Farry MP and had gained significant publicity for the issue in the press and local television. Residents had been living with the worrying and sometimes quite terrifying impact of rising sea levels for many years and were calling on the Council and elected representatives to take action. They had said this was happening on the Council's watch and doing nothing was simply no longer an option.

The purpose of the Motion was to understand and acknowledge the threat to the Harbour and the residents of Donaghadee and to make progress with potential solutions which were outlined some time ago. She was grateful for the considerable cooperation she had received from the Director of Place and Head of Assets and Property Services in preparing the Motion and ensuring that its objectives were deliverable and sustainable and thanked them both for their assistance.

She stated that Donaghadee was the fastest growing town in the Borough and at its very heart lay this iconic harbour, recognisable across Northern Ireland for its distinctive lighthouse. The importance of the Harbour's valuable heritage was confirmed by its Listed status. Donaghadee's residents enjoyed an idyllic coastal lifestyle, with sailing, award winning restaurants, artisan cafes, historic pubs and many beautiful parks, leading to its regular inclusion on lists of the most desirable places to live in Northern Ireland. The success of the drama series Hope Street, filmed throughout the town, had only added to its attraction.

But that picture postcard seafront was in peril due to rising sea levels and storm surges caused by climate change. Summarised in the document was a significant body of peer reviewed research and scientific evidence painstakingly collated by Donaghadee Community Development Association and Donaghadee Sailing Club which demonstrated compellingly the risks to life and property posed in times of high tides occurring alongside storms. On a regular basis waves crashed over the lighthouse, harbour and sea wall, leaving vessels sunk or irreparably damaged.

Councillor McCollum showed photographs of seawater flooding over the walls and that had become commonplace along the seafront. During Storm Barra in December 2021, the force of the waves breaching the sea wall was sufficient to

move large planters, Council bins and cars and significant damage was caused to businesses and homes in the area.

That was not confined to the destruction of property since one elderly resident living on The Parade had sustained life changing injuries when a wave smashed open her front door and knocked her to the ground.

The data contained in the document showed that the forecast was for the situation to continue to deteriorate.

Further, on an operational level, Donaghadee Harbour was viewed in the sailing community as lacking the very basic amenities which would make it fit for purpose. Not only had the lack of berthing facilities in the harbour led to the steady bleed away of the community's own sailors to nearby ports where their vessels could be more safely moored, but the town was missing out on that vital boost that visiting boats brought, not only in revenue generated by berthing fees but in the knock on benefits visitors could bring to Donaghadee's business economy and its abundance of quality restaurants, coffee shops, ice cream parlours, pubs and artisan shops.

A comparison with Portpatrick, Scotland, where many Northern Irish boats headed for a day trip, was both useful and disheartening. In the summer season 2022/2023 Portpatrick received 400 visiting boats which generated berthing fees of over £10,000. Donaghadee had a mere 5 visiting boats and received just £200 income. The income generated for businesses in the town would be a significant multiplier of those figures.

The question should be what could be done to improve the situation because in 2015 ownership of the Harbour was passed to Ards and North Down Borough Council and the Council assumed responsibility for its operation and its preservation.

As long ago as 1980, concerns about the vulnerability of the Harbour were the subject of a study undertaken by the Civil Engineering Department at Queens University, Belfast. Among its recommendations of the study was the creation of an Outer Nib to offer the Harbour protection from wave penetration. Unfortunately, nothing was done.

In 2015, the Donaghadee Town Masterplan identified the redevelopment of the Harbour as a High Priority and again, among other recommendations, proposed the construction of an Outer Nib and again, it was unfortunate that nothing was done.

In 2020, the Council commissioned a technical feasibility study from RPS Consultants which again, amongst other recommendations, concluded that the creation of an outer breakwater would resolve the problems caused by wave penetration and render the Harbour fit for purpose. Again, nothing was done.

Finally in 2023, the Council engaged consultants to undertake a review of the original 2015 Town Masterplan which reported that the redevelopment of the Harbour remained a major issue and in its words "a missed opportunity" and she quoted, "Funding is required for the restoration of the Harbour, with potential for a



breakwater and pontoons that facilitate use of the harbour by sailboats and leisure craft, subject to appraisal and business case”.

While the case for a breakwater was compellingly made in the various studies she had referred to, it was necessarily a sizeable long term project which would require collaboration with and funding from other statutory agencies, in the meantime, much could be done immediately and relatively modestly to render the Harbour accessible and thereby more attractive to, not only visiting boats, but also to retain the area's own sailors within the Donaghadee community. Like in the Portpatrick figures previously described she emphasised the importance of the knock-on economic benefits of increased visitor numbers for the businesses in Donaghadee.

Those modest proposals included restored signage, ladders, fenders and pontoons all designed to improve accessibility and put Donaghadee back on the map for visiting boats.

Members were asked at this stage simply for their agreement for the following;

1. To instruct officers to work with the local groups to scope the various options to improve facilities in the harbour in the short term and bring back a feasibility report including costings and possible funding streams, and;
2. To conduct a review of the 2020 RPS Harbour Study including the necessity for a breakwater and bring back a report to September's Council meeting, outlining the budget required to undertake this work, any key considerations, next steps and identify which stakeholders would need to be involved.

Seconding the Motion Councillor Irwin said that she did not intend to repeat too much of what her colleague had said since she believed she had covered the reasoning for the request very well.

She appreciated that Members would not have had a chance to look in depth at the reports that had been circulated but even a flick through them hopefully provided some clear evidence of why they were requesting the work be undertaken.

She reiterated that this was a fantastic report from DCDA and Donaghadee Sailing Club Volunteers and thanked them for their commitment to the issue, being based upon the 2020 Harbour Study completed by RPS.

The study from RPS was commissioned by the Council and came to the conclusion that an outer breakwater would largely solve the problem of risks posed by strong waves and weather events. It would render the harbour useable and make the tourist potential that Councillor McCollum had referenced possible.

Councillor Irwin was delighted to attend the launch event for the DCDA/Sailing Club report, and a few things stood out to her from that event, including her colleague acting as a prop to demonstrate the risk posed by rising sea levels. She wished she was able to show some of the projections presented and the difference the outer breakwater would make, which showed a significant reduction in wave height and strength within the harbour following its installation. Unfortunately, that was not included in the report.

However, one statement from Tony Skeats at the Sailing Club had stood out to her, which was that in hindsight, no one would choose to place a town where Donaghadee was placed geographically. It made perfect sense historically, given the proximity to Scotland, trade routes and linkage to the rest of the islands but with hindsight and the benefit of scientific progress, it was known how vulnerable the location made the town to flooding and coastal erosion and damage. The coastal protections were under constant attack and could only take so much.

Despite that, Donaghadee was thriving and was one of the fastest growing towns in the Borough, the new housing developments attracting many young families from Bangor and beyond to make the town their home and Donaghadee was continually named one of the best places to live in Northern Ireland.

That made it even more important for the Council to step up and ensure that the harbour, which it was responsible for, was as robust as possible and best equipped to deal with the rising sea levels, the storms and strong weather events which were becoming increasingly common and the resulting flood risk.

Councillor Boyle thanked the Members for their very worthy presentation and the erosion and flooding threats could be equally valid for the entire coastline of the Borough. While the Motion was lengthy it should be stressed that the Council had to start somewhere and a report on how to address the issues would be a good starting point.

Councillor McKee also thanked the Members for the information and had not realised that Donaghadee was in such peril, and it was a bit concerning what was being missed by follow up and within the local town steering groups.

Councillor Cathcart referred to the costings in relation to the harbour which had been handed to the Council and those would only rise when the infrastructure of the harbour was considered. He thought it would be worthwhile examining what was feasible to try to protect the town and its iconic harbour.

Councillor Harbinson thanked his colleagues and the all the volunteers involved in putting the report together and recognised that work needed to begin to improve the area.

Councillor Smart thanked the Members for bringing the Motion and the fantastic volunteers working in Donaghadee to improve the town and with the problems expressed lay a very real opportunity for tourism such as that seen in Portpatrick. He added that in terms of review he thought that it could be useful to refer to this asset that was handed over and whether the Council had recompense from the Department for Infrastructure since some of the feedback and condition reports were not totally reflective of the actual condition when they were surveyed by the Council.

Councillor Edmund was very happy to lend support and said that the Ards Peninsula had a coastal erosion group looking at the issues discussed, but he wished the Motion every success in addressing many of the problems which had been explained.

Councillor McCollum thanked Members for the warmth of their response and said it was encouraging and appreciated Councillor Boyle stating that the Council had to start somewhere. She was not suggesting that the Council could do everything but put steps in place to improve the situation.

In terms of the proposal for the sailing club some problems could be addressed at a modest cost such as the implementation of pontoons to encourage current users and visitors to the area. Much of the research and data was already in place and could be built upon and taken further, and she looked forward to a Council report and in turn working with other stakeholders.

**AGREED, on the proposal of Councillor McCollum, seconded by Councillor Irwin, that the Notice of Motion be adopted.**

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

There were no items of Any Other Notified Business.

## **TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 8.35 pm.

## ITEM 7.3.

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**ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

A meeting of the Place & Prosperity Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards on Thursday 11 April 2024 at 7.00pm.

**PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Councillor Blaney

**Aldermen:** Adair McDowell  
Armstrong-Cotter

**Councillors:** Ashe McCracken  
Edmund McCollum  
Hollywood McLaren (7.23pm)  
Kennedy Smart

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

**1. APOLOGIES**

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

Apologies had been received from the Mayor (Councillor Gilmour) and Councillors MacArthur & Rossiter.

**NOTED.**

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman sought any Declarations of Interest, and none was declared.

**NOTED.**

**REPORTS FOR APPROVAL****3. TOURISM SERVICE UNIT PLAN 2024-25 (FILE TO/MAR4/160167) (Appendix I)**

**PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:-** Report from the Director of Prosperity stating that since 2017/18 Service Plans have been produced by each Service in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context;
- Provide focus on direction;
- Facilitate alignment between Community, Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities;
- Motivate and develop staff;
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice;
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes;
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

A draft plan for 2024/25 was attached. This plan had been developed to align with objectives of The Big Plan for Ards and North Down 2017-2032; the draft Corporate Plan 2024-28 and the Annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The Plan would also support delivery of the ITRDS. The agreement of the plan would also aid toward achievement of the Council's performance improvement duties under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

The Service Plan highlighted where the service contributed to the Corporate Plan and, where this was the case, set out the objectives of the service for the 2024/25 year. It further identified the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service would try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The plan had been developed in conjunction with staff, officers, and management and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.

The plan was based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (for example due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP) the plan may need to be revised.

The Committee would be provided with update reports on performance against the agreed plan.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council agrees the attached Service Plan.

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

The proposer, Alderman Adair commended the Tourism team on a successful year last year. Continuing he advised that he had recently visited the VIC to collect some information on the Village Trails Walks and commented on how impressed he had been with that. He added that initiatives such as this were hugely beneficial for domestic tourism and would also generate further recognition of many of the towns and villages throughout the Borough.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter stated that the Service Plan before them was excellent and she reported that television presenter Timmy Mallett had recently posted an online video of him travelling through Donaghadee. She stated that it had provided great coverage for the town adding that he had planned his visit all online using the information provided there. Alderman Armstrong-Cotter hoped that it would encourage more people to come and visit Northern Ireland and she added that she particularly welcomed the historical aspect of the information currently available online.

Echoing those comments Councillor Hollywood agreed that the Timmy Mallet video had been excellent and provided great coverage for the Borough. Continuing he referred to the Funfair situated at the McKee Clock Arena, Bangor and asked if there were details about footfall around that.

The Head of Tourism advised that the Funfair booked through the Council's Lands Section and as such she would be able to obtain details around footfall and ticket sales from them and report back to the member in due course.

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

#### **4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICE UNIT PLAN 2024-25** (Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Prosperity stating that since 2017/18 Service Plans had been produced by each Service in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context;
- Provide focus on direction;
- Facilitate alignment between Community, Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities;
- Motivate and develop staff;
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice;
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes;
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

A draft plan for 2024/25 was attached. This plan had been developed to align with objectives of The Big Plan for Ards and North Down 2017-2032; the draft Corporate Plan 2024-28 and the Annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The Plan would also support delivery of the ITRDS. The agreement of the plan would also aid toward achievement of the Council's performance improvement duties under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

The Service Plan highlighted where the service contributed to the Corporate Plan and, where this was the case, set out the objectives of the service for the 2024/25 year. It further identified the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service would try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The plan had been developed in conjunction with staff, officers, and management and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant, including consultation for ITRDS.

The plan was based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (for example due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP) the plan may need to be revised.

RECOMMENDED that the Council adopts the attached plan.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter proposed, seconded by Councillor Edmund, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer, Alderman Armstrong-Cotter stated that it was a well prepared plan which provided detailed information on the proposed direction of travel going forward. She added that she would look forward to seeing the outworkings of many of the proposed work strands included within the plan.

Echoing the comments of his colleague, Councillor Kennedy agreed that it was an excellent report and he also acknowledged the enormous task which lay ahead for officers. He added that the plan essentially provided a secure foundation which could be built upon.

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

## **5. REGENERATION SERVICE UNIT PLAN 2024-25 (Appendix III)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place stating that since 2017/18 Service Plans had been produced by each Service in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context;
- Provide focus on direction;
- Facilitate alignment between Community, Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities;
- Motivate and develop staff;
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice;
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes;

- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

A draft plan for 2024/25 was attached. This plan had been developed to align with objectives of The Big Plan for Ards and North Down 2017-2032; the draft Corporate Plan 2024-28 and the Annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The Plan would also support delivery of the ITRDS. The agreement of the plan would also aid toward achievement of the Council's performance improvement duties under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

The Service Plan highlighted where the service contributed to the Corporate Plan and, where this was the case, set out the objectives of the service for the 2024/25 year. It further identified the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service would try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The plan had been developed in conjunction with staff, officers, and management and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.

The plan was based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (for example due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP) the plan may need to be revised.

RECOMMENDED that the Council adopts the attached plan.

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

The proposer, Alderman Adair, acknowledged the small Regeneration Team and the excellent work they did especially in respect of securing external funding. He indicated that he had a question around the Small Settlements Funding, noting that Kircubbin Promenade had secured Planning Permission earlier that week and as such he asked when the work could be expected to commence on site. He added that he was aware local residents were keen for the redevelopment to be completed for winter season at the latest.

The Head of Regeneration advised that officers would be in touch with the contractor and he was hopeful work would be completed within those timeframes referred to by the member.

Councillor McCracken noted the difficulties experienced in obtaining grants and asked officers to comment on that and the relationship the Council had with the Department for Communities (DfC).

In response the Head of Regeneration confirmed that the Council enjoyed an excellent working relationship with the DfC. Officers currently had been preparing action plans for the Masterplans to ensure work could commence once funding became available. He confirmed that there was no budget in place as yet but officers continued to ask the question. Similarly as yet there were no funding streams available for rural projects and no indication of any being forthcoming at this stage.



Continuing he referred to the ongoing soft review of Village Plans which had been welcomed by the many villages throughout the Borough and as such officers were keen to ensure that expectations were not falsely built up regarding funding opportunities. Indeed he suggested that the time may have come for some active lobbying by elected members to DAERA in an attempt to put pressure on it regarding funding.

By way of summing up Alderman Adair reported that his colleague Michelle McIlveen MLA had raised a number of queries with the DAERA Minister who had indicated that work remained ongoing in respect of rural development funding. He agreed that the Minister should be encouraged to move forwards in earnest in respect of this matter and reinstate the Small Settlements Funding, which had made such a difference to so many rural villages.

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

## **6. CAPITAL PROJECTS SERVICE UNIT PLAN 2024-25**

(Appendix IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place stating that since 2017/18 Service Plans had been produced by each Service in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context;
- Provide focus on direction;
- Facilitate alignment between Community, Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities;
- Motivate and develop staff;
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice;
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes;
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

A draft plan for 2024/25 was attached. This plan had been developed to align with objectives of The Big Plan for Ards and North Down 2017-2032; the draft Corporate Plan 2024-28 and the Annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The Plan would also support delivery of the ITRDS. The agreement of the plan would also aid toward achievement of the Council's performance improvement duties under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

The Service Plan highlighted where the service contributed to the Corporate Plan and, where this was the case, sets out the objectives of the service for the 2024/25 year. It further identified the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service would try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The plan had been developed in conjunction with staff, officers, and management and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.

The plan was based on the agreed budget.

RECOMMENDED that the Council adopts the attached plan.

Councillor Hollywood proposed, seconded by Councillor McCollum, that the recommendation be adopted.

At this stage Alderman Adair took the opportunity to express his thanks to one of the team's officers, Julia Kane, for all of her work to date.

Referring to Strategic Capital Development, Councillor McCracken noted that as planning permission had now been secured for some of the Greenways, he asked if there was any indication of when work would commence on site.

In response the Director of Place advised that Strategic Capital Projects looked after the Greenway projects on behalf of the Community & Wellbeing Directorate. She advised that while planning permission for part of the Greenway had been secured, planning permission still remained outstanding for the other section. The Director confirmed the contractor should be procured over the next few months. Update reports would be brought through Community and Wellbeing and she would ask the team involved to provide an updated directly to Cllr McCracken.

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

## **7. PEACEPLUS THEME 6 – PLACE SHAPING OF TOWNS ON THE EAST BORDER REGION**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place stating that PEACEPLUS was a cross-border funding programme supported by the European Union, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Government of Ireland, and the Northern Ireland administration.

The programme was designed to support peace and prosperity across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, building upon the work of the previous PEACE and INTERREG Programmes.

The programme had been divided into six themes:

- Theme 1 – Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities
- Theme 2 – Delivering Socio-Economic Regeneration and Transformation
- Theme 3 – Empowering and Investing in our Young People
- Theme 4 – Healthy and Inclusive Communities
- Theme 5 – Supporting a Sustainable and Better-Connected Future

- Theme 6 – Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration

Each new programme aimed to address longstanding social and economic challenges which had and continued to impact communities. Within each theme there were several investment areas – those had a specific focus and target specific organisations. There were 22 investment areas in total.

### **Theme 6 – Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration**

Whilst the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes had made significant contributions to cementing cross-border collaboration, challenges still persist. Projects under this theme would help organisations across the community to communicate, interact, and learn together.

### **Theme 6 – Investment Area 6.1 Strategic Planning and Engagement**

This investment area would support the engagement of strategic stakeholders targeting legal and administrative obstacles to co-operation in relevant sectors. The funding would focus on enabling joint development and management of strategies; co-operation capacity building; and identification of solutions to reduce obstacles to cross-border co-operation.

#### **1. Proposed Project: *Place-Shaping of Towns on the East Border Region***

Under Theme 6, Investment Area 6.1 Strategic Planning and Engagement, the following project was proposed: **Place-shaping of Towns on the East Border Region.**

Place-shaping provided an opportunity for the partners to work together with local people and stakeholders, unlocking innovation and change, to improve the quality of life in places across the East Border Region for the benefit of all. The aim of the Place-Shaping project was:

- To improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the selected 'place', through harnessing place shaping powers and functions within Councils and partners.
- To build plans for a place in which local communities are integral to its development and delivery.
- To understand shared obstacles and opportunities across the jurisdiction, identify solutions and apply best practice.

The proposed project would be submitted as a joint application between the following partners:

1. East Border Region
2. Ards and North Down Borough Council
3. Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
4. Newry, Mourne and Down District Council
5. Louth County Council
6. Meath County Council
7. Monaghan County Council

The total amount to be applied across all partners was £2M. This was an allocation of approximately £266,000 per partner, plus core costs.

The application would propose three strands of delivery:

- Strand 1 – Developing Place Plans
- Strand 2 – Place Learning
- Strand 3 – Pilot Action Delivery

### **Strand 1 – Developing Place Plans**

This strand would provide partners with the opportunity to develop place-making plans tailored to the unique needs and characteristics of their respective area. Partners could create comprehensive frameworks that would aim to transform High Streets and public spaces with the aim of understanding collective needs.

The Council had recently launched its review of the City and Town Masterplans which identified long-term goals, objectives, and strategies to enhance the development of towns and city. The actions identified in each Masterplan helped to coordinate development efforts, prioritise investment, and ensure that all changes align with the overall vision for the future of its towns and city. Therefore, the Council did not need to submit any projects under this strand, rather the Masterplans would be the framework for projects submitted under strand 2 and 3.

### **Strand 2 – Place Learning**

This strand would provide partners with a series of cluster/shared learning workshops/events and immersion study visits to each partner area to explore approaches to regeneration and place projects, supporting the social, economic, and environmental aspects of a place.

This strand would see the development of a Cross Border Place Network to include all partners and additional stakeholders. It was proposed that the Council fully engaged within this strand and become a member of the Cross Border Place Network.

### **Strand 3 – Pilot Action Delivery**

This strand would focus on the delivery of shared place or town centre actions across the partner areas which achieve common outcomes. Pilot actions would include partner wide projects or localised programme/initiatives.

The partners with existing Place Plans/Masterplans have identified numerous cross-over actions common to individual plans; *Wayfinding* for example being a common outcome.

In November 2023, the Council appointed consultants, The Paul Hogarth Company, and Gleeds, to develop *Wayfinding Strategies* for Bangor, Comber, Donaghadee, Hollywood and Newtownards, this work emanated from the Masterplan Reviews.

Designing unique and tailored wayfinding strategies for each town and city was crucial for enhancing the overall visitor experience and encouraging exploration of key destinations. By providing clear wayfinding to local heritage, attractions, services

and other points of interest, such strategies could help boost local businesses and increase dwell time, ultimately benefitting both residents and tourists alike.

It was therefore recommended to submit the Wayfinding Project as a Pilot Action Delivery Project under strand 3. The Wayfinding Strategies being developed by the consultants would provide an indicative cost of delivery per town/city. This would then determine the level of delivery possible within the available budget, a phased approach and/or pilot project may be required.

## **2. Next Steps**

Should the Council agree to enter the partnership and submit a joint application for funding, the Council would be required to:

1. Enter and sign a Partnership Agreement.
2. Work with all partners to develop an application for submission (call would open in approximately four weeks).
3. Agree to contribute £1,000 towards the costs for the appointment of a consultant to finalise the application for submission (this could be met from existing budgets).

It was hoped the call for applications would open late April 2024 with funding awarded later in the year. Projects should be ready to commence January 2025, with completion expected by December 2027.

RECOMMENDED that the Council proceeds to enter a partnership arrangement with the partners listed to submit a joint application to PEACEPLUS for funding of approx. £2M (£226,000 per partner).

It is further recommended that the Council submits, under Strand 2- Place Learning, and Strand 3- Pilot Action Delivery with Wayfinding as the identified project.

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

Commenting as proposer, Councillor Smart stated that it was an exciting project and as such he was content to propose the recommendation. He also thanked officers for their work undertaken to date in respect of this and for their work in partnership across each of the areas. In terms of the Wayfinding discussions which were currently ongoing across the CAG and TAGs he asked if those would help to build the application going forward.

The Head of Regeneration confirmed that would be the backbone of the application as the Council would be in a position to clearly show that it had undertaken major consultation around the Masterplans and Wayfinding. He was aware that some of the other partners would have to start from scratch however the Council was ready to proceed to delivery stage. Continuing he also advised that a draft report on the Wayfinding had been received earlier that week which would be brought to the attention of the Committee in due course. As such he believed that put the Council in an excellent position in respect of this project.

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

## **REPORTS FOR NOTING**

### **8. LEVELLING UP ROUND 3 RESPONSE FROM SECRETARY OF STATE (FILE RDP208) (Appendix V)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place detailing that that the Place and Prosperity Committee agreed in December 2023 that the Chief Executive write to the Northern Ireland (NI) Secretary of State asking for his intervention to ensure that Round 3 of Levelling Up was opened to NI. Council noted that the Levelling Up Fund did not require the restoration of the Assembly as it was a direct payment from Westminster (Appendix).

A response dated 12 March 2024 on behalf of the Secretary of State had been received from the Rt Hon Steve Baker MP (Appendix 2).

The response advised that the UK Government assessed where investment was needed, given the budgetary position faced by the NI Executive in order to stabilise finances and protect public services. It further confirmed that the UK Government removed any requirement to 'ring-fence' funding as part of this financial package delivered to the NI Executive in December 2023.

The response also advised that the UK Government would continue to work closely with projects and places in Northern Ireland that were awarded a total of £120 million in the first two rounds of the Fund and work with stakeholders on how best to level up communities in Northern Ireland.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the response from the Secretary of State regarding the Levelling Up Fund Round 3.

Alderman Armstrong-Cotter proposed, seconded by Alderman McDowell, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer, Alderman Armstrong-Cotter noted the disappointing response which had been received from the Secretary of State, particularly given the support which the Levelling Up funding had provided for many projects. She commented that while there may be no value in asking the Committee or the Chief Executive to respond, it could be beneficial if each political party instead issued a response. Continuing she expressed the view that it was particularly unfair as the funding had already been allocated in England and as Northern Ireland was very much part of the UK it was unfair of it to miss out on its fair share of this funding. As such she urged members to highlight this disparity with their respective parties.

Commenting as seconder, Alderman McDowell stated that it was wrong Northern Ireland had been excluded from this round for funding. He added that there was a general understanding within the community that Northern Ireland was eligible for this

however he noted that was not clear from the correspondence which had been received. Continuing he stated that the Council always needed to be planning ahead and as such he asked if there was any way the Council could find out if the funding was going to be available for the next tranche. He added that he agreed with the proposer that it would be necessary to lobby to make sure Northern Ireland was not forgotten about and not left behind.

At this stage the Director of Place confirmed that officers were in regular contact with the Department and continued to ask it about what funding was available. She added that as soon as there was any update that would be brought to the attention of the Committee.

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

**9. FOOTPATH PROVISION AT BALLYHALBERT - RESPONSE FROM DFI PERMENANT SECRETARY (FILE RDP14) (Appendix VI)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Place stating that at its meeting in June 2023 Council agreed to respond to the Department for Infrastructure's Permanent Secretary's letter of 24 May 2023, as members felt the response was unsatisfactory and had played down the road safety issues identified and the Council's suggestion of an alternative pedestrian route. It was also agreed that Council officers should investigate the proposal of the alternative route and report back in due course.

At its meeting in September 2023 Council agreed to further respond to the Department for Infrastructure's Permanent Secretary's letter dated 10 August 2023, as members expressed disappointment in the Department's response, that despite being a priority need and road safety concern in the village for over 20 years the construction of a footway link on Shore Road, Ballyhalbert was still not a priority for the Department. Further that Council invited them to a site meeting with the Peninsula DEA members to view the area and see the road safety issues for themselves.

The Permanent Secretary had further responded, and his letter of 22 August 2023 was attached. (Unfortunately, due to an administration error this was only received by the Regeneration Unit in March 2024.) He had again highlighted that any works on this stretch of road would have a significant cost, outlining the challenges with budget and confirmed the Department's position that they would not be taking this forward. The Permanent Secretary also declined the meeting request but did outline that if the Council found a solution using the privately owned lands, that the Department may be able to connect the road network to this.

Officers would be investigating the proposal of a potential alternative route and would report back to Council in due course.

RECOMMENDED that the Council notes the response.

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

Commenting as proposer, Alderman Adair noted this matter had been raised many times before and he was welcomed that there appeared to be a little progress from the Department. As such if the alternative proposal as put forward by the Council could be worked up to establish whether or not it would be feasible, it could hopefully get the go ahead. He added that this was a positive and very much welcome step forward for the people living in the village of Ballyhalbert and he encouraged members to support the recommendation.

(Councillor McLaren entered the meeting at this stage – 7.23pm)

The seconder, Councillor Edmund acknowledged the positivity within the response received from the Permanent Secretary, however he also noted what appeared to be the total disregard for the people of Ballyhalbert by refusing to accept the invitation to attend a site meeting. He added that was particularly disappointing given the impact the matter was having on both children and the senior residents of the village of Ballyhalbert. In summing up Councillor Edmund stated that he would say no more on the matter at this stage adding that he hoped the Permanent Secretary would take on board the comments which had been made.

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

### **APOLOGIES FOR LATENESS**

At this stage Councillor McLaren expressed her apologies for lateness to the meeting.

**NOTED.**

### **ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

The Chairman advised that there were no items of Any Other Notified Business.

**NOTED.**

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

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



## REPORTS FOR APPROVAL

### 10. PROJECT 24 ALLOCATION OF INFRASTRUCTURE

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

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

#### SUMMARY

Update report on the proposed allocation of the Project 24 pods and hub, recommending these go to the successful applicants.

### 11. KINNEGAR SOC (FILE RDP 37) (Appendix VII)

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

(Councillor Kennedy left the Chamber at this stage - 7.35pm)

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

#### SUMMARY

Report detailing Council's recently completed Strategic Outline Case for the potential purchase and regeneration of the former Kinnegar Military Logistics Base at Hollywood. The report also provides further details on the D1 process for the disposal of public sector property in Northern Ireland and outlines a number of next steps for Council's consideration, detailing costs and timelines associated with these. These include the option to commissioning an Outline Business Case for the potential purchase of the site, including a Development Brief to find a potential development partner.

## REPORTS FOR NOTING

(Councillor Kennedy re-entered the Chamber at this stage – 7.59pm)

## **12. BELFAST REGION CITY DEAL AND BANGOR WATERFRONT UPDATE (FILE RDP22/RDP56)** (Appendix VIII)

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

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

### **SUMMARY**

Update report on the Belfast Region City Deal projects, including an update on the Bangor Waterfront Regeneration Project. Includes further update on the current procurement processes for the various Integrated Consultancy Teams (ICT), as well as an update on the procurement processes for the new operating contracts for both the Marina and Pickie Fun Park.

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

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

### **TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 8.00pm.

## ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Corporate Services Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards on Tuesday 16 April 2024 at 7.00 pm.

### PRESENT:

**In the Chair:** Councillor Moore

**Aldermen:** Graham (7.09 pm) McIlveen  
McAlpine

**Councillors:** Cochrane Kennedy (7.08 pm)  
Irwin McCracken  
Irvine, S McRandal  
Irvine W

**Officers:** Director of Corporate Services (M Steele), Head of Administration (A Curtis), Head of Transformation and Performance (S Denny) and Democratic Services Officer (J Glasgow)

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for inability to attend were received from The Mayor (Councillor Gilmour), Alderman Brooks and Councillor Chambers.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair (Councillor Moore) declared an interest in Item 12 - Renewal of lease to Community Advice Ards and North Down – Premises at Hamilton Hub.

### 3. DEPUTATION – SUSTAINABLE NI (Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Copy of powerpoint presentation.

The Chair introduced and welcomed Dr Francesca Di Palo to the meeting.

Dr Di Palo undertook a powerpoint presentation covering the undernoted key areas:

- Background: Sustainability and Climate Action
- Where were things left?
- The role of Local Authorities
- What can we do together?
- Challenges, Barriers, Drivers and Key Priorities
- SNI Services: User Survey
- Facts
- Sustainability Membership Plan.

(Councillor Kennedy (7.08 pm) and Alderman Graham (7.09 pm) entered the meeting during the presentation)

The Chair invited questions from Members.

Alderman McIlveen noted that SNI undertook lobbying work as well as offering consultancy and he questioned how the line could be drawn between advancing policies and giving assistance to organisations. Dr Di Palo stated that it was recognised that there was more of a need to give support to public bodies to allow them to move forward in their path to net zero. SNI would continue campaigning through responses to public consultations but move more towards a consultancy role offering SNI's expertise and skills.

Alderman McIlveen expressed concern that by SNI offering a service to complete consultation responses essentially it was the voice of SNI being heard in the consultation rather than the client's voice.

Dr Di Palo stated that she wished to include scientific evidence rather than personal opinion in consultation responses. Along with including potential evidence based solutions that client's such as Councils could use. SNI were in touch with Sustainability Officers within the Council's.

Referring to the slide on the sustainability membership plan, Councillor McRandal asked if that was a new offering. Dr Di Palo advised that until now SNI were offering only one type of membership price which was different at a cost of £6,000. Through conversations and the outcome of the surveys, SNI recognised that there was a need for more training and support with an understanding and knowledge gap to be filled.

Councillor McRandal asked if SNI were at the similar stage with the other Council's. Dr Di Palo advised that she had been speaking with each of the Council's and some were at the approval stage. The level of membership could be upgraded during the year and the difference paid in the levels if it was felt that was required.

Councillor W Irvine asked what was meant by scope 3 emissions. Dr Di Palo advised that scope 3 emissions had 15 categories. Recent studies and research had shown that the biggest two categories for Council's were procurement and employee commute that had the most impact on emissions. Scope 1 emissions were those that Council's had direct control, emissions that were linked to operational activities e.g. heating. Scope 2 emissions were indirect emissions, but the Council could still have control e.g. electricity. Scope 3 emissions contained everyone that was feeding into scope 1 and 2 emissions in the local area. The idea was that suppliers in the local area would feed into a mitigation strategy to reduce emissions overall.

The Chair thanked Dr Di Palo for her attendance and she withdrew from the meeting.

**NOTED.**

#### 4. **ANNUAL SERVICE PLANS**

(Appendices II - VII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Corporate Services attaching Service Plans. The report detailed that since 2017/18 Service Plans had been produced by each Service in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context
- Provide focus on direction
- Facilitate alignment between Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities
- Motivate and develop staff
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice.
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes
- Better enable us to recognise success and address under performance.

Draft Service Plans for 2024/25 year were attached for the following Services:

- Community Planning
- Corporate Communications and Marketing
- Finance  
Strategic Transformation and Performance
- Administration
- Human Resources

The plans had been developed to align with the outcomes of the Big Plan for Ards and North Down and with our draft Corporate Plan 2024-28, 'Towards a Sustainable Borough'.

The Service Plans highlight where the services contribute to the Corporate Priorities as set out in the draft Corporate Plan 2024-28 Towards a Sustainable Borough and, where that was the case, sets out the objectives of the service for the 2024/25 year. It further identified the performance measures used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service would try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The Service Plans also identify key risks to the services along with analysis of those and necessary actions to mitigate/manage risks. Key risks impacting the services were mapped to the Corporate Risk Register.

The plans were based on the agreed budget for 2024/25. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g., due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the community planning legislation) the plans may need to be revised.

RECOMMENDED that the Council adopts the attached Service Plans.

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

In respect of Service Plan (b) – Corporate Communications and Marketing; Councillor McCracken felt there was gap in communications in terms of information getting out. That was referenced under weaknesses where it was recognised that other members of the team needed to liaise more regularly with other Council service areas. There was a lot of really good work being done within the Council however he felt that message was not getting out to the public sufficiently and there was not a sufficient volume of information being communicated through the various channels. Councillor McCracken felt the weaknesses and threats identified within the report were significant issues and he would like to see those being actioned.

The Director noted that the Corporate Communications and Marketing section did not fall within his directorate but the Chief Executive's. As outlined, one of the challenges in terms of communications was internal teams not sharing information correctly or not sharing any information. That was identified in the weaknesses and threats and Officers were conscious that more needed to be done in that area.

Councillor McCracken sought greater reassurance that more information would be communicated. He was raising this issue not to be critical but supportive.

In respect of Service Plan (a) – Community Planning; Councillor McRandal noted that from reading the service plan it looked like there had been no meetings held of third sector Community Planning forum.

The Director stated that Community Planning fell within the remit of the Chief Executive, and he undertook to check on the matter.

In respect of Service Plans - (c) Finance & (f) Human Resources; Councillor McRandal referred to the target for staff appraisals and noted the number of appraisals completed in each of the sections was low. The Director explained that a new appraisal process had been established. The target was to have all of the employee appraisals conducted by the end of the 2023-24 financial year and there would be a delay in ensuring all those were completed. He expected moving forward into the financial year the employee appraisal uptake would have increased.

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

**5. RURAL NEEDS ACT (NI) 2016 - MONITORING RETURN FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2023 - 31 MARCH 2024 (RA2)**  
(Appendix VIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Organisational Development and Administration attaching Rural Needs Monitoring Return - 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024. The report detailed that as Members would be aware, section 1 of the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 placed a duty on public authorities,

including Councils, to have due regard to rural needs when developing, adopting, implementing or revising policies, strategies and plans, and when designing and delivering public services. In carrying out this duty and in line with guidance issued by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), the Council carried out rural screening exercises on its policies. Those screening exercises were carried out simultaneously by officers when completing section 75 screening of policies.

The 2016 Act placed a further obligation on public authorities to compile information on the exercise of its functions under section 1 of the Act (i.e., information on completed screening exercises), and to report this annually to DAERA.

DAERA had produced a template for public authorities to complete when compiling the information for their annual return. DAERA then collated all the returns it received and produced an annual Rural Needs Monitoring Report.

The Council's draft return for 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024 was attached to this report at Appendix 1 and provided detail on the rural screening exercises completed during this period.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees to submit the Rural Needs monitoring return for 2023/24 (Appendix 1) to DAERA.

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

## **6. THE CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN**

(Appendix IX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services attaching draft AND Climate Adaptation Plan. The report detailed Northern Ireland's second Climate Change Adaptation Programme (NICCAP2) was published in September 2019 and it covered the period 2019-2024. The programme contained the NI Civil Service response to the risks and opportunities relevant to Northern Ireland as identified in the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2017, setting out the policies and strategies to deliver against the priority areas.

NICCAP2 also contained a chapter which sits outside government, titled '*Civil Society and Local Government Adapts*'. The chapter was written by Climate NI, in conjunction with stakeholders outside government, and was the first of its kind in the UK. Recognising that central government cannot act alone, this chapter was the first attempt to report on how Civil Society and Local Government sectors contributed to the national priority areas for action on climate risk and adaptation.

SOLACE supported two actions in the NICCAP2 for local government which were now due for an update on progress. One of those actions was to:

*Work with local councils to embed the adaptation cycle across local council planning with the aim of encouraging councils to complete a minimum of step 1 by 2021 and step 4 by 2024.*

Local Government Adapts: Adaptation Actions

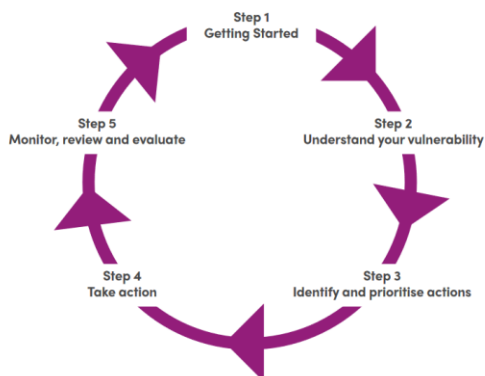


Figure 1: Adaptation Cycle<sup>29</sup>

**Step 1 Getting Started**

(Define objectives, assemble team and put in place any required procedures)

**Step 2 Understand your vulnerability**

(Consider your vulnerability to past weather event and projected climate)

**Step 3 Identify and prioritise actions**

**Step 4 Take action**

**Step 5 Monitor, review and evaluate**

Since the development of NICCAP, the Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 ('the Act') received Royal Assent on 6th June 2022.

The Act would 'confer power to impose climate change reporting duties on public bodies'. This included 'progress made in implementing Northern Ireland Climate Change Adaptation Programmes.'

As part of the Councils Roadmap to Sustainability, Action 17, was to 'Develop a Climate Adaptation Plan for the Council and Borough.'

Climate NI had been supporting Ards and North Down Borough Council in preparing its own Adaptation Plan. The development of this Adaptation Plan would allow council to meet its commitments to NICCAP, future reporting duty requirements within the Climate Change Act NI and its own Roadmap to Sustainability.

RECOMMENDED that Council approve the draft Climate Adaptation Plan as presented.

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

**7. UPDATED BUSINESS CONTINUITY POLICY AND PLAN (FILE  
(Appendices X, XI)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Corporate Services attaching Business Continuity Policy v2.0 and Business Continuity Plan. The report detailed that given the changes in Council structures since the legacy Council, Business Continuity Plans were implemented, it was identified that the legacy Plans were not fit for purpose in the event of Council service disruption and therefore a review and internal consultation was undertaken in 2023. The Business Continuity plan was approved by the Corporate Leadership Team in December 2023.

Business Continuity Management was a process that involved organisations identifying their vulnerabilities to business interruption and making arrangements to reduce risk and mitigate against the effects of any disruptions.



The Council was committed to ensuring that critical services could continue, or be recovered in a timely manner, in the event of a disruption or emergency. Council's Business Continuity Management arrangements were underpinned by the Business Continuity Policy and Plan.

The Business Continuity Plan provided overall guidance to Ards and North Down Borough Council's Corporate Leadership Team, Heads of Service Team and Service Unit Managers to build resilience so that the Council could:

- Respond to a disruptive incident.
- Maintain delivery of critical activities/ services during an incident.
- Recover from and return to 'business as usual' in a timely manner following an incident.

Business Continuity Planning would aim to achieve the following outcomes:

- Protect the safety of staff, visitors, and the wider community.
- Protect vital assets e.g. equipment, data, reputation etc.
- Ensure service delivery is not adversely affected, statutory and regulatory priority requirements are met and disruption to all services is minimised.
- Ensure customer expectations continue to be met, or managed, in such a way that customers are not adversely affected.
- Ensure the Council's reputation among stakeholders and the public is not negatively affected following the disruption.

The Plan worked at the worst loss level, however, for less severe incidents only the relevant sections of the Plan would be selected.

Business Continuity training and exercising would be completed annually in conjunction with Emergency Planning training and exercising.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approve the attached updated Business Continuity Policy and Plan.

Proposed by Councillor McCracken, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor McCracken noted that business continuity was an area that could be increasingly called upon in the future. The Borough had recently seen the impact of flooding, the damage that caused and the relative lack of preparedness in some areas. Councillor McCracken sought assurances that the plan would assist with such issues to the level that was required and was there enough resource contained for the resilience of the Borough to ensure that if an unexpected disaster occurred the Council could respond effectively.

The Director explained the reasoning for bringing the report to Committee which was the outcome of audit recommendations. The Council's internal auditors had raised concerns regarding the Council's lack of business continuity planning in certain areas. Taking those concerns and audit recommendations on board, Officers had undertaken a significant amount of work over the past 12 months to make the plan

more robust. Business Continuity Plans also needed to be kept live and options were being explored to undertake some live testing of the plan in the event of an emergency incident. To provide reassurance, the Director stated that the issue was being taken seriously and felt that was demonstrated through the significant information within the plan along with training to be rolled out to the relevant staff.

Councillor McCracken asked if there had been sufficient resource for the plan and if there had been an increase in resource as part of the new plan. The Director stated that the level of resource was proportionate and appropriate of what to be expected for an organisation such as Council for business continuity planning. Business continuity planning was more internally focused, there was reference to external organisations within the plan that may provide support in particular incidents. However, the plan was focused on how the Council would approach incidents and it was important to be clear on the various roles.

From a governance point of view, Alderman McIlveen felt it would have aided Members to highlight the changes in the policy and the detail of the audit recommendations to allow Members to consider the changes.

The Director took those comments on board.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor McCracken, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **8. ANDBC DIGITAL STRATEGY** (Appendix XII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from Director of Corporate Services detailing that as part of the Council's Strategic Transformation and Efficiency Programme (STEP), the Council was committed to developing a Digital Strategy (a plan that outlined how Council would invest in digital technology to make a wide range of Council services work better for staff, residents and partners).

BT Digital Transformation Consulting started working with Officers in October 2023 to help Council undertake a 'Digital Discovery' journey – which was the first key step in developing the strategy.

Digital Discovery aimed to help us understand more fully what we want to achieve and how we should go about achieving it. It included:

- Agreeing digital principles for the Council so we have a clear and shared understanding of our goals.
- Identifying high-level outcomes that the Council aims to achieve through its IT operations, strategies, and initiatives.
- Developing a project register of all ongoing IT-related projects.
- Establishing the digital maturity of the Council i.e. assessing how effectively the Council has embraced digital tools and strategies to achieve its goals, optimise processes, and foster innovation.
- Undertaking a gap analysis to identify what needs to be done to achieve our agreed outcomes.

The output of all of the above activities was the production of a Transformation Roadmap. The roadmap outlined a strategic and phased plan for the council's journey toward digital maturity and innovation (structured and prioritised over 3-5 years). It provided a visual representation of key milestones, initiatives, and activities essential for achieving the council's vision.

The Digital Strategy concluded with a comprehensive view of the organisation's project landscape. This included the current project register detailing ongoing initiatives. That was followed by the proposed project register. Each proposed project was individually detailed, offering a breakdown of its envisioned outcomes, associated resource requirements, and projected costs. Together, those projects form a strategic bridge, connecting the current state to a vision of transformative projects aligned with the council's digital journey.

### **Next Steps**

Following approval of this Digital Strategy:

- A Digital Transformation Board would be established.
- A programme of digital transformation projects would be defined.
- The projects would be prioritised and an overall workplan with individual workstreams and governance would be developed.
- Project resource requirements would be defined (and this may include the identification of external expertise in some instances).

The above actions would enable the Council to commence the implementation of its digital transformation journey.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approves the Digital Strategy.

The Head of Transformation and Performance spoke to the report outlining the salient points. She advised that as part of the Council's Strategic Transformation and Efficiency programme the Council committed to developing a digital strategy. The digital strategy was a plan on how the Council intended to invest in digital technology to improve its services for staff, residents and Council's partners. As outlined in the report, the process began in October 2023 when the Council engaged with BT Digital Transformation Consulting to assist Council in drafting its digital strategy. From the internal studies, a transformation roadmap had been produced which formed part of the digital strategy. The next stage was to develop a full programme of work for implementation of the strategy.

Proposed by Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor S Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor W Irvine questioned what the Council was hoping to achieve from the strategy. The Head of Transformation and Performance explained that the plan contained internal and external elements. Internally, the plan was to undertake a number of projects, making processes more efficient and digitising as much as possible in particular in respect of records management. There would also be externally facing pieces, letting residents and customers understand what they were achieving from the process.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor S Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.**

**9. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

There were no items of any other notified business.

**EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

**AGREED, on the proposal 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**

**10. PRINTING SERVICE CONTRACT EXTENSION (FILE CMM/2024/)**

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

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

**SCHEDULE 6:3 - RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON.**

The Council was asked to consider extending the arrangements for Printing Services by a further 12-month period under the revised Tender Option.

The recommendation was agreed.

**11. REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO INSTALL A DEFIBRILLATOR AT SPAFIELD  
(Appendix XIII)**

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

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

**SCHEDULE 6:5 - A CLAIM TO LEGAL PROFESSIONAL PRIVILEGE.**

Council was asked to consider a request from Holywood Ladies Football Club to install a defibrillator on the fencing at Spafield. It was recommended that Council approve granting a licence to Holywood Ladies Football Club for 1 year for the installation and maintenance of a defibrillator at Spafield subject to the terms and conditions as listed.

The recommendation was agreed.

**12. RENEWAL OF LEASE TO COMMUNITY ADVICE ARDS AND NORTH DOWN – PREMISES T HAMILTON HUB**

(Appendices XV, XVI)

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

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

**SCHEDULE 6:3 – 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 of part of the premises in Hamilton Hub. It was recommended that the Council renewed the Lease.

The recommendation was agreed.

**13. REQUEST FROM NI WATER TO PURCHASE LAND AT CLANBRASSIL**

(Appendices XVII - XIX)

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

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

**SCHEDULE 6:3 – INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE COUNCIL HOLDING THAT INFORMATION)**

Council was asked to consider a request to sell a portion of land at Clanbrassil to NI Water. It was recommended that the Council acceded to the request.

The recommendation was agreed.

**14. REQUEST TO ISSUE LEGAL PROCEEDINGS FOR UNAUTHORISED USE OF COUNCIL LAND AT MANOR STREET CAR PARK, DONAGHADEE**

(Appendices XX - XXII)

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

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

**SCHEDULE 6:1 - RELATING TO AN INDIVIDUAL**

Council was asked to agree to issuing legal proceedings for unauthorised use of Council Land at Manor Street Car Park, Donaghadee.

The recommendation was agreed.

**15. REQUEST FROM CRD EVENTS LIMITED TO HOLD 2NO. CONCERTS AT WARD PARK, BANGOR IN AUGUST 2024**  
(Appendices)

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

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

**SCHEDULE 6:3 - RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON.**

Council received a request from CRD Events Limited to hold 2 concerts at Ward Park, Bangor in August 2024 and it was recommended that Council agree to the request.

The recommendation was agreed.

**16. STEP BOARD REPORT UPDATE MARCH 2024**

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

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

**SCHEDULE 6:3 - RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON.**

Council was asked to note an update from the Head of Strategic Transformation and Change on the work of the STEP Board since September 2023.

The recommendation was agreed.

**RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC/PRESS**

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

**TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 8.04 pm.

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

A meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee was held at the Council Chamber, Church Street, Newtownards on Wednesday 17 April 2024 at 7.00 pm.

### **PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Councillor Martin

**Aldermen:** Adair  
Brooks  
Cummings

<b>Councillors:</b>	Ashe (7.10pm)	Hollywood
	Boyle	S Irvine
	Chambers	W Irvine
	Cochrane	Irwin
	Creighton	Kendall
	Douglas	

**Officers:** Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development (A Faulkner), Head of Community and Culture (N Dorrian), Head of Leisure Services (I O'Neill), Head of Parks and Cemeteries (S Daye) and Democratic Services Officer (R King)

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for inability to attend were received from Councillor Moore. An apology for lateness was received from Councillor Ashe.

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

The following declarations of interest were notified:

Councillor Martin (Chair) – Item 8 - Community Development Running Cost Grants  
Councillor Chambers – Item 18 - Sportsplex Update Response To Notice Of Motion

Councillor W Irvine declared an interest in Item 18 (Sportsplex Update Response To Notice Of Motion) due to being a Member of NCLT. He advised that he would only leave the meeting if he felt it appropriate to do so throughout the discussion.

**NOTED.**

### **REPORTS FOR APPROVAL**

### **3. INCREASE IN CHARGES FOR SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE (FILE EHPD16)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the Environmental Health Protection and Development Service offered a wide range of services to the public including statutory, non-statutory, free of charge and charged services. As part of the budget setting process, the Environmental Health Management team were asked to review their current charges and to present a proposal of increased charges which would result in an overall efficiency across the service (increase in income). This efficiency was agreed by Council on 14th February 2024.

In order to implement this budget, a review of current charges was undertaken by the team. This included identifying services to which there was a charge set in statute, services where a charge could legally be introduced and benchmarking existing charges with other Councils and delivery partners.

The charges outlined in the table below set out the proposed charges. Where charges were to be introduced, we would engage with users regarding their introduction and undertake an equality impact assessment where applicable.

The increased charges remained good value as benchmarked with the services provided by other Councils and Delivery partners.

The proposal of charges for 2024/2025 was as follows.

<b>Service</b>	<b>Current Charge</b>	<b>Proposed charge</b>	<b>Predicted Additional income</b>
Wasps Nests	£30	£50	£1000
Home Office Visits*	No charge	£120	£1080
Voluntary surrender of food	£65	£100	£105
Legal File requests	£40	£100	£120
Health Certificates	£20	£25	£45
<b>Total</b>			<b>£2350</b>

\*Subject to completion of an Equality Impact Assessment and consultation with key partners.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves these charges for 2024-2025.

Proposed by Alderman Cummings, seconded by Councillor S Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor W Irvine queried the introduction of charges for Home Office visits and how the £120 figure had been reached. It was explained by the Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development that this related to inspections of properties for potential immigrants to ensure that the accommodation was suitable.

The Officer added that it was not a statutory duty and other Councils across the UK charged up to £350 per visit so the introduction of charges was to bring this Council



in line with that approach. The fee was normally covered by a sponsor and this was a cost recovery measure in terms of the average number of officer hours involved in the visit and the follow up report.

In a further query, the Officer clarified to Councillor Boyle that voluntary surrender of food related to incidents where businesses required to make an insurance claim for food that had been destroyed as a result of a freezer breakdown, for example. The projected annual income of £105 was low because there were only usually up to three of these service requests per year.

(Councillor Ashe joined the meeting – 7.10pm)

Councillor Boyle queried the increase in Legal File Request charges and the Officer advised that this service was used by solicitors and it had been felt that a £40 to £100 increase was a nominal amount.

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

#### **4. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICE PLAN 2024-2025 (FILE CW22)**

(Appendix I)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing attaching the Service Plan for Environmental Health Protection and Development in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context.
- Provide focus on direction.
- Facilitate alignment between Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities.
- Motivate and develop staff.
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice.
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes.
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

The plan for 2024/25 was attached. This plan had been developed to align with objectives of the Big Plan and draft Corporate Plan. The agreement of the plan would also assist toward achievement of the Council's performance improvement duties under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

The Service Plan highlighted where the service contributed to the Corporate Plan and, where this was the case, set out the objectives of the service for the 2024/25 year. It further identified the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service would try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The plan had been developed in conjunction with staff, officers and management and consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.

The plan was based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g., due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP) the plan may need to be revised.

The Committee would be provided with update reports on performance against the agreed plan.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the attached plan.

Proposed by Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Kendall paid tribute to Jennifer Parkinson who had been the lead officer for the Council's Affordable Warmth scheme and praised her team for their work through recent challenging times in terms of reaching people in need in times of financial hardship.

The proposer referred to the Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (PTA) which came into force during the year and welcomed that its provisions would be enforced.

Councillor Kendall was pleased to see Brompton Bay and Donaghadee recognised in the plan as bathing water locations as the new season approached. It was known now that with heavy rain and insufficient infrastructure this led to pollution and sewage entering rivers and seas and she had noted a lack of data around discharges into our waters so she felt that ongoing monitoring of those areas would be very important for awareness of water quality and help ensure the safety of bathers.

Councillor Kendall had also noted the loss of wellbeing initiatives for businesses within the Borough due to PHA funding reductions and that was a shame that initiatives for wellbeing were always the first to go.

In a final matter, Councillor Kendall queried the reported staffing issues in terms of agency/short term contracts that had been referred to in the Service Plan and asked what initiatives were being considered to address that matter. The Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development advised that a student placement scheme was already in place but only one student had taken up the opportunity in the last three years. She suspected this was due to financial implications for students who were still required to pay university fees while undertaking a placement with the Council. Officers wanted to explore the issue though and she felt there could be opportunities for graduate trainees.

The seconder, Councillor W Irvine, concurred with the proposer's comments and felt that issues for student placements could be a wider problem with fewer numbers coming through colleges and universities. He raised concerns at the number of

statutory functions being transferred to the remit of Council and warned that it needed to be wary of the impacts on resources.

Returning to the matter of Affordable Warmth, Councillor Boyle explained that he had attended a meeting with senior officials to discuss the issue, which also touched on whether or not there may be an opportunity of the role in the scheme returning to the Council in the future. He asked if there had been any update and the Officer explained the background including the partnership approach to the scheme which was made up of Department for Communities, Northern Ireland Housing Executive and the Council. The existing proposal from DfC, now in place, was that Council would no longer be the delivery arm of the scheme so this meant there were no longer officers visiting homes to assist applicants in completing the necessary paperwork. While she was aware that a report had been issued by DfC claiming that the scheme was running successfully under the new model, she was yet to see any local data. The Officer would continue to seek updates from DfC, and continue to express an interest, on behalf of the Council, in the future operation of the scheme.

Alderman Adair explained some of the difficulties he was aware of in terms of constituents struggling to complete the complex application process under the existing model. He was aware of some of the changes in the criteria which included a revised cap on household income at £23,000 and some benefits including Personal Independence Payment had been excluded. He commented that further issues included a delay in getting through on an energy advice telephone line and confusion over elements of the scheme in terms of boiler applications and loft insulations that were not always practical for people to clear out their roof spaces. He spoke of the significant impacts of fuel poverty and the importance of maximising outcomes and urged Officers to keep the lines of communication open with DfC in terms of returning delivery of the service to the Council.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.**

**5. COMMUNITY AND CULTURE SERVICE PLAN 2024-2025 (FILE CW22)**  
(Appendix II)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing attaching the Service Plan for the Community and Culture section in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context.
- Provide focus on direction.
- Facilitate alignment between Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities.
- Motivate and develop staff.
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice.
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes.
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

The plan for 2024/25 was attached. This plan had been developed to align with objectives of the Big Plan and Corporate Plan. The agreement of the plan would also assist toward achievement of the Council's performance improvement duties under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

The Service Plan highlighted where the service contributed to the Corporate Plan and, where this was the case, set out the objectives of the service for the 2024/25 year. It further identified the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service would try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The Service Plan also identified key risks to the service along with analysis of these and necessary actions to mitigate/manage risks. Key risks impacting services were incorporated into the Corporate Risk Register. The plan had been developed in conjunction with staff, Officers and management and consultation with key stakeholders, where relevant. The plan was based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g., due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP) the plan may need to be revised. The Committee would be provided with update reports on performance against the agreed plan.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the attached plan.

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

**6. MUSEUM FORWARD PLAN FOR ACCREDITATION (FILE HER12 04/24)**  
(Appendix III)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the UK Museum Accreditation Scheme required all accredited museums to hold a Forward Plan and a variety of policies in order to care for and provide access to their collections to industry standards. North Down Museum last went through the Accreditation process in June 2023 and retained full accredited status. As part of this process the Museum was required the Museum Forward Plan every 3 years. The new plan ran from 2024-27.

Museum Accreditation required evidence that the Forward Plan had been signed off by the governing body. The Museum's Forward Plan was previously approved by Ards and North Down Borough Council in April 2021 (2021-24 plan). There had been minor changes made to ensure the plan met the updated museum accreditation requirements, but no major updates had been necessary.

The Museum Manager had consulted with the heritage representatives of the Arts and Heritage Panel and with Museum staff on any minor amendments made.

RECOMMENDED that the Council formally accept the Museum Forward Plan 2024-2027 as appended to this report.

Proposed by Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Irwin, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor W Irvine asked if there were any major changes to the existing plan and the Head of Community and Culture advised that there had been minimal changes in order to bring it up to date with the new accreditation requirements.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Irwin, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **7. ARTS PROJECT GRANT REASSESSMENT (FILE ART)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the first round of Arts Projects Grants 24/25 was ratified by council in March with the recommendation of awarding 6 successful applicants and rejecting 5 unsuccessful applicants.

As was normal procedure, feedback was offered to all unsuccessful applicants.

During this process it was discovered that a required CV was not downloaded and therefore was not assessed as part of the application. As a result of this, the application score for 'Quality and experience of artists' was marked down due to a lack of evidence, ie. there was a 'missing CV'. On realising this error, the Community Arts Development Officer notified the applicant and reconvened the assessment panel to reassess the application with all the submitted documents.

The reassessment took place over Zoom on the 20th March with a panel consisting of:

- Pandora Butterfield
- Dympna Curran
- Amy McKelvey

This reassessment of the application led to a change in their overall mark from 58 to 64, meaning that they exceeded the pass mark of 60 and therefore their application was successful.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves that Inspiring Yarns be awarded grant funding of £1000 as requested in their application. The total monies awarded in round 1 of the Arts Project Grant for 24/25 is £6,892.50.

Proposed by Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor Irwin, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Kendall welcomed the funding for Inspiring Yarns and understood that any similar difficulties could be avoided under the new grants system once it was implemented.

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

(The Vice Chair, Councillor Kendall, presided over the following item after the Chair, Councillor Martin left the meeting having declared an interest – 7.25pm)

**8. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT RUNNING COST GRANTS (FILE CDV28)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the Community Development (CD) Fund 2024-25 was match funded by the Department of Communities via the Community Support Programme and the Council Community Development Section.

The Community Development running cost grant process was opened on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and closed on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2024 at noon and was advertised on Council website, social media and information circulated via the Council database.

Documentation including constitutions, financial statements and list of officer bearers which was already available on the Government Funding Database was not required to be supplied at the time of the application in order to streamline line the process and reduce bureaucracy for applicants.

The objectives of the CD Fund were:

- to strengthen local communities;
- to increase community participation;
- to promote social inclusion through the stimulation and support of community groups; and to encourage and promote community activity.

The expected outcomes of the CD Fund were:

- An active and organised community
- An influential community
- An informed community
- A sustainable community.

The grants were assessed and scored under the following criteria:

Grant Criteria – <b>Running Costs</b>	Max Points
Aim and activities	5
Costs	5
Catchment area (based on top 10% of most deprived wards)	5
Benefit/achieve 2024/25	5
Economic independence	5
Tackling poverty and social exclusion	5
Promote health and wellbeing	5
S.75 Equality and Good Relations	5
In-kind contributions	5
Value for money	5
 Total score available	 50

An assessment panel comprising of the Community Development Manager, Community Development Grants Officer and Parks, and Cemeteries Engagement Officer scored each of the applications and a pass mark of 50% was agreed prior to scoring.

The total budget for the Community Development Grant was £92,000.

A total of 63 applications were received for running costs totalling a value of £124,789. Out of the 63 applications received, 49 were successful, 10 applications did not meet the pass mark of 50% and 4 applications were deemed ineligible. The total eligible amount was £102,949.48 (see table below).

Letters of Offer would be issued once a Letter of Offer from the Department for Communities had been received.

**Table 1 Successful Applicants**

Successful Running Costs Breakdown				
#	Name Of Group	Score	Eligible Amount	Amount Awarded @ 89%
1	1st Bangor Scouts	50.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
2	Ards Peninsula Villages Partnership	66.00%	£1,700.00	£1,513.00
3	Ballyphilip Youth Club	62.00%	£2,490.00	£2,216.10
4	Ballywalter & District Historical Society	54.00%	£450.00	£400.50
5	Ballywalter Community Action group	72.00%	£590.00	£525.10
6	Ballywalter Men's Shed	68.00%	£790.00	£703.10
7	Bangor Sea Cadets	70.00%	£2,000.00	£1,780.00
8	Behind the stable door	70.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
9	Bloomfield Community Association	82.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
10	Bowtown Community Development Group	76.00%	£2,170.00	£1,931.30
11	Breezemount Community Association	84.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
12	Carrowdore & District CA	84.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
13	Clandeboyne VCA	82.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
14	Cloughey & District Community Association	66.00%	£2,288.00	£2,036.32
15	Codo Drops	86.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
16	Conlig Community Regeneration Group	80.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
17	Discover Groomsport	54.00%	£1,955.00	£1,739.95
18	Donaghadee Community Development Association	54.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
19	Gifted Enterprise	92.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
20	Greyabbey Village Hall Management Committee	50.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
21	Groomsport Village Association	54.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
22	Hollywood Family Trust	86.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
23	Hollywood Shared Town	72.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
24	Homestart Ards, Comber & Peninsula	82.00%	£2,000.00	£1,780.00
25	Inspiring Yarns CIC	75.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00

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26	Kilcooley Women's Centre	94.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
27	Killinchy Activity Group	50.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
28	Killinchy Senior Citizens	68.00%	£2,000.00	£1,780.00
29	Ladybirds Parenting Centre	92.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
30	Lisbarnett and Lisbane CA	58.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
31	Love Ballyholme	50.00%	£610.00	£542.90
32	Millisle & District Community Association	64.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
33	Millisle Health and Wellbeing	74.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
34	Millisle Regeneration	58.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
35	Millisle Youth Forum	72.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
36	Portaferry Community Collective	54.00%	£1,049.00	£933.61
37	Portaferry Community Services Ltd	74.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
38	Portaferry Gala Fest	70.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
39	Portaferry In Bloom	70.00%	£1,200.00	£1,068.00
40	Portaferry Men's Shed	84.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
41	Portavogie Autism Group	68.00%	£864.98	£769.83
42	Portavogie Regeneration Forum	52.00%	£882.50	£785.43
43	Redburn Loughview Community Forum	60.00%	£2,450.00	£2,180.50
44	St Patricks Community Centre	56.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
45	The Be Kind Project	68.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
46	The Link Family & Community Centre	58.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
47	Twinkle Tots Parent and Toddler	54.00%	£1,660.00	£1,477.40
48	United Ulster History Forum	74.00%	£800.00	£712.00
49	Whitehill CA	80.00%	£2,500.00	£2,225.00
		<b>Totals:</b>	<b>£102,949.48</b>	<b>£91,625.04</b>

Table 2 Unsuccessful Applicants:

Running Costs Applications That Didn't Meet The 50% Pass Mark			
#	Name Of Group	Score	Reason for Unsuccessful Application
1	Ballygowan & District Community Association	N/A	Not Scored incorrect application used
2	Bangor and North Down Samaritans	N/A	Not scored deemed ineligible - not grassroots, not CD outputs & big organisation
3	Comber Regeneration Community Partnership	46%	Didn't meet pass mark of 50%
4	Decorum NI	34%	Didn't meet pass mark of 50%
5	Killinchy and District Community Development Assoc	26%	Didn't meet pass mark of 50%
6	North Down and Ards Red Squirrels & Pine Marten	N/A	Not scored - not community development
7	Polish Association Bangor	48%	Didn't meet pass mark of 50%
8	Portaferry and Strangford Trust	40%	Didn't meet pass mark of 50%
9	Portaferry Regeneration Ltd	40%	Didn't meet pass mark of 50%
10	Portaferry WI	28%	Didn't meet pass mark of 50%



11	Portavogie Coastal Rowing Team	N/A	Not scored - sports not community development
12	Seahaven residents Association	30%	Didn't meet pass mark of 50%
13	U3A Ards & Peninsula	44%	Didn't meet pass mark of 50%
14	Warehouse Open Centre	46%	Didn't meet pass mark of 50%

For those unsuccessful applications, officers would be available to provide feedback to applicants and assist with sourcing alternative funding.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the recommendations detailed in Tables 1 and 2 above and that Letters of Offer be issued once a Letter of Offer has been received from DfC.

Proposed by Councillor S Irvine, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

The seconder, Councillor W Irvine welcomed the number of applications but suggested that Council introduce a tiered system for the awards in future due to the differing needs of organisations. He asked what the issues had been with the 14 unsuccessful applications and the Head of Community and Culture explained that there had been a variety of reasons depending on each application but advised that officers followed up with each organisation to provide feedback which could assist them with future applications.

Given the demand for the funding programme and reductions of the fund from previous years, Councillor Kendall asked if more funding could be made available in the future. The Officer advised that this could be requested but she was hopeful there would not be any further reductions.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor S Irvine, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.**

(Councillor Martin returned to the meeting and assumed the role of Chair – 7.28pm)

**9. ARTS COUNCIL OF NORTHERN IRELAND DRAFT STRATEGY 2024-2034 CONSULTATION RESPONSE (FILE ART 17 04/24 ACNI)**  
(Appendix IV)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the Arts Council (ACNI) developed and championed the arts in Northern Ireland through investment and advocacy. They did this through distributing Public and National Lottery funds creating opportunities for more people, from all backgrounds and communities, to enjoy and take part in the arts. ACNI support, develop and champion arts and cultural activity by supporting artists, arts practitioners, organisations, venues and communities throughout Northern Ireland.

ACNI had invited responses to their proposed ten-year strategy for 2024-2034.

This was their first ten-year strategy which was developed over the course of 2023, including five months of extensive engagement with artists, arts organisations, key representatives across government, businesses and the wider public sector.

The following was a summary of the strategy's proposed outcomes:

Outcomes for the Arts Sector:

Outcome 1: A more financially stable arts sector.

1. We would generate more income for the arts.
2. We would pursue an approach to investment in the arts that was long term and outcomes based.

Outcome 2: A sector that develops, looks after its people and is more inclusive.

3. We would create the conditions to grow artistic talent and develop the wider arts workforce.
4. We would ensure that the arts sector in Northern Ireland was inclusive and reflected society.

Outcome 3: A sector that is better supported to develop through experimentation and innovation.

5. We would enable innovation and artistic risk taking in the arts sector.

Outcome 4: A sector that contributes to social and economic benefits, and cares about the environment.

6. We would support arts projects that addressed contemporary societal challenges.
7. We would support the sector and act as a catalyst to drive awareness, engagement and positive change in response to climate change.

Outcomes for Society:

Outcome 5: More people from all backgrounds can enjoy arts experiences.

8. We would invest in the arts sector to deepen, widen and diversify audiences and participants.

Outcome 6: A sector that is more valued across society and government.

9. We would work in partnership to demonstrate to policy makers, decision makers and peoples in Northern Ireland the positive impact of the arts.
10. We would work as an effective and efficient organisation.

A recommended response was attached in the Appendix.

**RECOMMENDED** that Council approves the attached consultation response.

Proposed by Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Douglas, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer noted the funding pressures of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland and groups within the sector. He valued the work of the Council in delivering grants for such opportunities and was happy to support the response.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Douglas, that the recommendation be adopted.**

**10. LEISURE SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 2024-2025 (FILE CW22)**

(Appendix V)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing attaching the Service Plan for the Leisure Services section in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

Plans were intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context.
- Provide focus on direction.
- Facilitate alignment between Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities.
- Motivate and develop staff.
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice.
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes.
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

The plan for 2024/25 was attached. This plan had been developed to align with objectives of the Big Plan and Corporate Plan. The agreement of the plan would also assist toward achievement of the Council's performance improvement duties under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

The Service Plan highlighted where the service contributed to the Corporate Plan and, where this was the case, sets out the objectives of the service for the 2024/45 year. It further identified the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service will try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The Service Plan also identified key risks to the service along with analysis of these and necessary actions to mitigate/manage risks. Key risks impacting services were incorporated into the Corporate Risk Register. The plan had been developed in conjunction with staff, Officers and management and consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.

The plan was based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g., due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP) the plan may have needed to be revised.

The Committee would be provided with update reports on performance against the agreed plan.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the attached plan.

Proposed by Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor Hollywood, that the recommendation be adopted.

The proposer praised the Leisure service for continuously performing better than budgeted and it had again continued to exceed expectations. This was despite the staffing pressures and that was no mean feat. While she looked forward to the completion of the Leisure Strategy, Councillor Kendall wanted to take the opportunity to praise the work of the Leisure team in very difficult circumstances.

Recognising that Leisure was returning a healthy profit margin over budgets set, Councillor Boyle noted some of the targets within the plan which included highlighting the motivation and development of staff, promoting performance improvement, encouraging innovation and sharing good practice, encouraging transparency and performance outcomes and better enabling the assessment and addressing of underperformance. Those were four tough challenges and he wondered how all that would be implemented, particularly the motivation and development of staff in light of ongoing issues he was aware of.

The Head of Leisure Services explained that the Service Plan was written in conjunction with the rate setting process and on the basis of having a full complement of staff and it contained what the clear threats and challenges were of delivering that plan. Despite the issues he had previously reported, Leisure had experienced an exceptionally good year, and that was not just the financial achievements and reduced burden on the ratepayer, particularly in terms of the success of Ards Blair Mayne Leisure Centre, but in the quality of the service and how that had been protected despite the challenges that the service had faced.

He was aware of issues that would be discussed later in the meeting, but the plan as presented was based on what the Council was in control of and all things being equal. This included assumption that all staff were paid on scales expected through the recently approved restructure from 1<sup>st</sup> April. He was now aware that would not be the case and that discussions were ongoing with unions over this. He could not promise that Leisure was therefore able to deliver all of those aspects of the plan that Councillor Boyle was referring to.

Councillor Boyle thanked the Head of Leisure for his response and wished to place on record his full support for the Head of Leisure in what were challenging times. He also recognised that some of the information included in the Service Plan had been put together before the current staffing issues.

While recognising those challenges, the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Irwin, praised Officers for their work in the challenges they were facing. She recognised that for now Leisure was in a great position despite what was to come later.

She referred to the political section of the Service Plan and noted that it stated that some key supporters of the service had not been re-elected. This had stood out as being something that could have been open to misinterpretation in terms of the existing Council's support for leisure. The Deputy Mayor said she did not question the current Council's support for Leisure Services and felt that it had been badly worded.

The Officer responded that the statement related to a number of former elected members who constantly stood up in the Chamber and voiced their support, one of

whom had passed away and others who were no longer serving on the Council. He was keen to highlight that he knew that the Service had support from all Members but it was important for him and his team to recognise the support from Members who were no longer here.

The Chair, Councillor Martin, referred to a table on page 18 concerning retention. He noted that the target figures for 2023/24 were not available which made it difficult to measure but the Officer explained that this was a new KPI. He explained this had been included as part of the transformation process where benchmarking would take place against other Councils.

The Director of Community and Wellbeing clarified that the particular KPI being referred to by the Chair related to retention of leisure centre members.

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

### **11. ARDS AND NORTH DOWN SPORTS FORUM GRANTS (WG MARCH 2024) (FILE SD149)**

(Appendix VI – XII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that

Members would be aware that on the 26<sup>th</sup> 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 February 2024, the Forum received a total of 27 applications: 1 Anniversary, 4 Event, 1 Goldcard, 20 Individual Travel/Accommodation and 1 Club Travel/Accommodation Grant (1 Anniversary, 3 Event and 6 Individual Travel/Accommodation Grant will be assessed as 2024/25 Grants). A summary of the **26** successful applications are detailed in the attached Successful Goldcard 23-24, Successful Individual Travel/Accommodation 23-24, Successful Club Travel & Accommodation, Successful Anniversary Report 24-25, Successful Event Report 24-25 and Successful Individual Travel/Accommodation 24-25 Appendices.

For information, the annual budget and spend to date on grant categories is as follows:

<b>2023/24 Budget £45,000</b>	Annual Budget	Funding Awarded <b>February 2024</b>	<b>Remaining Budget</b>
Anniversary	£1,000	£0	<b>£250.00</b>
Coaching	£3,000	£0	<b>£1,453.75</b>
Equipment	£14,000	£0	<b>*-£4,558.76</b>

Events	£6,000	£0	<b>-£523.33</b>
Seeding	£500	£0	<b>£55.01</b>
Travel and Accommodation	£14,500	*£2,007.20	<b>*-£5,936.19</b>
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	<b>£1,000.00</b>
Schools/Sports Club Pathway	£5,000	£0	<b>£3,002.00</b>
*Goldcards proposed during the period February 2024 is 1 (28 Goldcards in total during 2023/24).			

\*The proposed remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of **-£5,936.19** was based on a proposed award of **£2,007.20** – for Noting and a reclaimed amount of **£160**.

\*The proposed remaining budget for Equipment of **-£4,558.76** was based on a reclaimed amount of **£196.98**.

The proposed funding for February is **£2,007.20** and the proposed remaining budget for 2023/24 was **-£5,257.52** (112% of the 2023/24 budget spent).

\*The proposed funding relating to 2024/25 Anniversary grants budget was **£750.00**. This would be deducted from the Anniversary grant allocation 2024/25.

\*The proposed funding relating to 2024/25 Events grants budget was **£1,697.55**. This would be deducted from the Events grant allocation 2024/25.

\*The proposed funding relating to 2024/25 Travel and Accommodation grants budget was **£720.00**. This would be deducted from the Travel and Accommodation grant allocation 2024/25.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the attached applications for financial assistance for sporting purposes valued at above £250, and that the applications approved by the Forum (valued at below £250) are noted.

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

As Chair of the Ards and North Down Sports Forum, Councillor Boyle spoke to welcome the funding awards and felt that this was an example of a budget that should be spent well as it reflected the success of local athletes and clubs. He hoped that further funding could be made available to meet the demands of the programme.

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

## **12. PARKS & CEMETRIES SERVICE PLAN 2024-2025 (FILE CW22)**

(Appendix XIII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing attaching the Service Plan for Parks & Cemeteries in accordance with the Council's Performance Management policy.

This Plans was intended to:

- Encourage compliance with the new legal, audit and operational context
- Provide focus on direction
- Facilitate alignment between Corporate, Service and Individual plans and activities
- Motivate and develop staff
- Promote performance improvement, encourage innovation and share good practice
- Encourage transparency of performance outcomes
- Better enable us to recognise success and address underperformance.

The plan for 2024-2025 was attached. This plan had been developed to align with objectives of the Big Plan, the Corporate Plan and associated Annual Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). The agreement of the plan would also assist toward achievement of the Council's performance improvement duties under the Local Government Act (NI) 2014.

The Service Plan highlighted where the service contributed to the Corporate Plan and, where this was the case, set out the objectives of the service for the 2024-2025 year. It further identified the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service would try to attain along with key actions required to do so.

The Service Plan also identified key risks to the service along with analysis of these and necessary actions to mitigate/manage risks. Key risks impacting services were incorporated into the Corporate Risk Register. The plan had been developed in conjunction with staff, officers and management and consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.

This Service Plan was created in association with various stakeholder feedback including a staff business planning day held on 1st December 2023. In addition, the plan was based on the agreed budget for Parks & Cemeteries. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g. due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP) the plan may have needed to be revised.

The Community & Wellbeing Committee would be provided with update reports on performance against the agreed plan throughout 2024-2025.

RECOMMENDED that Council approves the attached plan.

Proposed by Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor W Irvine recognised the vast remit of the Parks and Cemeteries service and was concerned about the weaknesses identified, particularly in relation to limitations of future grave provision within key locations. He queried this further, and the Head of Parks and Cemeteries advised that a business case had been received over recent days and would be brought to the Committee and he hoped that the Capital Development team would progress it quickly.

Alderman Adair referred to the SWOT analysis and criticism of the cemetery service which been identified as a weakness in the Service Plan and he explained that the recent motion he had brought, following more than 100 complaints, was not intended to bash the Council but should be used as an opportunity to improve the service. He felt that currently the Council was not delivering an efficient cemetery service and there had been many reasons given in terms of the weather. He went on to say that despite this, many churches were able to maintain their own private cemeteries very well. He appreciated that the Head of Service was listening though and that a report was due to come back to the Committee.

Councillor Hollywood noted there had been implications of Brexit and the Windsor Framework on the purchase of plants from the UK. He asked how this had impacted costs and the Officer explained that it had actually reduced costs considerably in many cases but there had been difficulties in sourcing some plants.

Councillor Creighton queried the volunteering and friends group policy that been agreed by Council. She wondered if this approach would be extended to the cemeteries service given the concerns that had been raised by Alderman Adair.

The Officer explained that the scheme continued to grow. 12 volunteers were currently assisting within the service in the Walled Garden and others in some parks, and he referred to a partnership arrangement with the Horticultural Society. It was planned to develop volunteering opportunities further including within cemeteries but that would have to be planned carefully to ensure it worked with the existing service. He added that a temporary engagement officer was currently working to expand those opportunities and it was planned to create a permanent position.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor Kendall, that the recommendation be adopted.**

**13. LOCAL AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT PROGRESS REPORT  
2023 (FILE CW7)  
(Appendix XIV – XV)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the Council monitored air quality within the Borough and reported the findings to the Department for Environment, Agriculture and Rural Affairs (DAERA) on an annual basis. We operated a real-time monitoring station on the A2 in Hollywood due to high traffic flows at that location, and measured nitrogen



dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) levels using passive diffusion tubes at numerous sites across the borough.

In addition to measuring NO<sub>2</sub> levels, we also analysed particulate levels (PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub>) at the site in Holywood. A new PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub> analyser was installed in November 2020 and a new NO<sub>2</sub> analyser in early 2023. Real time results were available on the Northern Ireland Air Quality website <https://www.airqualityni.co.uk/>. Although pollutant levels had remained below National Air Quality Objectives in the Borough, we must still aim to place an emphasis on reducing emissions. As such, we operated a schools' initiative in conjunction with Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council called 'Engine Off – Prevent the Cough', with the aim of reducing the number of idling vehicles outside primary school sites in the Borough. In addition to working with local schools, we had erected 'no idling' signage at a number of Council operated car parks, and this would be extended to a number of household recycling centres. We were in the process of working to expand the scheme further with Translink.

As referred to above, the Council was obliged to report air quality standards within the Borough to DAERA on an annual basis. We were notified by DAERA in February that the Council's Local Air Quality Progress Report for 2023 had been accepted and the information was now posted online. A copy of the report and the response made by DAERA were attached to this report.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

Proposed by Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor Creighton, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Kendall queried the engagement with Translink and the Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development explained that the programme included school traffic and bus drivers would be encouraged to turn off their engines when their vehicles were stationary as part of those efforts to reduce air pollution.

Councillor Douglas noted that Comber had been referred to as a village and asked that it be corrected.

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

**14. ARDS AND NORTH DOWN PCSP ACTION PLAN 2024-2025  
(FILE PCSP/ANDBC 16)  
(Appendix XVI)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the PCSP operated in line with a 3-year Strategy (2022-2025) and Annual Action Plan in order to draw down funding from the Joint Committee, made up of the Department of Justice (DoJ) and Northern Ireland Policing Board.

The attached Annual Action Plan for 2024-25 had been agreed by the PCSP and had been submitted in draft to the Joint Committee for comment and approval.

A letter of offer will be forwarded once the Action Plan had been approved by the Joint Committee.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

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

Alderman Cummings praised the PCSP particularly given its recent staff shortages. He asked for an update on that situation and the Head of Community and Culture advised that a full complement of staff was now in place including the temporary appointment of an Externally Funded Programmes manager who also oversaw the PEACE V and Good Relations teams.

The seconder, Councillor Creighton, wished to praise Jane Shields of the PCSP, and endorsed all her hard work particularly while the service had been understaffed.

Councillor Hollywood was concerned that there was zero funding available for tackling paramilitary related crime and the Officer advised that £10,000 had been put aside for this but the additional funding request had been rejected by the Joint Committee.

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

## **15. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SEEDING GRANT HOLYWOOD COMMUNITY NETWORK (FILE CDV31)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Council provided a Community Development Seeding Grant for newly formed community/residents groups. The seeding grant provided financial assistance with the costs involved in formally constituting a community/residents group.

On the 10 January 2024, Council received a seeding grant application from the Chairperson of Holywood Community Network. The application was reviewed by a Community Development Officer and the Community Development Manager. The application was complete and met the criteria for receipt of a Community Development seeding grant.

Holywood Community Network were awarded a seeding grant of £200.00. Under delegated authority, the seeding grant was approved and signed off by the Director of Community and Wellbeing.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

Proposed by Councillor Kendall, seconded by Alderman Adair, that the recommendation be adopted.

On proposing, Councillor Kendall praised the work of Hollywood Community Network and was pleased that Council was able to support the organisation.

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

## **16. COUNCIL GRANTS POLICY UPDATE RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION (FILE CW169)**

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that the following notice of motion was agreed at the Community & Wellbeing Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024:

“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:

- Accessibility
  - Simplify application forms, review all funding applications to ensure that they were simple, clear and did not unnecessarily over burden applicants with information required.
  - Digitisation of community grants, tenders and reporting to allow those that wished the option for simple and more efficient submissions.
- Building capacity in the community, creating a scheme to help the community to write and deliver more successful applications and bring in more external funding to this Borough.
- Communication Enhancement on Single grants list or ‘open grants’ page on council website with uniform advertisement of grants so that everyone receives the same information on available funding with a clear grants timetable, with scoring criteria clearly outlined including ranking and amount available across borough etc.
- A single point of contact to direct community and voluntary groups to support and assistance across different Council departments.
- Showcase & celebrate the great and valuable activities that the dedicated volunteers were delivering on this section of website.
- Equity
  - Make funding available proportional to size of communities/activities being delivered and the type of needs being addressed, community groups represent different sizes of population and area (areas of deprivation etc) and were doing different work (‘essential needs’ and ‘non-essential’) yet often funding was allocated ‘per group’ rather than area/numbers targeted or type of work being delivered.

- Funding available to reflect the continued rise in costs., e.g., ensure funding available for community events is adequate to actually host events & activities.
- Up front funding is uniform, that groups get the same up front funding percentage (e.g.,80%) across all Council funding to help with delivery.
- Equality of opportunity, ensuring that groups are not pigeonholed into a certain category of funding pots and can apply for all they were eligible for.
- Removal of 'first come first serve' funding to ensure level playing field.
- Efficiency
- Creation of reserve lists of funding to ensure Council could allocate underspend and slippage quickly, easily and equitably to ensure no funds are returned to Departments.
- 'Trusted Supplier Scheme' to allow emergency and time limited funding to be provided quicker.
  - Logistical planning, ensuring that all grants are delivered in a timely manner to ensure impact on the ground.

The review would be brought to the Community Grants Working Group to be examined in detail and reviewed on an annual basis.”

### Update

In February 2024 the Grants Management Working Group convened to support a detailed internal review of grants that were offered and administered across Council. The group was Chaired by the Head of Community & Culture, supported by the Transformation Team and representatives from all departments across Council who administered a grants process. The group was considering the transformation of the process used to administer grants across Council and has now included the decision from the motion outlined above together with any ongoing audit recommendations, including updating the current Grants Policy.

The group was working towards a standardised approach to grants management, where possible, with a view of moving towards a digital grants management system. The scope of work included a review of the current grants process and Grants Policy.

The review process would also include the following actions:

- Identify services that currently administer grants,
- Re-establish ANDBC Grants Working Group,
- Set up Grants Management SharePoint site,
- Gather all documentation relating to Council grants,
- Carry out desk top analysis of the current process for grants administration across Council,
- Review and update ANDBC Grants Policy,
- Working Group to agree standardised approach to grant process and documentation including Application, Letter of Offer, Grant Claim Form, Evaluation etc (where appropriate),
- Financial Assistance Policy to be drafted
- Review Audit recommendations,
- Notice of Motion considerations,
- Updated Policy to be presented to Policy Screening Working Group,

- Report to relevant Council Committee(s),
- Updated Policy to be agreed by Council,
- Updated Policy to be published on website,
- Move onto Phase 2 of the project – Electronic Grants Management Project.

A meeting of the Community Development Grants Working Group in order to receive an update and progress further had been scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 6pm.

Further updates will be brought to Committee in due course.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes this report.

Proposed by Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor S Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor W Irvine looked forward to this progressing and given the number of actions, he spoke of the importance that regular update reports be brought back to the Committee.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor W Irvine, seconded by Councillor S Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.**

## **17. PEACEPLUS LOCAL AUTHORITY ACTION PLAN (FILE PEACV-1)**

(Appendix XVII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that Members would be aware that the PEACEPLUS Partnership had been co designing a PEACEPLUS Plan for the Borough.

The following three themes were included in the Plan:

- Theme 1 - Local Community Regeneration and Transformation
- Theme 2 - Thriving and Peaceful Communities
- Theme 3 - Building Respect for Cultural Identities

Attached in the appendix was a summary of the PEACEPLUS Local Authority Action Plan for noting. The content of theme 1 was approved by Council in March and Themes 2 and 3 by the Partnership in the Autumn of 2023 when it operated under delegated authority to do so. The Plan was to be considered by the Steering Committee of SEUPB in the autumn and a Letter of Offer was anticipated in November 2024.

The Secretariat would begin work on drafting of tenders for each of the revenue projects in relation to themes 2 and 3 of the Plan. Preparation of the Strategic Outline Cases (SOC's) for each of the 5 capital projects was already underway. These would be submitted to SEUPB in June or July. SEUPB would carry out its own due diligence in relation to the capital projects before confirming to Council which projects it deemed suitable to proceed further with. Council would thereafter

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be required to make a final decision on which capital project or projected it wished to implement taking account of the theme 1 budget of £1,555,205.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the content of the summary PEACEPLUS Local Authority Action Plan attached.

Proposed by Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Kendall acknowledged that the Action Plan was no small matter and a lot of work had gone into it, but a lot was still to happen. She looked forward to the culmination of that work and thanked officers for their efforts.

Councillor W Irvine recognised that PEACEPLUS was a work in progress and looked forward to the SEUPB coming back once this was submitted. He asked if there could be any opportunity within the Action Plan to address issues of gable wall graffiti at Clanmorris in Bangor, these houses were opposite Sainsburys and the graffiti was a blight on the area. The Head of Community and Culture explained that discussions over the issue had taken place between the Council's Good Relations team and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and while there was nothing specific within the PEACEPLUS Action Plan at this early stage, this matter could be considered later in the process.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Councillor Kendall, seconded by Councillor W Irvine, that the recommendation be adopted.**

(Councillor Chambers and Councillor Kendall left the meeting – 8.05pm)

## **18. SPORTSPLEX UPDATE RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION** **(FILE CW15)**

(Appendix XVIII – XX)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that in December 2023 Council agreed to the following Notice of Motion:

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.

The sports facilities at Bangor Sportsplex consisted of an eight lane athletics track with an associated infield for jumps and throws, a 3g soccer pitch upgraded from a previous sand carpet pitch and two grass pitches. It previously also had an astroturf hockey pitch, which had to be closed due to subsidence. There was also a building providing changing rooms, meeting rooms and a small gym at the site along with carparking for the users of the facility.

The facilities at Bangor Sportsplex opened in phases between 1997 and 2001. The athletics track was finally opened at the site, which was a former landfill site following “dynamic compaction”, to stabilise the ground prior to construction.

In 2001 localised settlement occurred to one of the synthetic pitches and investigations concluded the settlement was due to “underground conditions”. By 2003 settlement had begun to occur on the athletics track and had continued throughout the life of the facility with Council regularly undertaking remedial and sometimes costly repair work.

### **The Athletics Facility**

A visual survey of the athletics facility was undertaken by Aecom in 2016 (Appendix 1) and this identified that significant areas of the facility had subsided. A topological survey was also undertaken by “Geodynamics” and it concluded that significant areas of the facility fell outside acceptable sports standards parameters for “horizontal level”

A performance test carried out by Labosport in October 2016 found that the track did not meet the IAAF requirements for athletics tracks as it fell below the threshold for force reduction, track thickness and surface regularity. Aecom proposed three options ranging from do minimal to a reconstruction of the entire athletics facility and the two synthetic pitches. This option was costed at over £3 million in 2016 and that did not include the cost of demolition and excavation. Given the passage of time since then, this cost would have significantly increased many fold. Aecom also concluded this would be a very lengthy and expensive process as it would be reliant on confidence that full settlement had occurred before rebuilding structures on the site, something they did not suggest was likely.

In 2019 Council commissioned Sportlabs consult to prepare an update report on the current condition of the athletics facility (Appendix 2).

In addition to significant maintenance issues, they noted a “wider concern regarding localised subsidence in the area”. They identified extreme variations in levels in the infield and visible undulations over the full track width at the start of the back straight” They proposed an interim solution of resurfacing at these and other similar areas, totalling 300m<sup>2</sup>, whilst Council determined the long-term future of the facility. They also identified the need for a new hammer cage and the moving of the pole vault area to align with new regulations regarding restoring the facility to a level to host International level events.

They proposed two options to bring the athletic facility up to an acceptable standard;

Option 1; A significant resurface of the entire track area, new hammer cage, replacement of long jump boards, deep cleaning of existing runways and remarking of facility at a cost of approx. £427,000

Option 2; An interim solution of patchwork and line markings in those areas, some deep cleaning and a replacement hammer cage (cost not included) which was estimated to be a cost of approximately £54, 000. It was determined to proceed with

option 2 whilst Council determined the long-term viability of athletic facility provision within this site or the wider Borough. In November 2019 Council agreed to refurbish the athletic facility to bring them up to the standard to obtain UKA Trackmark (unit 1 and 2) accreditation for UK athletic facilities. A budget of £80,000 was approved and NCLT/Serco were appointed to deliver this project on Councils behalf. This process encountered significant issues as detailed in the report to Council in February 2022 but ultimately, the facility did achieve accreditation for the athletics' facility in 2022. This accreditation was subject to restrictions placed on the hammer cage which did not meet the minimum accreditation standards and has subsequently been closed for use. This accreditation expires on 23rd August 2025.

In January 2022 a report to Community and Wellbeing provided an update on the interim works that were carried out to bring the track up to an acceptable standard. The report also again highlighted this solution was not guaranteed, due to potential further subsidence at the site, and a long-term strategy for the site and potential alternatives would need developed.

Leisure Officers subsequently submitted requests for funding to take forward this work in both the 2023/24 and 2024/25 rate setting process but were unsuccessful in securing the necessary funds. It would be our intention to resubmit our request for funding to explore the future of the site and a potential alternative site(s) for those activities which can no longer be delivered at this historically problematic site.

There are currently 135 athletic facility members utilising the facility on a regular basis. In addition, the facility was primarily booked during the months of March to June with between 30 and 40hrs a month. The rest of the year there were limited bookings per month ranging from three hours a month in August to eleven hours a month in January. These bookings were mainly by schools, school associations and other sports clubs. The IFA also had conducted referee testing at the facility in the past few years. North Down AC members mostly made up the majority of the 135 memberships which entitled them to utilise the facilities at all times of the year during "casual use".

### **The 3G Pitch**

In addition to the overview above an inspection of the 3G synthetic pitch by Sportslabs consult was undertaken in May 2023 (appendix 3). They concluded that the surface would not be able to meet the characteristics of BS EN 15330 for performance or any FIFA certification. Whilst a decision on the long-term future of the site was required the visual inspection identified significant remedial work on the fencing, carpet, kickboards and enhancing the floodlights to an LED equivalent. They deemed that the surface had appeared to have reached the end of its serviceable life and even regular maintenance would not prove sufficient to maintain a suitable playing environment. They also raised their concerns that this pitch may encounter similar issues to the adjacent pitch which had closed many years earlier due to subsidence from the existing landfill these facilities were originally constructed on. A recent visual inspection reaffirmed the above findings but noted additional wear and some further issues with surface undulations.



RECOMMENDED that Council notes the content of this report and as part of the budget setting process for 2025/2026, and subject to any relevant outcomes of the forthcoming leisure strategy, considers supporting a business case that will be submitted for funding to appoint a consultant to develop options and recommendations for future provision of appropriate facilities at Sportsplex, or at alternative sites within the Borough for those activities that can no longer be delivered there.

Proposed by Councillor Creighton, seconded by Councillor Irwin, that the recommendation be adopted.

Councillor Creighton was happy to propose the recommendation though she felt that the motion had not been fully addressed. She asked if it was viable to continue track and field activities at the Sportsplex venue and what alternative options were available if that was no longer the case.

The Head of Leisure Services advised that it had been established in 2013 that the Sportsplex was not a viable site for track and field and he had sought funding for work to assess an alternative venue as part of the rate setting process but that had been unsuccessful.

Responding to a further query about the accreditation ending in August 2025, he explained that parts of the current facility already no longer met the criteria of that accreditation and while £400,000 was invested over the last five years in the pitch and the track, that had only bought time to determine the long-term future.

Councillor Creighton queried the future use of the Sportsplex facility and the Officer advised that the site, according to the AECOM report, was not suitable for anything structural from a leisure perspective. He was aware of a PEACEPLUS proposal as reported earlier in the meeting there was an example of a facility that could be an option.

Councillor Irwin appreciated the work that had gone into the report and it had provided a helpful and detailed history of the facility which she and other newer members appreciated, and would consider. She appreciated that the Officer had previously asked for money for researching future options but this left a major problem for athletics provision within the Borough given the known subsidence issues and the 2025 deadline approaching.

Councillor W Irvine requested that a communications plan be put in place to deal with the future of the site and any press enquiries that could arise.

The Chair, Councillor Martin, agreed with that approach and added that for football use he felt that the pitches at the rear of the site were in excellent condition.

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

(Councillor Chambers and Councillor Kendall returned to the meeting – 8.09pm)

## 19. PLAY PARK REFURBISHMENTS 2024-2025 (FILE CW4)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing outlined as follows:

### Background

Ards and North Down Borough Council produced a Play Strategy for the period up to 2032. Within the strategy, it was recommended that the Play Park refurbishment budget be increased to enable more Play Parks to be updated each year. Those Play Parks scoring the lowest within the Annual Independent Inspectors Report would be prioritised for refurbishment. Also, within the Play Strategy it was recommended that budget be made available for the delivery of older children provision (Skate Parks, Pumps Tracks, Parkour, Multi Use Games Areas) based on a settlement hierarchy approach.

As previously reported, Council had procured 'Play & Leisure Services' to design and build those play parks in the south of the Borough and 'Garden Escapes' to deliver those in the north of the Borough. All the designs comply with standards outlined in our tender document ensuring, for example, minimum levels of equipment for each tier of play park, appropriate age specific equipment ratios, and a minimum of 30% inclusive equipment. This was also consistent with the design guidance as outlined in the Play Strategy. They also complied with the relevant British and European Industry Safety Standards.

Gordon Playground Inspections, the independent inspector was appointed in 2023, following a competitive procurement process.

In 2023/2024 the following play park refurbishments were completed:

Fort Park, Helens Bay,  
Kilcooley Square, Bangor,  
Dickson Park, Ballygowan and  
The Glen, Newtownards.

Following a public consultation exercise The Green (Shore) in Kircubbin was being upgraded (from a Teir 2 to a Tier 1) and Parsonage Road Play Park was to be closed and converted into a Sensory Garden subject to community consultation. However, this decision had been put on hold, following a decision agreed at the March 2024 Council meeting.

It was agreed by Elected Member's in October 2023, that additional consultation be carried out on the older children provision in Holywood and that other lands not in Council ownership be explored as potential sites. This meant that the budget for the older children provision (**£150,000**) was then able to be transferred to Kircubbin given that the question had been posed as part of the public consultation on what type of older children provision, they would prefer there. The preference was for a Multi-Use Games Area and that would now be delivered at The Green (Shore). Further consultation in Holywood was due to be carried out in the coming months and other sites were being explored, with a report on proposals to follow.

Below was a list of play facilities as a result of a review of the independent inspectors report that were scheduled for refurbishment this financial year 2024/25.

### 1. Millisle Outdoor Gym

It was reported in March 2023 that the Inspector had identified that the outdoor gym at Ballywalter Road in Millisle was approaching the end of the equipment's life and that it had been particularly affected by corrosion from the seaside environment. It was proposed to replace this gym equipment with timber calisthenics equipment which would provide a similar range of motions/exercises, but which would be more durable in this location. It was not able to complete this within the 2023/2024 Financial Year due to both delays in delivering the other projects and inflation costs affecting the same, it will be completed before the summer of 2024. **Cost approx. £30,000.**

### 2. Harbour Road, Portavogie

The Inspector had identified that the play park at Harbour Road as being one of the lower scoring play parks with the equipment approaching the end of its life and therefore in need of refurbishment, it is currently a Tier 2 and will be refurbished as such. It was proposed that the refurbishment could take place before summer 2024. **Cost approx. £120,000.**

### 3. Shorefront and Springwell (Crescent) Groomsport

Both play parks at the Shorefront and Springwell (Crescent) were scoring low in the Inspectors Report, both are classified as Tier 2 play parks.

The Play Strategy proposed closing Springwell (Crescent) and upgrading the one at the Shorefront to a Tier 1 which would serve the settlement of Groomsport. It also recommended that potentially a Multi-Use Games Area could be located on one of the existing tennis courts. However, it was now proposed that a separate area of land be used, and the tennis courts retained as they were.

It was proposed to consult on the following options and to ask which was the preferred option:

#### Option 1

Close Springwell (Tier 2) and upgrade the Shorefront to a Tier 1.

(It may be necessary to relocate the play park from its current location to one in the grass areas adjacent to it to accommodate the required larger footprint). **Cost approx. £170,000.**

#### Option 2

Keep Springwell and refurbish the Shorefront as a Tier 2.

(It should be noted that if this is the preferred option Springwell (Crescent) will get refurbished in the future and it will remain a Tier 2. It may still be necessary to relocate the play park at the Shorefront to accommodate a new Tier 2 play park). **Cost approx. £120,000.**

A question would also be posed that if the respondents selected Option 1, what alternative use would they prefer to see delivered as the Springwell (Crescent) site. Also while undertaking this public consultation, it posed an opportunity to also ask the question regarding older children provision in Groomsport. Groomsport was identified as one of the locations for older children provision in the Play Strategy. It was proposed that an older children facility could be located at the Shorefront. Therefore, the question would also be asked:

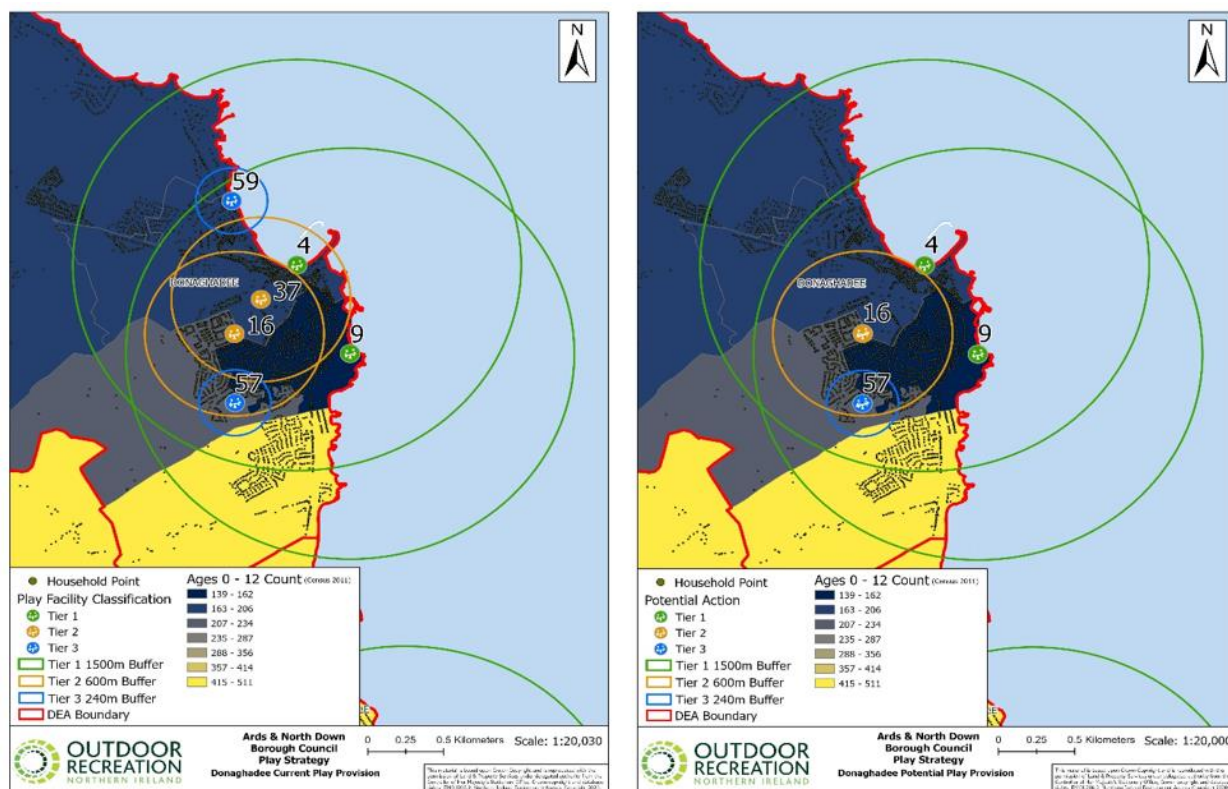
What type of older children provision would you prefer to be delivered at the Shorefront?

1. Multiuse Games Area
2. Skate Park
3. Pump Track
4. Parkour

It should be noted that the older children provision would not be delivered until the next Financial Year or beyond, it may require planning approval etc and that would need to be investigated once the outcome of the public consultation was concluded. It was proposed to conduct the public consultation exercise before summer 2024.

#### **4. Northfield and Beechfield (Donaghadee)**

The play parks at Northfield and Beechfield were both identified as being amongst the lower scoring parks in the Inspectors report. The Play Strategy identified an overprovision of play areas in Donaghadee. At present Donaghadee has a population of 7,325 and had six Council managed play parks (2 x Tier 1's, 2 x Tier 2's and 2 x Tier 3's), distinct overlaps in the catchments of each play park are shown in the graphic below, the first graphic showed the existing provision and the second showed the proposed provision following the recommendations outlined in the Play Strategy. As a comparison Comber had a population of 9,528 and has 2 Council managed play parks (1 x Tier 1 and 1x Teir 2) and the catchments of these play parks covers the settlement.



No. 59 Pinks Green (Tier 3), No. 4 Lemons Wharf (Tier 1), No. 37 Beechfield (Tier 2), No. 16 Northfield (Tier 2), No. 9 The Commons (Tier 1) and No. 57 Hunts Park (Tier 3).

Settlement	Population (2021 Census)	No. of Play Parks	Population Per Play Park
<b>Bangor</b>	<b>64,596</b>	<b>Total: 15</b> Tier 1: 2, Tier 2: 10 & Tier 3: 3	4306
<b>Newtownards</b>	<b>29,677</b>	<b>Total: 7</b> Tier 0: 1, Tier 1: 1 Tier 2: 5 & Tier 3: 0	4240
<b>Hollywood</b>	<b>10,757</b>	<b>Total: 4</b> Tier 1: 2, Tier 2: 2 & Tier 3: 0	2689
<b>Comber</b>	<b>9,528</b>	<b>Total: 2</b> Tier 1: 1, Tier 2: 1 & Tier 3: 0	4764
<b>Donaghadee</b>	<b>7,325</b>	<b>Total: 6</b> Tier 1: 2, Tier 2: 2 & Tier 3: 2	1221

The table above showed the uneven distribution of Play Parks within the Borough and suggested over provision in Donaghadee, as previously identified within agreed Play Strategy.

The Play Strategy identified the removal of Beechfield (Tier 2) as being surplus given the proximity of Northfield (Tier 2) alongside the provision at Lemons Wharf (Tier 1).

According to the Inspectors report Beechfield was now considered to be at the end of the equipment's life so would now be appropriate to have it removed and if so Northfield which was also at the end of its equipment's life could be refurbished as a Tier 2. **Cost approx. £120,000.**

A consultation would take place in relation to this and if Beechfield was to be removed, to establish what alternative use people would prefer at the Beechfield site. It would also to establish what type of older children they would like to see delivered at Hunts Park. There was currently a basketball net in Hunts Park on an area of hardstanding. The delivery of the older children provision at Hunts Park would be determined by the delivery of an older children facility in Holywood, if was not possible due to additional consultation issues or planning requirements to deliver that in Holywood then then the delivery of provision in Donaghadee may be possible sooner.

It should be noted that provision for older children was also envisaged at The Commons and this was established through the consultation carried out as part of The Commons Masterplan where a skate park/pump track was the preferred facility type. That would be delivered as part of a wider project at The Commons in the future as well as a new Tier 1 play park replacing the existing one.

## 5. Londonderry Park

The play park at Londonderry Park (Tier 1) had been identified as one of the lower scoring play parks in the Inspectors report. Newtownards was well served by play parks including the Borough's only Top Teir (0) play facility at Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing Leisure Centre. The play park at The Glen (Tier 2) had just been refurbished. It was proposed that Londonderry was refurbished as a Tier 1 (**Cost approx. £170,000**).

## 6. Ballyholme, Banks Lane, Pickie and Ward Park Bangor

The Inspectors report identified Ballyholme (Tier 3), Banks Lane (Tier 2) and Pickie (Tier 1) as being amongst the lower scoring play parks and Ward Park (Tier 1) was also one of the lower scoring Teir 1 play parks in in the Borough.

The Play Strategy identified Ballyholme as being surplus given the proximity of Kingsland and Banks Lane. It was not envisaged that it would be removed until the wider Bangor Waterfront project had been delivered. Kingsland and Banks Lane would be refurbished as part of the Waterfront scheme. Pickie was also due to be relocated into a space straddling the Marine Gardens area and an adjacent area of Council land and for it to become at Teir 0. Therefore, it was not considered appropriate to invest money in any of these play parks given the plans as part of the wider Bangor Waterfront/Marine Gardens schemes.

Given that there was an ongoing Capital Project in Ward Park (path, ponds etc) and that the aforementioned play parks in Bangor would benefit from investment as part of the Waterfront/Marine Garden schemes in the future, it was considered that it would be appropriate to refurbish Ward Park to provide a quality Teir 1 play park to serve Bangor in the interim (**Cost approx. £170,000**). Given the budget constraints

(£500,000 per year for play park refurbishments) it would be necessary to deliver this towards the end of the 2024/2025 Financial Year and running into the 2025/2026 Financial Year to use up the remaining available budget from the 2024/2025 Financial Year and avail of the additional budget required from the next one.

It was also proposed, subject to consultation, to relocate the play park in Ward Park from its current location at the rear of the residential properties at Moira Drive (yellow flag) to the northern most tennis courts (white flag) which had been out of use for many years. It was considered that this relocation will be beneficial to the residential amenity of the properties on Moira Drive as it would be moved away from their homes thus reducing noise impacts, but also the new location would be more accessible as parents can utilise the car park off the Gransha Road located at the pavilion building. A report on the Ward Park Tennis Courts future development plan was being presented to Council in the coming months.



**RECOMMENDED** that the Council notes the updates in relation to the planned refurbishments, consultations and older children provision in 2024/2025.

Alderman Adair proposed, seconded by Alderman Cummings, that Council proceed with upgrades at sites contained in the report that require no community consultation but pause a decision on those sites that require community consultation to enable a members workshop on the future of the council play strategy.

Speaking to his alternative proposal, Alderman Adair said it was fantastic that a number of sites had been earmarked for upgrades. He was particularly pleased with the Millisle outdoor gym and he was delighted that was going ahead. He was delighted also that the playpark in Portavogie, at New Harbour Road, was also proceeding. He clarified that it was reported as Harbour Road in the report but that should be amended to New Harbour Road. He was happy that those sites could



proceed unhindered however his alternative proposal was calling to pause those sites that required consultation as he felt the Play Strategy needed to be reviewed.

When the Play Strategy had passed, Members had believed that no playpark would be closed without community consultation and he referred to a matter in Kircubbin which had only served to divide two areas in the village because there had not been enough focus on how the two areas could operate in tandem.

He was a believer that playparks should be accessible to all families on foot and the Council had delivered good playparks for children as well as other facilities for young people, however he felt that the wording of consultations was causing issues with communities which often put them in position of having to sacrifice a playpark to allow the upgrade of another one. He felt that Councillors needed to have a broad discussion over the future of the strategy and he felt lessons needed to be learned around the consultation processes. He felt this would not be delaying those playparks that had been agreed but it was important to look at those requiring consultation to ensure that communities get the playparks that were right for them.

The seconder, Alderman Cummings felt that due to the changing demographics as a result of ongoing development, the Borough required constant review of its play facilities. It was no surprise that play areas were very popular and the upgrades were greatly appreciated. He pointed to Dixon Park in Ballygowan, and he had been impressed with the contribution that local people had made in terms of the layout. He was therefore happy to support the proposal to allow Council to take on board the important views of communities.

Alderman Brooks rose to support the proposal and told the Committee that he had been one of the few members of the Council who had not supported the Play Strategy as he had been unhappy with the proposed closures of playparks within it. He felt that no Councillor could be content to support the closure of a playpark. Referring to Donaghadee, there were six playparks of varying sizes, listed in the strategy. At Pink's Green for example there were only swings, he recalled, and therefore no huge economic gain of removing them given the huge concern it would cause to local people. He recalled the large concern when the playpark at Beechfield, an area of deprivation, was proposed for closure. He also noted that the strategy was based on 2010 Census data and Donaghadee was a very different place now. He recalled that 1700 people had signed a petition with regards to Beechfield which was used consistently.

He referred to proposals to invest into play facilities at Northfield in Donaghadee, which would have been at the expense of the Beechfield site. He had suggested the relocation of redundant play facilities at Lemon's Wharf to Northfield as an alternative to that closure.

He stressed that he was not the Council's representative in Bangor East and Donaghadee but Bangor East and Donaghadee's representative here in the Chamber and he said that people were unhappy that the Council was being perceived as closing down playparks. He was therefore happy to support the alternative proposal.



Councillor Hollywood gave his appreciation for the recent refurbishment of the playpark in Kilcooley and explained that it had gone down very well with children and parents.

Councillor Irwin was supportive of the proposal and felt it was important to allow those playparks that did not require consultation to go ahead as planned but she was aware of the grievances around parts of the strategy which she explained had been agreed before her time as a Council member and closing playparks was not something that should be done lightly. She was concerned that there had been proposed closures in at least two areas of deprivation including the facilities at Beechfield and another in Kircubbin and she felt it was right to review the strategy and review how it was playing out.

Councillor Chambers added his support to the proposal, feeling it was wise to discuss this and he felt that public consultation, carried out the correct way, was vital. He raised a query around the two playparks in Groomsport which were both designated as Tier 2, yet one of those facilities, at the seafront, was of a clearly higher standard than the other at Springwell which consisted of a couple of wooden swings and a wooden slide. He asked why both were deemed to be the same and the Head of Parks and Cemeteries advised that the tiering system was in line with national guidance however he agreed that there was a clear difference and that was why there had been a suggestion for replacement. He reminded Members that they had supported the strategy at the time and the Council had only been actioning the content within it. He also explained the financial constraints the Council faced in delivering those actions and how it was limited to what it could deliver every year.

In a further query, Councillor Chambers had noted that there was possibility for relocation of one of the Groomsport playparks and he felt that the information was very vague and wondered why if another area had been identified why it was not included in the report. The Officer explained this would be part of the consultation process. Officers would continue with those projects that would be agreed under the alternative proposal but he explained that those areas that would not now get playparks this year would be Donaghadee, Groomsport and Ward Park as part of this proposal and therefore tonight's decision would have impacts on local children.

Councillor Chambers felt it would be foolish to start digging up a new site when there was one already suitably located but he would be happy to see what the public had to say on it at the time of consultation. He also queried the future of the tennis courts, understanding that they had not been maintained for considerable time. The Head of Leisure Services advised that a decision had been taken earlier in the day to close the tennis courts due to the unsafe state they were in.

Councillor Chambers described this as a real kick in the teeth as he had been informed that no work had been deemed necessary at the site. The Officer responded that there was a difference between upgrades and general maintenance, however the condition had now deteriorated and following inspection had been deemed unsafe and a decision had been taken to close the facility. A meeting would take place the following day to look at how the issues could be addressed to allow reopening as soon as possible.

In a final query, Councillor Chambers referred to Ashbury and a decision that was taken to write to Northern Ireland Water. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries advised this was being actioned and he would respond in the coming weeks.

The Director of Community and Wellbeing referred to Ward Park playpark and the relocation that was to be consulted on as part of major development taking place there. He asked for clarity if this was to be part of Alderman Adair's proposal given that this was not about closing the playpark but simply if to relocate it as part of the large development at the park. Alderman Adair was happy to exclude Ward Park given that it was only a potential relocation of an existing facility so he was happy for it to proceed with the existing consultation that was already planned.

Adding his support, Councillor W Irvine asked where the playpark at Ward Park would be relocated and the Officer explained it could replace one set of unplayable tennis courts that had been closed for a number of years. There were no plans to refurbish those so it was currently the preferred option and one that was a suggestion by local residents.

Councillor W Irvine felt that made sense and recognised there was an engagement session at Bangor Library on the forthcoming Saturday. The Officer concurred and advised that Members should have received an invitation. The purpose was to engage on a number of proposed changes to the park including the playpark.

Councillor Boyle supported the amendment but felt it was unfair for the Council to beat itself up over the content of the strategy as he believed there was a lot of good work contained within it. However, he believed that the limitations in terms of finances available to deliver it meant that it had caught up with the Council and things were always going to change in that time. He spoke of the value of consultation and the importance of getting it right. He gave an example of Portaferry where the Council had suggested the shore front but the community preferred a different site and the Council listened. He was happy to see how the proposal progressed and was glad that it still allowed some of the strategy to continue but he agreed that areas and community needs changed so it was right to revisit it.

Summing up, Alderman Adair thanked Members for their support. He believed there was only one opportunity to get this right and the focus should be on delivering the right outcomes for children and young people. He echoed the words of Alderman Brooks that Members were representing their communities on the Council and not the other way round. He thanked Members and hoped that the workshops could be set up as soon as possible.

**AGREED TO RECOMMEND, on the proposal of Alderman Adair, seconded by Alderman Cummings, that Council proceed with upgrades at sites contained in the report that require no community consultation but pause a decision on those sites that require community consultation, (*with the exclusion of Ward Park*), to enable a members workshop on the future of the council play strategy.**

## **20. CYSTIC FIBROSIS MEDICATION (FILE CW168)**

(Appendix XXI – XXII)

PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED:- Report from the Director of Community and Wellbeing detailing that At the Council meeting on 31st January 2024, it was discussed and resolved as follows:

"That Council notes with extreme concern proposals by NICE to remove its NHS recommendations for Kamro, Orkambi and Symkevi due to rising costs; calls upon NICE to reconsider this proposal without hesitation to make such medication available to all in need; and will write to the Department of Health to request an assessment of the efficacy of this drug to help save lives since its introduction in January 2022; and to consider amending the minimum age for recipients of this medication to two so as to ensure that all those who suffer from cystic fibrosis have the best start in life."

Council further agreed to write to the Prime Minister. on the same issue.

Responses (attached) had been received from Minister for Health Robin Swann MLA and Rt Hon Andrew Stephenson CBE MP Minister of State for Health and Secondary Care.

RECOMMENDED that Council notes the attached letters of response.

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

## **21. ANY OTHER NOTIFIED BUSINESS**

### Portaferry Sports Centre

Councillor Boyle referred to an unplanned decision by management to temporarily close Portaferry Sports Centre from Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April until further notice. This decision had been actioned as a result of staff shortages due to sickness.

He was deeply disappointed at the closure and the Council's response in terms of its communication with elected members who had only received official notification this morning, two days after the centre had closed.

Councillor Boyle told the Committee that he did not constantly check social media and had only become aware of the closure after being asked by members of the public so he had been unable to give them an explanation.

While he was aware of wider staffing issues in terms of having capacity to run the centre, he had not thought that Council had reached the stage where it had to unexpectedly close the facility.

Continuing, he added that problems with the sports centre had been a disaster for the people of Portaferry for a long period of time, pointing to issues with the sports hall where a sizable section had been cordoned off for almost a year following the collapse of the floor which had not been repaired.

While he knew there had been a committed team of staff at the facility, there was something desperately wrong in the Council when elected members were only officially notified two days after the decision was taken to close the venue.

Councillor Boyle criticised the Council's response on the day of closure in terms of communication, complaining that there had not been any signs placed up to advise of the closure and that not everyone, including himself, was constantly on social media.

He explained that this had gone down badly with the public in Portaferry and compared this to Comber leisure facilities where in one part of the Borough ribbons were being cut and in another lights were being turned off and doors locked.

He felt that leisure services in that part of the Ards Peninsula suffered badly and it was not viable for anyone to make a 40-mile round trip to use leisure facilities in Newtownards or Comber.

While he was aware that the centre was not owned by the Council and the responsibility of the Education Authority, it was still a problem for the community and he found it sad that such a fine looking building otherwise, was now closed indefinitely. He felt that people deserved to know the next steps and what the Council was going to do about it.

Alderman Adair agreed that the closure was handled very badly and he too had only become aware of it when he received phone calls from leisure centre members. He felt that elected members should have been contacted straight away as they were normally the first port of call for members of the public. While there had been a post on social media, he too was not someone who was on their 24/7 and felt elected members should have been treated better.

He called for the facility to be reopened as soon as possible and suggested that a stakeholder meeting to include the St MacNissi's Trust, which had an interest, elected members for the Ards Peninsula and officers be organised to see how the situation could be moved forward.

A 40-mile round trip to the nearest alternative centre did not promote health and wellbeing in the community and there were some private facilities in the Peninsula that could perhaps be utilised.

Councillor Ashe asked if there were any details of the plans to address the staff shortages and if there were any plans to refund those gym members that did not wish to travel to the alternative facilities in Newtownards and Comber.

At the outset, the Head of Leisure Services wished to apologise to elected members and agreed that they should have been informed of the closure on Monday. He explained that it had been a developing situation which had been out of the Council's control and the centre was closed because staff had taken ill.

The Officer advised that in addition to the social media post every member of the leisure centre was sent an email and a message to advise of the closure on Monday

and while he appreciated they may not have picked those up, the Council had made that direct contact with them. He appreciated that elected members should have also received that same information.

He explained that Council had not had available staff to go down and place signage up at Portaferry Sports Centre. That was now being actioned though. He advised that the response would be reviewed for next time this happened as he believed unfortunately this would likely happen again.

In terms of the Sports Hall floor, he stressed that this was an issue with the school and he urged Members to help move this along with the Education Authority who owned the building, and relevant stakeholders.

He explained that the partial use of the sports hall was the result of taking health and safety advice in order to facilitate the needs of customers.

To put the matter in context, he explained that it took just over 4500 staff hours per day to deliver leisure services across all centres and there was at times a shortfall of 2300 hours each day. For more than half of those hours there were no members of staff available. There were significant sickness levels, some of it work related, including 10 staff on long term sick and 10 vacancies. That was despite 15 recruitment exercises carried out since the Covid-19 Pandemic and delayed job evaluations for five years. He suspected that situation would continue due to disagreement between Council and trade unions and therefore jobs would continue to be advertised at levels of pay below the industry average. He had noted though that the latest recruitment exercise had included the wording 'job evaluation pending' and that had returned the largest amount of interest at that level in five years.

He added that those wider staffing issues had meant there was no additional resource available, through temporary staff transfers, to keep Portaferry open.

The Officer explained the additional challenges in recruiting permanent staff at Portaferry Sports Centre given the long commuting distances versus the part time operating hours which did not make it financially viable for many people unless they lived locally. The only other appeal was for trainee or up and coming managers gaining an opportunity in a less competitive environment.

He advised that this closure only related to key members of staff being off sick but it was an indication of the difficulties being faced right across Leisure services. For example the pool and spa in Newtownards had been closed twice in the previous four weeks and some classes in Comber had been stopped. There were also two long term vacancies in Portaferry on top of the sickness.

In summary, he said it was regrettable that elected members had not been informed of the closure on Monday but he repeated the difficulty of a developing situation and stressed that all members of Portaferry Sports Centre had been contacted.

Councillor Kendall commented that this was a significant issue that had been raised previously and it was not just affecting Leisure but also Parks and Cemeteries and others. She recalled information from a previous meeting which had outlined some of

the problems that had resulted in recruitment issues that Council was facing. She welcomed that the Head of Leisure Services had made this clear and it was a massive strategic risk for the Council. She felt that Council needed to do all it could to get job evaluation process completed to ensure it was competing on a par with other Councils and providing the best service possible. Councillor Kendall feared this problem could simply move around the Borough and that should not happen when a member of staff had to take time off due to a reasonable illness.

The Head of Leisure Services clarified in response to Councillor Ashe's earlier query, that all members of Portaferry Sports Centre were advised that they would not be charged during this period and would have the option of using other leisure centres free of charge.

(The meeting went into recess at 9pm and resumed at 9.10pm)

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

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

#### **22. KILCOOLEY SOCIAL SUPERMARKET (FILE CW142)**

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

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 3 – EXEMPTION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS IF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON.**

A report was presented to Community and Wellbeing detailing funding for social supermarkets.

The Report presented 3 options for members consideration.

One option was agreed.

#### **23. TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF CONSULTANT SERVICES TO DEVELOP A LEISURE STRATEGY FOR AND 2025–2035 (FILE LE18)**

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

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 3 – EXEMPTION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS IF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON.**

A report was presented to Community and Wellbeing detailing the tender for the appointment of a consultant to develop a leisure strategy for AND, 2025-20-35

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

The recommendation was agreed

## **24. NEWTOWNARDS CITIZENS HUB UPDATE (FILE PCU21)**

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

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 3 – EXEMPTION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS IF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON.**

A report was presented to Community and Wellbeing detailing an update of the Newtownards Citizens Hub Project

The Report recommended that Council proceed to the next stage.

The recommendation was agreed.

## **25. CYCLE TO WORK SCHEME (FILE CG11817)**

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

**NOT FOR PUBLICATION SCHEDULE 3 – EXEMPTION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS IF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON.**

A report was presented to Community and Wellbeing detailing a reinstatement of a cycle to work scheme

The Report recommended that Council notes the report.

The recommendation was agreed

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

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

## **TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 9.25pm.

Unclassified

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**ITEM 8****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	31 January 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	15 April 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 - ResoluteM;nds
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Deputation request form

The attached deputation request had been received from ResoluteM;nds to present to the Council.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council accepts the request for a deputation from ResoluteM;inds and refers it to the Community and Wellbeing 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](mailto: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.

<b>Name of person(s) making the deputation request:</b>	Rory Sloan
<b>Date of request:</b>	19/03/2024
<b>If making the deputation on behalf of an organisation or a group of individuals, name of the organisation / individuals:</b>	ResoluteM;nds
<b>Name of Committee (if known) to which you wish to make your deputation:</b>	

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 subject of my deputation will include raising awareness about addiction in Northern Ireland, the current mental health crisis particularly amongst young people. I hope to request and encourage Council Members' support for peer-advocacy, lived-experience informed and peer-led diversionary initiatives. This includes informing Councillors/Members about the upcoming launch of ResoluteM;nds, the launch event being held in the Borough. Local Councillors work closely with their communities and DEAs, they are keenly aware of the kinds of issues experienced by young people in particular in Northern Ireland.

My deputation aims to address the issues of addiction and mental health issues in Northern Ireland, highlighting the urgent need for increased awareness and action. These challenges have a huge impact on individuals, families and communities. I believe through my own lived experiences and knowledge, having faced addiction and mental ill health over the last few years, I can help and encourage young people understand the impact of addiction, how to support your mental health, and to learn my from own experiences - taking steps to manage addiction, support positive mental health, and thereby help to make a positive impact on young people.

#### About me:

My name is Rory Sloan. I am 23 years old from Belfast. From the age of 14 I have struggled with substance abuse and mental health issues. As I grew older my substance abuse turned into a cocaine addiction which led me to finding myself involved in criminal activities and going to prison just after my 21st birthday. Since being released I have turned my life around fully. After still struggling for a year with drugs, before now being 11 months sober I have developed an insane passion around these topics. I have spoken at and became a One Young World Leader, i have spoken at several conferences across Northern Ireland and Ireland including at the restorative justice conference in stormont where Princess Anne came to my work shop. I am now launching my own Campaign called ResoluteM;nds which is launching on the 15th of may in the Culloden Hotel.

#### What is ResoluteM;nds:

ResoluteM;nds is committed to combat the crisis of addiction and mental health among young people. Leveraging personal experiences, passion and acquired knowledge, we aim to inspire hope and provide support to those facing these challenges while advocating for greater awareness and education for young people across the world.

Our vision is a world where young people are empowered to overcome mental health and addiction obstacles, guided by empathy, understanding and shared experiences. Through ResoluteM;nds, we aspire to build a

**community of resilience, where every voice will be heard and no one battles alone.**

**The primary objective of ResoluteMinds is to significantly impact the landscape of mental health and addiction among young people by providing support and awareness.**

**Our plan entails:**

- **Live events**
- **school workshops**
- **social media awareness**
- **podcast coverage**
- **community platform**
- **bringing mental health and physical health into one**

## **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.

(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](mailto:dataprotection@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)  
Tel: 0300 013 3333

Unclassified

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**ITEM 9****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	24 April 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Strategic Transformation and Performance
Date of Report	15 April 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	N/A
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: N/A
Subject	Head of Strategic Transformation and Performance Permission to attend Local Government Partnership Network 2024 (Manchester)
Attachments	N/A

The Head of Strategic Transformation and Performance has been invited to attend the Local Government Partnership Network 2024, Manchester, on Tuesday 21 and Wednesday 22 May 2024.

LGPN is a unique learning and networking platform which brings together over 150 leaders from local government authorities to encourage discussions, benchmarking, sharing of ideas and networking with peers.

Key themes for 2024 include:

- AI empowerment for local government transformation
- Digital leadership for service excellence
- Nurturing success: CRM-integrated workforce management

Not Applicable

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- Powering progress: community engagement and enhanced service
- Inclusive impact: revolutionising local government through diversity and digital innovation

As we are about to embark on our digital transformation journey with the launch of our Digital Strategy, it is timely that the Head of Service with responsibility for strategic transformation, including Digital Services and the implementation of the Digital Strategy, attends this event to network with her counterparts across the UK.

The Head of Strategic Transformation and Performance requests permission to attend and that the cost of flights (best value available) is covered by Council. The event and one night of accommodation are provided free of charge.

**Return Flights:**

BHD - MAN £98 (at time of report)

**TOTAL COST:** <£150 (allowing for fluctuation in current prices)

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council approve the Head of Strategic Transformation and Performance to attend the Local Government Partnership Network in May 2024.

Unclassified

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**ITEM 10****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Council Meeting
Date of Meeting	24 April 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	16 April 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	Changes to conducting Committee and Council meetings and changes to the Standing Orders
Attachments	Appendix 1 Letter from Department for Communities 1 March 2024

**Background**

Section 78 (local authority meetings) of the Coronavirus Act 2020 (“CVA”) contained provision to provide councils with the flexibility to hold meetings by remote or hybrid means during the Coronavirus emergency. This included an enabling power for the Department to make subordinate legislation regarding remote/hybrid meetings and the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 were subsequently made and came into operation on 1 May 2020.

Council was informed in a letter from the Department for Communities (Appendix 1) that the current extension Order (S.R. 2023 No. 140) ceased to have effect by virtue of section 96(7) of the Coronavirus Act after 6 March 2024. This means that the



Not Applicable

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provisions which enable councils to hold remote/hybrid meetings fell and legislation reverted to the position before the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (NI) 2020 were made meaning meetings must be held in person after 6 March 2024.

### **Changes to Standing Orders**

As a result of the current legislative position, Standing Order 30 and Annex 2 of the Standing Orders are currently redundant and at the Council meeting on 27 March 2024, the following changes to the Standing Orders were recommended for consideration and stood down without debate for one month.

Standing Order 30 of the Standing Orders, Version 10, February 2024 is written as follows:

## **30 Remote Attendance**

### **30 1 Definition of remote attendance**

In line with the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020, any reference in these Standing Orders to a Council or Committee meeting is not limited to a meeting of persons all of whom, or any of whom, are present in the same place and any reference to a “place” where a meeting is held, or to be held, includes reference to more than one place including electronic, digital or virtual locations such as internet locations, web addresses or conference call telephone numbers

### **30 2 Elected Member remote attendance**

An Elected Member in remote attendance attends the meeting at any time provided they are able: (a) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard, and where practicable be seen by, the other Members in attendance; (b) to hear, and where practicable see, and be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by, any members of the public in attendance in order to exercise a right to speak at the meeting; and (c) to be so heard and, where practicable, be seen by any other members of the public in attendance

### **30 3 Press and public remote attendance**

Any reference in these Standing Orders to a member of the public or press being present at a meeting includes such persons attending by remote access, and the reference in Standing Order 8 1 to every meeting being “open to the public and press” includes through enabling remote access

### **30 4 Voting when attending remotely**

Any vote that would otherwise be taken by a show of hands in line with Standing Order 21 4 will, if any of the Elected Members entitled to vote are in remote attendance, be taken by way of a verbal confirmation from each Member as to whether they are for or against the motion

### **30 5 Miscellaneous remote attendance provisions**

References in Standing Orders 10 and 28 to excluding the public and press from the Council Chamber or removing them from the room, shall be read as removing

Not Applicable

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their remote access where their attendance is, or would be but for their exclusion, remote attendance

There is no requirement for an Elected Member in remote attendance to stand when addressing the Presiding Chairperson in line with Standing Order 20 6

A Presiding Chairperson in remote attendance shall call a meeting to order, rather than rise to do so, in line with Standing Order 20 19

It is recommended that Standing Order 30 as above and Annex 2 of the Standing Orders Version 10, February 2024 is revoked. If Council is instructed by the Department for Communities that new legislation is in place to allow hybrid meetings, a report regarding a new Standing Order will be brought to Council.

### **Stand Down Standing Orders**

Members should be aware when making these decisions, that under Standing Order 29 2 Any motion to, add to, vary or revoke these 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 will be ratified at an ordinary meeting of the Council. Therefore, these Standing Orders were stood down at the Council meeting on 27 March 2024, for discussion at the meeting of 24 April 2024.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council agrees to amend the Standing Orders as set out in this report.



**To: Council Chief Executives**

**Causeway Exchange  
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Our ref:  
Date: 1 March 2024

Dear Chief Executive

### **Council Remote/Hybrid Meetings**

Section 78 (local authority meetings) of the Coronavirus Act 2020 (“CVA”) contained provision to provide councils with the flexibility to hold meetings by remote or hybrid means during the Coronavirus emergency. This included an enabling power for the Department to make subordinate legislation regarding remote/hybrid meetings and the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 were subsequently made and came into operation on 1 May 2020.

The expiry date of section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 has been extended a number of times, with the current extension Order - the Coronavirus Act 2020 (Extension of Provisions Relating to Local Authority Meetings) (No. 3) Order (Northern Ireland) 2023 - extending the provisions to 24 March 2024, thus allowing councils to continue to hold remote/hybrid meetings under the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (NI) 2020.

The section 78 extension orders were made under the Assembly’s confirmatory procedure which means that, whilst an Order comes into operation once made, it will cease to have effect 40 days from the date of making unless it has been approved by resolution of the Assembly (the 40 day period does not include any time in which the Assembly is dissolved, in recess for more than 4 days or adjourned for more than 6 days). The 40-day approval period for the current extension Order is due to expire on 6 March 2024.

The CVA was intended as emergency legislation. The Communities Minister, Minister Lyons, having considered whether it is appropriate for the current extension order to be put before the Assembly for approval and whether another extension order should be made to extend the provisions of section 78 of the CVA for a further 6 months, has concluded that there is no justification for the continued extension of provisions of the CVA.

The current extension Order (S.R. 2023 No. 140) will cease to have effect by virtue of section 96(7) of the Coronavirus Act after 6 March 2024 (although that does not affect anything previously done under or by virtue of the order). This will mean that the



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provisions which enable councils to hold remote/hybrid meetings will fall and legislation will revert back to the position before the Local Government (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of District Council Meetings) Regulations (NI) 2020 were made.

Councils should therefore make arrangements to ensure they are positioned to hold meetings in person after 6 March 2024.

The Local Government (Meetings and Performance) Act (Northern Ireland) 2021 provides a power for the Department to make regulations for the purpose of or in connection with ensuring district councils meetings may be held remotely. The Minister has asked that the Department proceed on regulations under the 2021 Act instead.

The Department will continue to update councils regularly on this matter.

Yours sincerely

**Anthony Carleton**  
**Director**  
**Local Government & Housing Regulation**

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	24 April 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	
Date of Report	24 April 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
11	31.05.15	Rory McIlroy recognition	Councillor Muir	Jun-15	Corporate Services Committee – October 2015. NOM transferred to C&W committee	Agreed	May-24	Further Report to follow in May 2024.
330	21.01.19	Shelter at slipway in Donaghadee	Councillor Brooks & Cllr Smith	Jan-19	Environment Committee	Agreed	TBC	Officers awaiting feedback from potential funder
372	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	NOM closed - confirmed with proposer following discussions with officers. Will be removed from tracker.
419	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	Councillor Brooks	Oct-20	Community & Wellbeing Committee – December 2020	Agreed at December 2020 C&WC. Ratified at December 2020 Council	TBC	Report to follow after consideration of Masterplan and application of
463	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	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
509	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	Councillors McRandal and Douglas	Apr-22	Environment Committee – June 2022	Agreed	Reported to January 2024 Environment Committee - agreed to bring	Agreed amendment: We propose the Officers bring back a further
513	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.
514	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	Agreed at October 2022 C&WC. Ratified at October 2022 Council	TBC	Council agreed Comber 3G pitch is ranked 21st in project prioritisation. Stakeholder

516	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.
519	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	Amended and agreed at October 2022 C&WC. Ratified at October 2022 Council	May 2024 C&W Committee	Engagement Ongoing
522	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
525	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
529	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

532	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 February 2024 EC Committee	Agreed to Instruct the Council's solicitor to draft a bylaw 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 bylaw approval and implementation process as set out under the Local Government Act 1972.
545	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 at December 2022 C&WC. Ratified at december 2022 Council	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.
549	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. NOM transferred to Community and Wellbeing Committee	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



550	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 Cttee. 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
555	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	Agreed at February 2023 C&WC. Ratified at february 2023 Council	June 2023 C&W Committee	Further report to future C&WC including a report recommendation on declaration.

554	08.01.2023	<p>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.</p>	Councillors Adair & Edmund	Jan-23	Place & Prosperity – February 2023	Agreed and ratified at Council 5.7.23	P&P 11 April 2024 - <b>Awaiting ratification at April Council</b>	<p>Perm Sec's of Dfl ltr of 10.8.23 reported to Sept P&amp;P where it was agreed that that Council writes to the Perm Sec of Dfl expressing disappointment at the lack of understanding in the response... CEx issued letter 3.11.23, response to be reported to P&amp;P when received. Chaser email re invite to attend site meeting sent by CX to DFI 6.3.24. Response rcvd 7.3.24</p>
562	18.01.2023	<p>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.</p>	Councillors Morgan and McRandal	Jan-23	Environment Committee – February 2023	Agreed	01/10/2023 and ratified at October 2023 Council	

560	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 <sup>nd</sup> Marquess of Londonderry, who was known by the courtesy title of Viscount Castlereagh during most of his life, in the 200 <sup>th</sup> 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
564	08.02.23	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 at February C&WC. Ratified at February Council	TBC	Officers considering report to be brought back to future Committee
567	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 received
568	6.3.2023	Officers are tasked with reviewing current powers and how council could best effect positive change.  As part of this review officers would investigate using part or all of Newtownards town centre as a pilot scheme to tackle dereliction, which could then be broadened across the Borough if successful. The review may form a working group which would consider what incentives could be provided through, DfC whom hold regeneration powers, the Planning system, Building Control, or by other means, to encourage the re-use or	Councillor Smart and Councillor Irvine	Mar-23	Place and Prosperity Committee June 2023	Agreed and ratified by 5 July Council	June 2024 P&P	
559	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.
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	Councillors Creighton and Moore	Council - August 2023	Community & Wellbeing Committee- September 2023	Agreed at September 2023 C&WC. Ratified at September 2023 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	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 at October C&WC. Ratified 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
580	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.
585		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 being considered by officers with a report to June 2024 C&WC

588		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		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,
586	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	TBC	Decision deferred at February 2024 committee . Further report brought back to CSC on 16 April 2024.
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 at December C&WC. Ratified at December Council	C&WC 17th April 2024	Report to April C&W Committee to be ratified at April Council
594	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	TBC	An ammendment to the original NOM was put to Council 20.12.23 2024 but fell.
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	Councillor McCracken and Councillor Blaney	29.11.23	C&W December	Agreed at December C&WC. Ratified at December Council	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 at December C&WC. Ratified at December Council	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	Alderman Adair and Councillor Edmund	29.11.23	C&W January	Agreed at January C&WC Ratified at January Council	TBC	Officers considering report to future C&WC
599	21.11.23	"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,	Councillor Cathcart and Councillor Gilmour	29.11.23	C&W January	Agreed at January C&WC Ratified at January Council	June C&WC	Grants transformation project already underway. First working group on 10th May 2024 with a report to June
560	23.11.23	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.	Councillor McLaren and Councillor Hollywood	Dec-23	C&W January	Agreed at January C&WC Ratified at January Council	May C&WC	Officers considering report to May 2024 C&WC
561	29.11.23	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	Alderman Adair and Councillor MacArthur	Council December 2023	Environment Committee January 2024 - to be ratified at January 2024 Council	Agreed with amendment: That this Council notes the continuing issue of dead seals and all mammals washed up on our beaches and	Update report brought to EC March 2024 - agreed to note the report.	
568	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			NOM to be closed

564	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		May-24	Response to NOM report to CS May. Close NOM after ratification.
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	Alderman Adair and Cllr Edmund	Council - January 2024	CW Committee	NoM amended and agreed at February C&WC ratified at February Council	TBC	Reports will be brought back to C&W Committee meetings as requested
567	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	Corporate Services Committee		TBC	13.3.24 Letter issued by CEX. 11.4.24 DfI acknowledged receipt of the letter.
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 and Morgan	Council - January 2024	Heard and agreed at Council. Further agreed that Council writes to the Health Minister once appointed		April 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			
563	28.2.24	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”	Cllr Boyle and Alderman McAlpine	Council - February 2024	P&P	Withdrawn at P&P 7.3.24	n/a	None
570	19.02.24	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	Ald Adair and Cllr Edmund	Council - March 2024	C&W March	Agreed	TBC	Officers considering report to future C&WC
571	20.02.24	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.	Councillor McKee and Councillor Kendall	Council - February 2024	Environment Committee - March 2024	Agreed	TBC	
572	23.02.24	That Council brings a report with a view to implementing a “dogs on leads” policy on that part of the Coastal Path which traverses the private road serving the properties 91 to 117 Station Road, Hollywood inclusive.	Alderman Graham and Councillor Martin	Council - March 2024	Environment Committee - April 2024	Agreed	TBC	



575	04.03.24	Rescinding Notice of Motion - Playpark, Parsonage Road, Kircubbin	Councillors Wray, Kerr, Boyle, Edmund, Aldermen Adair and McAlpine	Council - March 2024	n/a	Agreed at Council		
576	19.03.24	<p>That this Council recognises the significant opportunities which the redevelopment of Donaghadee Harbour could bring to the local economy in terms of leisure sailing and tourism and thus instructs officers to work with local groups to scope potential operational facilities which could enhance the offering in the Harbour and further brings back a feasibility report on the various options, including costings and possible funding streams.</p> <p>Further, that this Council recognises the issues associated with high winds and coastal change and reviews the original 2020 Harbour Study conducted by RPS including the necessity for an offshore breakwater and agrees to bring back a report in time to be presented to Council in September 2024, outlining the budget required to undertake this work, any key considerations, next steps and identify which stakeholders would need to be involved.</p>	Councillor McCollum and Councillor Irwin	Council - March 2024	Environment Committee - April 2024	Agreed	TBC	