

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

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8<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee of Ards and North Down Borough Council in the Council Chamber, 2 Church Street, Newtownards on **Wednesday, 15 May 2024** commencing at **7.00pm**.

Yours faithfully

Susie McCullough  
Interim Chief Executive  
Ards and North Down Borough Council

### **A G E N D A**

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest

#### **Reports for Approval**

3. Arts Project Grants 2024-2025 (Report attached)
4. UK Government Multiply Agenda - Offer of funding (Report attached)
5. Community Development Grants Funding (Report attached)
6. Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants (WG April 2024) (Report attached)
7. Play Provision in Loughries *Update to Notice of Motion* (Report attached)
8. Vaping and Young People *response to Notice of Motion* (Report attached)

#### **Reports for Noting**

9. Arts and Heritage Advisory Panel Minutes (Report attached)
10. Home Office Refugee and Asylum Seeker Funding (Report attached)
11. Portavogie and Portaferry 3G pitch and Portaferry Sport Centre update *response to Notice of Motion* (Report attached)
12. Tree and Woodland Strategy Update (Report attached)

13. North Down Coastal Path Working Group Minutes (Report attached)
14. Food Service Plan 2023-2024 performance (Report attached)
15. Notice of Motion

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

16. Any Other Notified Business

### **ITEMS 17 to 21 \*\*\* IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\***

#### **Reports for approval (In confidence)**

17. Tender for Grounds Maintenance Support Services (Report attached)
18. Comber Greenway Alternative Route (Report attached)

#### **Reports for Noting (In Confidence)**

19. PEACEPLUS Minutes (Report attached)
20. PCSP Minutes (Report attached)
21. Leisure Services Contract. Update on recent claims concerning compensation events (Report attached)

### **MEMBERSHIP OF COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE (16 MEMBERS)**

Alderman Adair	Councillor Douglas
Alderman Brooks	Councillor Holywood
Alderman Cummings	Councillor Irwin
Councillor Ashe	Councillor S Irvine
Councillor Boyle	Councillor W Irvine
Councillor Chambers	Councillor Kendall (Vice Chair)
Councillor Cochrane	Councillor Martin (Chair)
Councillor Creighton	Councillor Moore

Unclassified

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**ITEM 3****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	15 May 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	26 April 2024
File Reference	ART 05 R1/24
Legislation	Local Government Act (NI)
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Arts Project Grants 2024-2025
Attachments	None

The second round of the Arts Project Grants for 2024-2025 opened for application in March 2024 with a closing deadline of Monday 22 April 2024. The grants were advertised in the local press, social media and on the Council's website.

An assessment panel met on Wednesday 24 April 2024 to assess the 10 applications received by the closing date. The panel comprised of the following members:

- Moira O'Rourke
- Dympna Curran
- Amy McKelvey

A maximum of £1,000 was available per application. The total available budget in this round is £4,175. Total amount requested was £9,646.98. Pass mark was agreed at 60%.

Table 1 below provides a summary of the applications, the scores received and comments.

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Table 1

	Name of Organisation	Requested Amount	Project	Score	Comments	Amount awarded (54%)
1	Hollywood Shared Town	£993	Arts workshops with Redburn Over 55's Group	90	Excellent facilitators and varied programme which will support the growth of Redburn Over 55's	£536.22
2	Orchardville Society (previously AMH Promote)	£1,000	Development of Christmas show with disabled clients	90	Excellent project with huge benefit to the clients of Orchardville	£540
3	Boom!	£1,000	Development of volunteer programme with 16 – 18 yr olds	86	Excellent project targeting an important age group and offering valuable learning skills	£540
4	Ulster Guild of Spinners weavers and Dyers	£1,000	Workshop Programme in traditional textiles	86	Great application and a project that will support new interest and development in the group	£540
5	Ards Camera Club	£1,000	Photography Workshops	76	Great programme	£540
6	Kilcooley Women's Centre	£1,000	Harp playing workshops	73	Interesting and unique idea	£540
7	Cedar Foundation	£712	Art Workshop with Clients with brain injury	70	Good idea but application needed a little development	£384.48
8	Valhalla theatre Group	£990	Workshops and development of Historical walking tour of Bangor Castle and surrounding	69	Great idea but value for money and demand for the project was slightly lacking	£534.60

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9	D'dee Community Development	£1,000	Design and creation of D'dee Kilt	52	Didn't represent value for money	Did not reach pass mark
10	D'dee Heritage Preservation Company	£951.98	Art workshop days	48	Poor application	Did not reach pass mark
	Total	£9,646.98				£4,155.30

Eight organisations scored above the pass mark of 60, however, due to the limited monies available the panel discussed a number of options for a fair distribution of the funds available.

Council's normal practice is to divide the amount available by the total amount applied for that met the pass mark and award in proportion to that ratio. Therefore, in this case, that would result in an award of 54.2% of monies requested by each successful applicant.

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the eight awards from the Arts Project Grant Fund for 2024-2025 at 54.2% as per Council normal practice described above.

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**ITEM 4****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	15 May 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community & Culture
Date of Report	22 April 2024
File Reference	CW170
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	UK Government Multiply Agenda - Offer of funding
Attachments	None

The government's new £560 million programme to help transform the lives of hundreds of thousands of adults across the UK started in Spring 2022 and will be delivered through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, as Multiply Funding. Northern Ireland's Multiply funding was delayed due to the absence of the Assembly. Funding is now being made available, but the Department for the Economy has a short timeframe to deliver funding before the closing date of March 2025.

The aim of the funding is:

Numeracy is the ability to understand and use maths in daily life, home, and work. Whether that be improving household finances, helping children with homework, making more sense of the stats and facts in the media, or improving numeracy skills specific to your line of work.

**UK Government Multiply Agenda**

Multiply is a fully funded government scheme that offers maths courses to adults aged 19 years and older. The aim of the funding is to reach the hardest to reach

Not Applicable

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learners/residents, to engage in basic maths for everyday life, delivered in the heart of the community.

Council Officers were initially made aware of the programme at a meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024. The programme includes funding towards employment of a Multiply Officer to enable Council to co-ordinate a full programme and manage the funding.

The deadline to apply for funding towards a Multiply Officer was 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and for submission of bids for programme funding was 26<sup>th</sup> April 2024. Due to the extremely tight turnaround the Chief Executive granted permission to apply for funding for a Multiply Officer and seek permission retrospectively.

A Letter of Offer has been received from the Department for the Economy for provision to employ a Multiply Officer. Responsibilities of the post will include:

- Management and coordination of Multiply Projects.
- Project administration, including liaison with DfE.
- Promotion and marketing of Multiply projects.
- Procurement.

The post is a temporary role until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

At the time of writing this report, five bids for programme funding had been submitted before the closing date of 26 April 2024. The bids total £314,668 were submitted under the following four themes:

- Engaging with Mature Learners
- Numeracy Bootcamp (two separate applications submitted under the one theme)
- Bring a grown up
- Maths for speakers of other languages.

The Department for the Economy has estimated that there may be £200,000 available per eligible applicant but are unable to confirm amounts at this stage. The scheme will be delivered locally via an open call to community partners to ensure local delivery of the scheme by March 2025. A further update will be brought to Committee once a Letter of Offer for programme funding has been received.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council retrospectively approves the request to employ a Multiply Officer using the full funding on offer.

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**ITEM 5****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	15 May 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community & Culture
Date of Report	23 April 2024
File Reference	CDV28
Legislation	Recreation and Youth Services Order (NI) 1986
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Community Development Grants Funding
Attachments	None

The Community Development (CD) Fund 2024-25 is match funded by the Department of Communities via the Community Support Programme and the Council Community Development Section.

Correspondence has now been received from DfC (Minister of Communities), Gordon Lyons MLA, to advise that due to budget uncertainty and ongoing negotiations, the budget position for 2024/25 for all Government departments remains unclear.

In response to the budget uncertainty DfC is making an interim allocation to help sustain services and for a three-month period up to 30 June 2024. This has been based on the 2023/24 Letter of offer.

In April 2023 Council agreed to award £91,625.04 to forty-nine successful groups, subject to a Letter of Offer being received from DfC. £41,100 of this is required from DfC through the Community Support Programme with the rest being Council funding.



Not Applicable

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Given the current budget uncertainty, it is recommended that Council releases Letters of Offer to the successful applicants totalling 100% of the Council contribution for 2024/2025 and 25% (quarter 1) of the DfC budget.

The balance the Departments contribution to the total grant budget can be released once a further Letter of Offer has been received.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council approve the recommendation that Letters of Offer for Community Development running costs are issued with 100% of the Council budget awarded and 25% of the DfC contribution until further confirmation is received from DfC on the next three quarters of 2024/2025 financial year.

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**ITEM 6****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	15 May 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure Services
Date of Report	11 April 2024
File Reference	SD151
Legislation	Recreation and Youth Services Order (1986)
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants (WG April 2024)
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Successful Goldcard Appendix 2 - Successful Individual Travel & Accommodation Appendix 3 - Unsuccessful

Members will 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 require Council approval. In addition, the Council requested that regular updates are reported to members.

Not Applicable

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During March 2024, the Forum received a total of 33 applications: 1 Event, 3 Goldcard, 29 Individual Travel/Accommodation Grants. A summary of the **30** successful applications are detailed in the attached Successful Goldcard and Successful Individual Travel/Accommodation 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>March 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>*-£442.53</b>
Seeding	£500	£0	<b>£55.01</b>
Travel and Accommodation	£14,500	£0	<b>*-£5,836.19</b>
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	<b>£1,000.00</b>
Schools/Sports Club Pathway	£5,000	£0	<b>£3,002.00</b>
28 Goldcards in total during 2023/24.			

\*The proposed remaining budget for Event of **-£442.53** is based on a reclaimed amount of **£80.80**.

\*The proposed remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of **-£5,836.19** is based on a reclaimed amount of **£100**.

The proposed remaining budget for 2023/24 is **-£5,076.72** (111% of the 2023/24 budget spent).

<b>2024/25 Budget £45,000</b>	Annual Budget	Proposed Funding Awarded <b>March 2024</b>	<b>Remaining Budget</b>
Anniversary	£1,000	£0	<b>£250.00</b>
Coaching	£3,000	£0	<b>£3,000</b>
Equipment	£14,000	£0	<b>£14,000</b>
Events	£6,000	£0	<b>£3,319.95</b>
Seeding	£500	£0	<b>£500</b>
Travel and Accommodation	£14,500	<b>*£3,710.00</b>	<b>£9,870.00</b>
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	<b>£1,000</b>
Schools/Sports Club Pathway	£5,000	£0	<b>£5,000</b>
<b>3 Goldcard Extensions Awarded in March</b>			

\*The proposed remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of **£9,870.00** is based on a proposed award this month of **£3,710.00**, and **£920.00** awarded previously.

Not Applicable

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The proposed remaining budget for 2024/25 is **£36,939.95** (18% of the 2024/25 budget spent), as £750.00 for Anniversary Grants, £2,680.05 for Events and £920.00 for Travel and Accommodation, was awarded previously.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is 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.

**APPENDIX 1 - SUCCESSFUL GOLDCARD REPORT FOR NOTING**

APPLICANT	SPORT	EVENT	REPRESENTING	GOLDCARD	DATES	PROPOSED	NOTES
Amber Dempster	Futsal	UEFA Futsal World Cup Qualifiers	Northern Ireland Women's Senior International Futsal squad.	ABMWLC - gym, pool & spa	15/10/2024	Yes	<b>Amber was awarded a Goldcard up to 31 March 2024, she has submitted a letter from the IFA advising she has been selected for the Northern Ireland Women's Senior International Futsal squad. The squad are preparing for two friendly games in April against Belgium as well as the first ever FIFA Women's World Cup qualifiers in October 2024. Propose Goldcard for 6 months until 9 October 2024.</b>
Rhys McClenaghan	Gymnastics	Men's Artistic National Squad - Olympic Squad Senior	Ireland	ABMWLC - gym, pool & spa & LP - cryospa	15/10/2024	Yes	<b>Goldcard extended for a further 6 months, until 15 October 2024.</b>
Eamon Montgomery	Gymnastics	Men's Artistic National Squad - Olympic Squad Senior	Ireland	ABMWLC & BA - - gym, health suite and pool	15/10/2024	Yes	<b>Goldcard extended for a further 6 months, until 15 October 2024.</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>						<b>3</b>	

## APPENDIX 2 - SUCCESSFUL INDIVIDUAL TRAVEL/ACCOMMODATION REPORT FOR NOTING

APPLICANT	SPORT	EVENT	DATES	LOCATION	REPRESENTING <sup>2</sup>	REQUESTED	PROPOSED	NOTES
Harvey Doyle	Ice Hockey	Sedhma Minor Hockey Tournament	2-8/04/2024	Canada	Ireland	Flight Dublin to Halifax 861.49 euro	£200	Letter from the Irish Ice Hockey Association advises Harvey has been selected to represent the Irish U15 Ice Hockey Team at the Sedhma Minor Hockey Tournament in April in Canada. Propose funding of £200.
Ryan Stirling	Taekwon-Do	The Warrior Open 2024	9&10/03/2024	Rickmansworth	Northern Ireland	Flights £245.86 + Accommodation £251	£150	Letter from SCoT confirms Ryan Stirling has been selected to represent Northern Ireland as part of the Northern Ireland National Taekwon-Do Team at The Warrior Open Taekwon-Do Tournament in London, England on 9 & 10 March 2024.
Luke Stirling	Taekwon-Do	The Warrior Open 2024	9&10/03/2024	Rickmansworth	Northern Ireland	Flights £245.86 + Accommodation £251	£150	Letter from SCoT confirms Luke Stirling has been selected to represent Northern Ireland as part of the Northern Ireland National Taekwon-Do Team at The Warrior Open Taekwon-Do Tournament in London, England on 9 & 10 March 2024.

Eva Patton	Athletics	All-Ireland Age Group Indoor Championships (U15 Girls 4 x 200 relay)	23/03/2024	Athlone International Arena	Ulster	Travel 161 miles x 2 x 45p = £144.90	£100	<b>Selection Letter received from Athletics NI, says Eva has been selected for the Irish Indoor Championships in Ireland, in the U15 Girls 4 x 200 relay. Recommend funding of £100.</b>
Eva Patton	Athletics	All-Ireland Age Group Indoor Championships (U15 60m, 60m hurdles and shot put)	6 & 7/04/2024	Athlone International Arena	Ulster	Travel 161 miles x 2 x 45p = £144.90 + Accommodation £94.10 = £239	£100	<b>Selection Letter received from Athletics NI, says Eva has been selected for the Irish Indoor Championships in Ireland, in the U15 60m, 60m hurdles and shot put. Recommend funding of £100.</b>
Bobby Driscoll	Sailing	2024 EurILCA Europa Cup	8-10/03/2024	Port Pollensa, Mallorca, Spain.	Ireland	Flights £218.44	£170	<b>Bobby has been selected to represent Ireland at the EullCA Europa Cup in Spain from 8-10 March, propose funding of £170 (Bobby has received £1,250 RYANI and £1,000 from Mary Peters Trust).</b>
Annabel Ridout	Sailing	RS Feva UK National Championships	25/05/24	WPNSA, Weymouth	Northern Ireland	Flight £41.98, Ferry £159.60. Accommodation £229.20	£150	<b>Annabel has been selected to attend the RS Feva UK National Championships from 25-28 May in Weymouth. Recommend funding of £150.</b>

Annabel Ridout	Sailing	RS Feva World Championships RS Feva World Championships	26/07/24	Bruinisse, Netherlands		Accommodation £195.20. Ferries £170.80 / £132.80. Mileage £40.14	£170	<b>Annabel has been selected to attend the RS Feva World Championships from 22-26 July in Netherlands. Recommend funding of £170.</b>
Emily Ridout	Sailing	RS Feva UK National Championships	25/05/24	WPNSA, Weymouth	Northern Ireland	Flight £41.98, Ferry £159.60. Accommodation £229.20	£150	<b>Emily has been selected to attend the RS Feva UK National Championships from 25-28 May in Weymouth. Recommend funding of £150.</b>
Emily Ridout	Sailing	RS FEva World Championships	26/07/24	Bruinisse, Netherlands	Northern Ireland	Accommodation £195.20. Ferries £170.80 / £132.80. Mileage £40.14	£170	<b>Emily has been selected to attend the RS Feva World Championships from 22-26 July in Netherlands. Recommend funding of £170.</b>
Annabel Ridout	Sailing	Eric Twinames RYA Youth Championships	04/05/2024	Rutland Water England	Northern Ireland	Ferry £194.00	£150	<b>Annabel has been selected to attend the Eric Twinames RYA Youth Championships from 4-6 May at Rutland Water. Recommend funding of £150.</b>
Emily Ridout	Sailing	Eric Twinames RYA Youth Championships	04/05/2024	Rutland Water England	Northern Ireland	Ferry £194.00	£150	<b>Emily has been selected to attend the Eric Twinames RYA Youth Championships from 4-6 May at Rutland Water. Recommend funding of £150.</b>



Charlotte Keers	Equestrian	Pony Club Dressage Home International	03/05/2024	Royal Windsor	Northern Ireland	Ferry £747.30, Hotel £580.97	£150	<b>Charlotte has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at the Dressage Home International to be held at The Royal Windsor Horse Show on Friday 3 May 2024. Recommend funding of £150.</b>
Zoe Emerson	Acro gymnastics	NDP National Finals	25-May	Fenton Manor Sports Complex, Stoke on Trent	Northern Ireland	Flight £295.82, Car Hire £119.29, Air BnB £183.59	£150	<b>Zoe has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at the NDP National Finals from 25-26 May in Stoke on Trent. Recommend funding of £150.</b>
Grace Anderson	Gymnastics	NDP National Finals	25/05/24-26/05/24	Fenton Manor Sports Complex, Stoke on Trent	Northern Ireland	Flights £124.30, Accommodation £85	£150	<b>Grace has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at the NDP National Finals from 25-26 May in Stoke on Trent. Recommend funding of £150.</b>
Eve Adair	Equestrian	Dressage Home International Windsor Horse Show	03-May	Windsor Horse Show, Windsor, England	Northern Ireland	Accommodation £621.67	£150	<b>Eve has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at the Dressage Home International Windsor Horse Show in Windsor, England, on Friday 3 May 2024. Recommend funding of £150.</b>
Eden Johnston	Acro Gymnastics	NDP National Finals	25/05/24-26/05/24	Fenton Manor Sports Complex, Stoke on Trent	Northern Ireland	Flight £314.74 + Accommodation £256.00 = £570.74	£150	<b>Eden has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at the NDP National Finals from 25-26 May in Stoke on Trent. Recommend funding of £150, "subject to" a signed declaration.</b>

Robert Bell	Lawn Bowls	Deaf Lawn Bowls Home Nations Tournament 2024	29-Jun-24	Belmont Bowling Club, Belfast	Northern Ireland Deaf Bowling Team	Accommodation £235	£50	Robert has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at the Deaf Lawn Bowls Home Nations Tournament 2024 on 29 June at Belmont Bowling Club. Propose £50, "subject to" NGB letter.
Jessica Dadley-Young	Sailing	Eric Twiname Junior Championships	4-6 May 2024	Rutland Water Sailing Club	Northern Ireland	Ferry £400 + camping £100 = £500	£150	Jessica has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at the Eric Twiname Junior Championships from 4-6 May at Rutland Water Sailing Club. Recommend funding of £150.
Freya Boyce	Athletics	All Ireland Juvenile Indoor Championships	23-Mar	Athlone, Ireland	Northern Ireland and Ulster	Travel £135 + Accommodation £102.72 = £237.72	£100	Freya has been selected for the All Ireland Juvenile Indoor Championships, after coming first at the NI & Ulster Indoor Championships in the U17 Mixed Relay and U18 Girls Relay. Recommend funding of £100, "subject to" an Athletics NI letter confirming Freya has qualified for this event. Revised NGB letter received 27/03/24.
Kris Burgess	Athletics	All Ireland Track and Field Championships	23-Mar	Athlone, Ireland	Northern Ireland and Ulster	Travel £138.60	£100	Kris has been selected to represent Northern Ireland and Ulster on 23 March at the All Ireland Track and Field Championships in Athlone, Ireland. Recommend funding of £100.

Aaron Burgess	Athletics	All Ireland Track and Field Championships	06-Apr	Athlone, Ireland	Northern Ireland and Ulster	Travel £138.60	£100	Aaron has been selected to represent Northern Ireland and Ulster on 6 April at the All Ireland Track and Field Championships in Athlone, Ireland. Recommend funding of £100.
Caitlin Moore	Gymnastics	NDP National Finals	25-26 May	Stoke on Trent	Northern Ireland	Travel £87 + Accommodation £83	£150	Caitlin has been selected to represent N.Ireland from 25-26 May 2024 at the NDP National Finals in Stoke on Trent. Recommend funding of £150.
Ellie Segasby	Gymnastics	NDP National Finals	25-26 May	Stoke on Trent	Northern Ireland	Travel £80 + Accommodation £248.32	£150	Ellie has been selected to represent N.Ireland from 25-26 May 2024 at the NDP National Finals in Stoke on Trent. Recommend funding of £150.
Olivia Davey	Gymnastics	Inter Regional Championships	11-12 May	Southampton	Northern Ireland	Travel £337.82 Accommodation £236.98	£150	Olivia has been selected to represent N Ireland from 11-12th May at the Inter-Regional Championships in Southampton. Recommend funding of £150

Bobby Driscoll	Sailing	ISA Youth Performance training / Munster championships	30-31 March 2024	Schull, Ireland	Ireland	Travel Mileage £304.20	£100	<b>Bobby has been selected to represent Ireland at the Munster Championships in Schull, Ireland from 30-31 March. Bobby is in receipt of RYANI Sports Award £1500, Mary Peters Award Youth Sports £1000 and Sport NI Youth Sports £1000 for 1 year.</b>
Bobby Driscoll	Sailing	Irish Sailing Association Youth National Championships RCYC	4-7 April 2024	Cork, Ireland	Ireland	Travel Mileage £253.80	£100	<b>Bobby has been selected to represent Ireland at the Irish Sailing Association Youth National Championships RCYC in Cork, Ireland from 4-7 April. Bobby is in receipt of RYANI Sports Award £1500, Mary Peters Award Youth Sports £1000 and Sport NI Youth Sports £1000 for 1 year.</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>								<b>£3,710.00</b>

## APPENDIX 3 - UNSUCCESSFUL REPORT

APPLICANT	APPLICATION	REQUEST	EVIDENCE REQUIRED	EXPLANATION
North Down Cycling Club	Event Grant	North Down Grand Prix - 2 June 2024 (Hall Hire £150 + Paramedic £550 + Barriers/Toilet £250 = £950)	Our Event Application Guidance states, "the application must be submitted three months prior to the event".	<b>Funding not recommended as application was submitted on 12 March for their Grand Prix on 2 June. Event Grant applications must be submitted a minimum of 3 months prior to the Event.</b>
Eliza McGill	Individual Travel & Accommodation Grant	British Trampoline School Finals, 15-16 March 2024, Telford	Applicants must have qualified or been selected to represent their province/country (i.e. Ulster, N. Ireland, Ireland or Great Britain), not their School/Northern Ireland Schools	<b>Funding not recommended as a Gymnastics NI letter has not been submitted with the application advising that Eliza has qualified/been selected to represent her province/country. This is a British Trampoline School Finals.</b>
Ellie Segasby	Individual Travel & Accommodation Grant	British Trampoline School Finals, 15-16 March 2024, Telford	Applicants must have qualified or been selected to represent their province/country (i.e. Ulster, N. Ireland, Ireland or Great Britain), not their School/Northern Ireland Schools	<b>Funding not recommended as a letter from Towerview Primary School was submitted with the application. The guidelines require a letter from Gymnastics NI, advising that Ellie has qualified/been selected to represent her province/country. This is a British Trampoline School Finals.</b>

Unclassified

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**ITEM 7****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	15 May 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks and Cemeteries
Date of Report	29 April 2024
File Reference	CW4
Legislation	n/a
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Play Provision in Loughries Update to Notice of Motion
Attachments	None

Members will recall a previous Notice of Motion was agreed by Council in October 2022: “That Council task officers to carry out a review of Play Provision in Loughries with a view to its inclusion in the Councils Play Strategy going forward.”

A report on this was brought to Council in December 2022 with the following recommendation, which was agreed with an amendment:

*It is recommended that Council review the potential for play provision for Loughries in the future when the thresholds as outlined above have been met unless provision is made as a result of the planned discussion with others outside of Council. Council notes the report and will review Play Provision in Loughries in 2024.*

**Context**

The Councils Play Strategy was finalised in 2021 and outlines the strategic approach to play provision in the Borough until 2032. Loughries was assessed in the

## Not Applicable

development of the strategy, but no specific actions in relation to the settlement were included.

This was because Loughries is classified as a Small Settlement (as defined in the Ards and North Down Area Plan 2015). The approach to play provision for Small Settlements and rural areas is outlined in the Councils agreed Play Strategy (Section 6.4) as follows:

*Rural Provision Providing fixed play areas in rural settings needs to be measured and balanced against a range of factors including those outlined above in terms of demographics, distance to other settlements and playparks, as well as the need for land acquisition and budget constraints. In rural areas households tend to be generally dispersed within the landscape. In some cases, clusters of dwellings are defined as Small Settlements in terms of the settlement hierarchy which is outlined in the relevant Local Development Plan. The approach in other Council areas in Northern Ireland is to only provide formal fixed play provision in settlements which are classified as Villages and above. In planning terms, the need for play areas is outlined under Planning Policy Statement 8, Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation (Policy OS 2, Public Open Space in New Residential Development). This is a useful benchmark to consider along with the previously mentioned considerations when determining the need for play provision.*

Therefore, a fixed play area will be considered if a Small Settlement has:

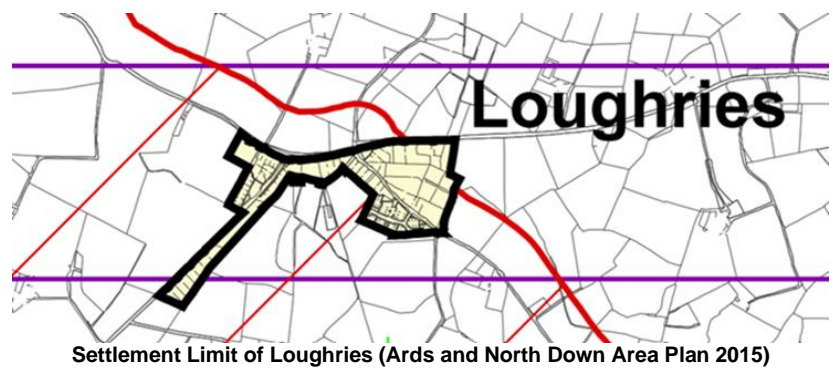
- More than 100 residential units within the defined Settlement Limit (as delineated by the Area Plan) or
- Minimum of 100 residential units within the catchment radial of the play area

If a Small Settlement meets the criterion and in conjunction with the other considerations as outlined above, then the installation of a play area will be considered (if suitable land can be acquired if the Council does not have any other land available within the settlement). If a play area is deemed necessary, then it is considered that a Tier 3/Doorstep Facility would be appropriate.

Alternatives to fixed play provision can be deployed in rural areas such as exploration of Play Partnerships with schools (if they have play areas), Play Events and Play Pods which have been discussed previously within the Play Strategy. This will be progressed on the appointment of a Play Development Officer, the recruitment process for this post has started.

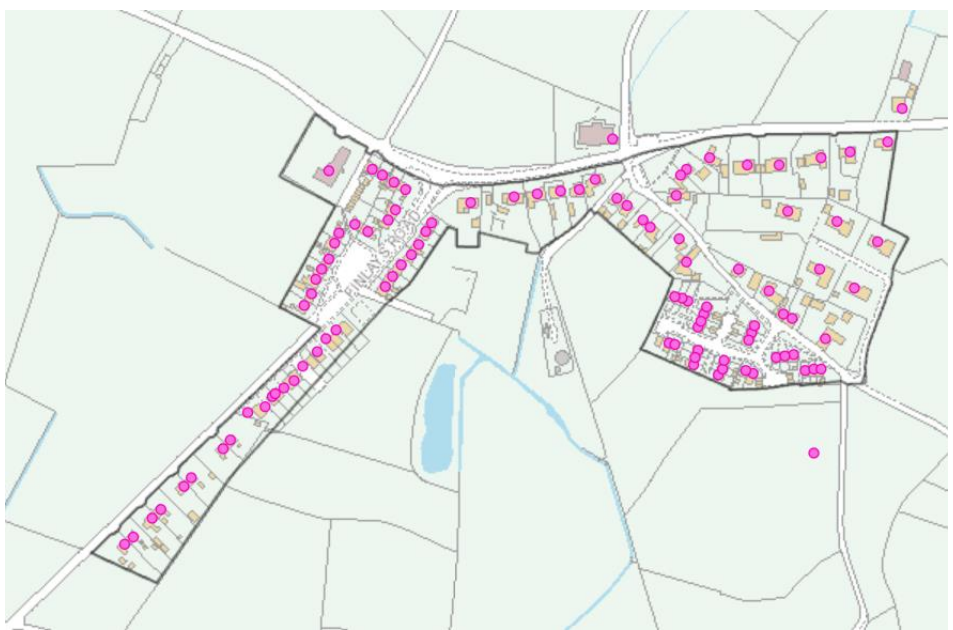
The Settlement Limit for Loughries as defined by the Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 is shown below.

Not Applicable



Settlement Limit of Loughries (Ards and North Down Area Plan 2015)

Using the Council's GIS (Geographical Information System) all address points registered in the Borough are shown. This information is updated on a regular basis using Address Pointer Data received via Land and Property Services. There are currently **98** addresses registered within the Settlement Limit of Loughries with one being the Church and another a school, which are not residential, as is shown below. The black line denotes the Settlement Limit.



Address Points in Loughries



Not Applicable



Address Points in Loughries

The above is a recent orthophotography image of Loughries with the address points shown and the Settlement Limit is delineated by the red line. While the number of address points hasn't changed since the last report in November 2022, it may have been perceived that some new houses have been built along Finlay's Road, but at the time of that prior report the address points had already been registered with Land and Property Services and were annotated on the map and were therefore counted at that time.

Furthermore, Council currently has no land holdings within or out with the Settlement Limit so therefore land acquisition would be required to deliver any play provision in Loughries.

**Summary**

Currently Loughries does not meet the criteria as defined in planning policies and outlined in the Play Strategy, as:

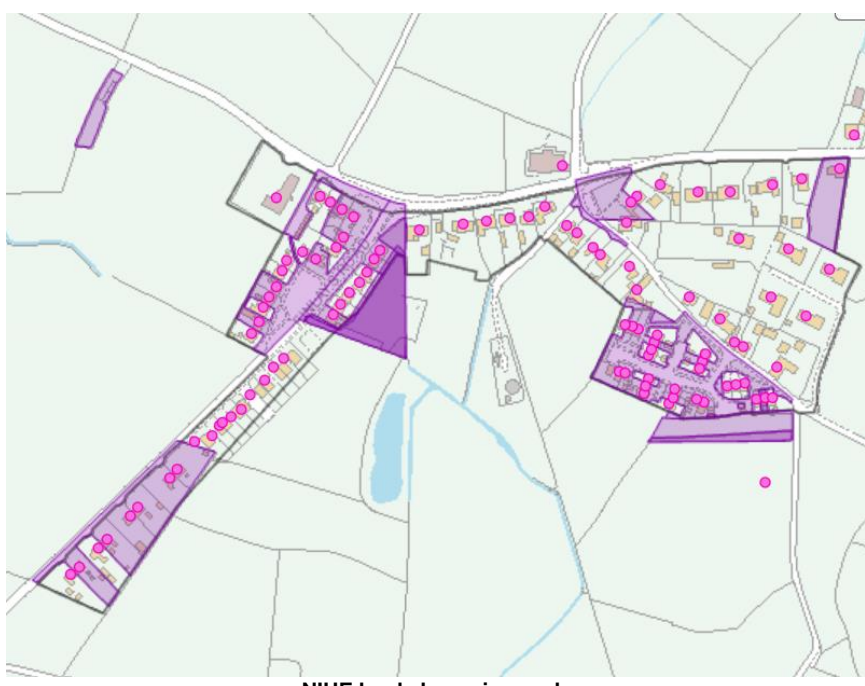
- 1. the threshold of 100 dwellings has not been reached and
- 2. there is no Council land available.

**Future Options**

If in the future the residential unit threshold was met, there is the potential to explore a partnership with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive who have some land holdings in Loughries (see map on page 5).

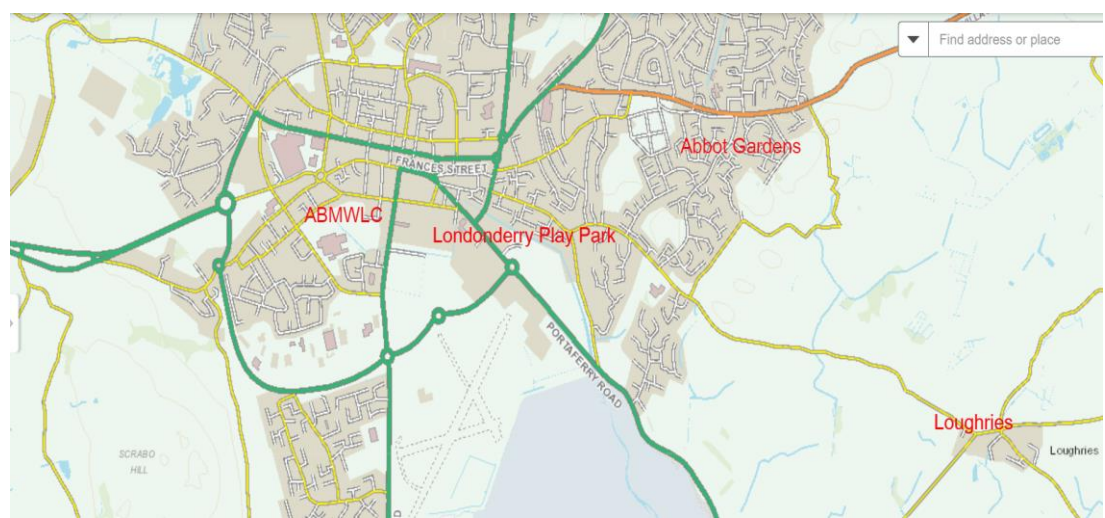
However, even if they were agreeable to transfer some land to Council their lands are limited and they may have further plans for it. In addition, some of the undeveloped land is quite close to houses and therefore a consultation exercise would have to be held with residents to ascertain if they would want a play park close to their houses.

Not Applicable



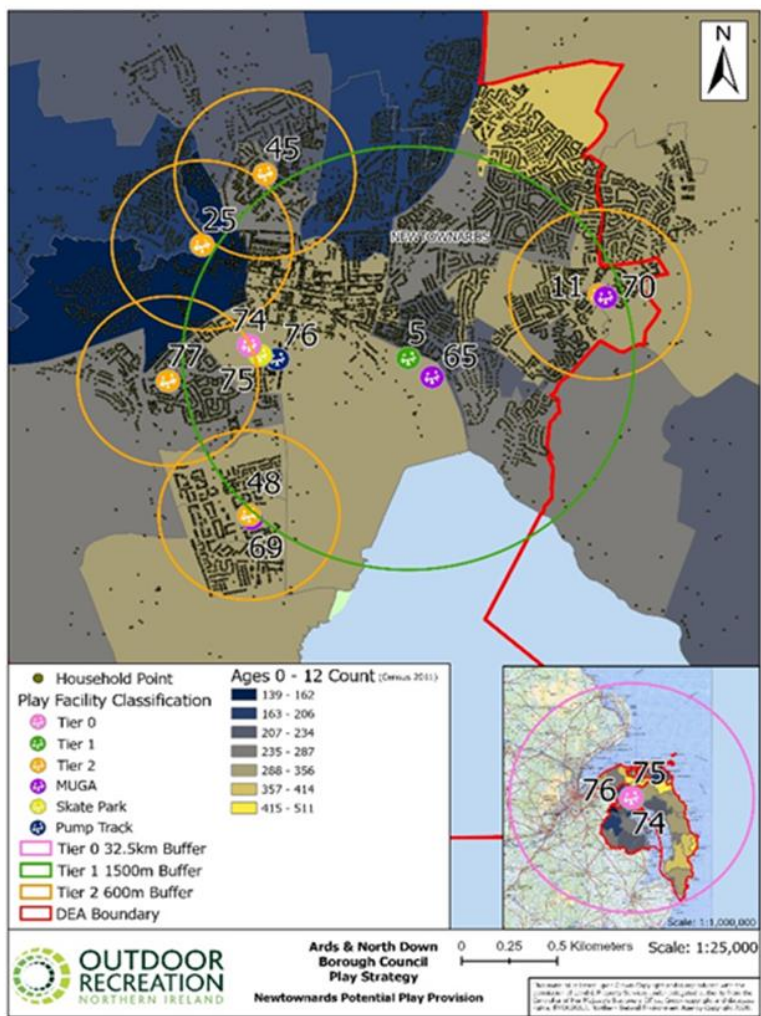
NIHE land shown in purple

It should also be noted that there are other playgrounds which are close to Loughries, with Londonderry Park (Tier 1) being 2.4 miles (by road) and ABMWLC Tier 0 which has an even wider catchment area as shown on the map insert below as well as Abbot Gardens (Tier 2).



Nearby Playgrounds

Not Applicable



Catchment Areas of Playgrounds in Newtownards

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council

1. Note the above update and agree that play provision in Loughries is not appropriate at this time due to the number of residences and lack of available lands.
2. Furthermore agree that officers review the potential for play provision for Loughries in the future when the thresholds as outlined above have been met.

Unclassified

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## ITEM 8

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	15 May 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Environmental Health Protection and Development
Date of Report	18 April 2024
File Reference	CW14
Legislation	The Nicotine Inhaling Products (Age of Sale and Proxy Purchasing) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 Tobacco and Related Products Relations 2016
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: N/A
Subject	Vaping and Young People response to Notice of Motion
Attachments	None

In January 2024 Council agreed the following as a result of a Motion

*That this Council recognises the growing concerns and impact of single use vapes on our young people, schools and our local environment. Calls on Council Officers to take a full review of options available to address these concerns and work in conjunction with outside agencies in order to do so. The 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.*

This report outlines the outcome of the review requested through the notice of motion and sets out the Councils role and recommendations on what the Council could call on Stormont to progress to address the prevalence of young people vaping.

Not Applicable

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## **Background**

Vaping is the inhaling of vapour created by an electronic device known as an e-cigarette. Vapour typically contains nicotine and other ingredients, some of which may be harmful. Although vaping is considered less harmful than smoking, the long-term health effects are not fully known, and evidence has shown that they are not harm free. The health advice is that young people and people who have never smoked should not vape. The levels of vaping among local children and young people have however been increasing. According to the Northern Ireland Young Persons behaviour and attitudes survey 2022, 9% of 11–16-year-olds vape compared to 6% in 2019 and the prevalence was higher in older age groups, with 24% of those in Year 12 currently using vapes.

According to the Final Review of the 10 Year Tobacco Control Strategy for Northern Ireland, the growth in the use of disposable vapes are of particular concern. These products are low cost, attractively packaged and available in a range of flavours and appear to appeal to young people.

Vapes can also contain harmful substances other than nicotine. There have been recent reports of vapes laced with illicit substances such as THC or Spice which can have a negative outcome when vaped and the media has reported young people being hospitalised after using vapes with these types of substances added.

There are also concerns over the environmental impact of disposable vapes due to the presence of lithium batteries and hard to recycle components which means they often end up as litter or as general waste.

## **What is Ards and North Down Borough Council currently doing?**

### Underage Sales

Legislation was introduced in February 2022 which prohibits the sale of Nicotine Inhaling Products (NIPs) (including vapes) to anyone under the age of 18. This is enforced by Tobacco Control Officers within local Councils in Northern Ireland. All identified retailers of NIPs are sent letters and/or visited to inform them of their legal obligations and are advised that test purchasing will be undertaken. In 2023/24, 70 test purchases were carried out in the Ards and North Down area for the underage sale of vapes. The Public Health Agency (PHA) target was 50. During these exercises 8 premises sold NIPs to our child volunteer, and as a result 4 Fixed Penalties and 2 written warnings were issued. 2 investigations are ongoing. Tobacco Control Officers also investigate complaints in relation to underage sales of vapes made by the public.

Officers remain vigilant to businesses starting to sell vapes and new business opening up. This has become very challenging with confectionary shops, beauty and tanning parlours, hairdressers/barbers etc starting to sell vapes. There is currently no obligation for a business to register or seek a licence in order to sell vapes.

Not Applicable

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### Product Safety

The Council has also a product safety role in relation to vapes. The Consumer Protection team enforce a number of pieces of legislation, including the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 (TRPRs) which introduces rules to ensure:

- minimum standards for the safety and quality of all e-cigarettes and refill containers (otherwise known as e-liquids),
- that information is provided to consumers so that they can make informed choices,
- an environment that protects children from starting to use these products.

They also set out standard for e-liquids including:

- Volume of nicotine containing e-liquid for sale in one refill container to be no more than 10ml
- Disposable e-cigarette, a single use cartridge or a tank, capacity of no more than 2ml
- Nicotine strength to be no more than 20mg/ml
- Must not contain certain ingredients including vitamins, colourings and prohibited additives.

TRPRs also includes new labelling requirements and warnings and require all e-cigarettes and e-liquids to be notified and published by the Medicines Healthcare Regulatory Authority (MHRA) before they can be sold.

It should be noted that illegal or non-compliant vapes are products that do not meet the requirements set out in the TRPRs and/or are deemed unsafe under the General Product Safety Regulations 2005. For example, vapes that exceed the maximum tank capacity, vapes that do not fulfil the labelling requirements, vapes that contain illegal ingredients, or those that have not been registered with MHRA.

E-cigarettes also fall under the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 2016 and therefore must also meet the requirements of these regulations. These are also enforced by the Consumer Protection Team.

To date a scoping exercise has been carried out and intelligence shared within neighbouring Local Authorities regarding labelling irregularities. The Consumer Protection Workplan 24/25 have established a Cross Council task and finish group to research and produce officer guidance on industry developments, training, legislative position and to investigate any changes on enforcement, inspection forms, storage and disposal. This group will link with policy makers to ensure consistency across all Council areas.

### Community Safety

In the course of their duties, Community Safety Officers speak to young people about the reasons they use vapes, how they obtain vapes and if it is refillable, they ask them what type of liquids they put in them. They have also had discussions regarding drugs in vapes and the health implications that can arise from all vape use.

In 2023/24 the Community Safety team added a segment into their talk at BeeSafe on litter, to include the dangers to young people from vapes being discarded in our

Not Applicable

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play parks and green spaces. This was delivered to over 1700 Primary 7 students from Schools within the Borough.

#### Partnership Working

Following the notice of motion, Council officers discussed establishing a forum with representation from Consumer Protection, Tobacco Control, Community Safety, Neighbourhood Environment, and inviting other stakeholders such as PSNI and the Public Health Agency to share information and identify potential measures to tackle youth vaping. This could include for example introducing a session on the risk of vaping at our BeeSafe events (aimed at P7s) and greater social media coverage. This will progress in the 2024/25 year.

#### **Some of the other organisations involved in vaping include:**

The PHA provides funding to Councils in Northern Ireland to employ Tobacco Control Officers to undertake visits to retailers to promote compliance with the age of sale legislation and carry out test purchase exercises. The PHA have indicated that they will be increasing the Councils target for test purchasing for 2024/25. The PHA also recently published resources to support discussion with young people on vaping and raise awareness of its risks and are available at [www.pha.site/vaping](http://www.pha.site/vaping). This clear health message is welcome however additional flexibility on how we use the funding including doing more on education would be welcome.

Trading Standards NI are responsible for counterfeit e-liquids and e-cigarettes and if there is a trademark (intellectual property) infringement, for example branding is used on a product that the brand has not allowed (e.g. Haribo)

Border Force and HMRC are currently running Operation CeCe, a joint HMRC-National Trading Standards operation which has been working to seize illicit tobacco in England, Scotland and Wales since January 2021. With more than 27 million illicit cigarettes and 7,500kg of hand-rolling tobacco were seized in its first two years. A new policy paper – Stubbing out the problem: A new strategy to tackle illicit tobacco was launched in January 2024. This details the HMRC and Border Force project to combat the supply and sale of illegal tobacco. Funding over £100 million throughout the next 5 years has also been allocated to HMRC, Border Force and Trading Standards to support the delivery of this policy paper which includes supporting the delivery of the first smoke free generation. This does not cover Northern Ireland.

Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) have oversight over the electrical safety of e-cigarettes.

PSNI deal with drugs, including the use of 'spice' in e-liquids.

Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) supports Trading Standards Officers in Great Britain (who enforce product safety legislation). CTSI have Lead Officers in Vaping who provide expertise in this area and provide advice to officers. CTSI is supporting the work of Operation Joesph, which has been set up in England and Wales to tackle the supply and sale of Illegal vapes and e-cigarettes. Funding of £3 million was announced in April 2023 for Operation Joesph. Through this operation,

Not Applicable

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Trading Standards Officers have carried out operations to seize illegal vapes and e-cigarettes, according to BBC news, more than 500,000 illegal vapes have been seized across England in a crackdown by trading standards teams. In addition to this work, an expert panel has been set up to discuss emerging issues and provide advice. While Northern Ireland is not included in the operation, a representative from Northern Ireland sits on the panel as an observer and Northern Ireland Officers can access advice issued by the expert panel.

## Restrictions and Challenges

### Gaps in legislation

Legislation introduced in 2022 which prohibited the sale of NIPs to anyone under the age of 18 did not:

- prohibit the sale of NIPs from vending machines, despite there being a provision in the Health (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (NI) 2016 to do so. NIPs vending machines have now been located in a number of premises in our Council area as retailers exploit this loophole. The prohibition of selling tobacco from vending machines has been in operation since 2012.
- prohibit the sale of Nicotine Pouches to under 18s. Current intelligence highlights that the sale and use of these products is increasing.
- require all retailers of NIPs and pouches to register in the way the tobacco retailers have had to since April 2016. This hinders enforcement as whilst we have been trying to compile lists of vaping retailers these are unlikely to be completely accurate giving the growing number of businesses that appear to be selling vapes.
- make provision in relation to the retail display or packaging of these products in line with tobacco products. Unlike tobacco, children can see and pick up vapes in retail outlets easily and vape packing can be designed in ways that is more appealing to children.
- make any provision to combat online sales of NIPs/pouches. Online sales represent a huge challenge in relation to these products as there are currently no controls and at the very least some age verification safeguards are required.

Non-nicotine containing e-cigarettes are also a cause for concern given the potential for other harmful contents and undeclared addition of nicotine. The TRPRs do not apply to these products, nor do the regulations around underage sales. We are aware that the use of non-nicotine vapes, and other consumer nicotine products is increasing among young people particularly younger men.

### Resources

Whilst the underage sales team is well resourced by PHA, funding the enforcement of E-cigarettes and E-liquids from a product safety angle is very resource intensive. The Consumer Protection team deal with a wide range of legislation and products



Not Applicable

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with an already limited resource. As OPSS do not have oversight of e-liquids, the funding provided by them cannot be used for this work. The team would require additional resource to enforce the Regulations around e-cigarettes and e-liquids more effectively, especially given the large number of businesses that sell these products in the Borough.

Additionally, when e-liquids are withdrawn from sale by officers for non-compliance, the Council does not have systems in place to transport and dispose of these products. E-liquids are a chemical, E-cigarettes contain lithium-ion batteries and disposable e-cigarettes contain both. Chemicals and lithium-ion batteries require specialist transportation and disposal. Lithium-ion batteries are a fire hazard. Additionally, safe storage is required for seized products while investigations are carried out and legal cases taken. To progress this equipment for the safe storage of products has been ordered and there have been discussions regarding the disposal of any seized vapes with colleagues in waste.

### **Consultation Proposals**

Some of the above restrictions and challenges will hopefully be dealt with by legislation that the UK Government intends to bring forward following the recent Consultation on Smoke Free Generation and Tackling Youth Vaping, in particular measures to:

- Restrict flavours
- Regulate point of sale displays
- Regulate packaging and product presentation
- Apply above restrictions to non-nicotine vapes and other nicotine products such as pouches.

The UK Government also intends to impose age of sale restrictions and ban the purchase of non-nicotine and other nicotine products by others on behalf of those who are under 18.

The UK Government also intends to introduce a ban on sale and supply of disposable vapes and is considering options including a new duty to reduce affordability of vapes.

The Northern Ireland Health Minister recently announced that subject to Assembly approval, Northern Ireland will be included in the new UK laws to tackle youth vaping.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council, in order to deal with some of the other restrictions and challenges noted, considers the following actions:

1. Council to write to the Northern Ireland Minister of Health

Not Applicable

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- a) supporting the introduction of the proposed new legislation to tackle youth vaping and
  - b) requesting the introduction of legislation to:
    - prohibit the sale of NIPs from vending machines making it more difficult for children and young people to access them,
    - requiring retailers of NIPs to register in line with tobacco retailers or introduce a licensing scheme for tobacco retailers and vape retailers
    - make provision to combat online sales of NIPs
    - apply the above restrictions to other nicotine products and non-nicotine vapes.
2. Write to CTSI to request the extension of Operation Joseph to Northern Ireland. This project provides financial resource, as well as guidance and advice to local authorities in England and Wales. If the operation and associated funding could be extended to Northern Ireland it would provide essential resource to the Council.
  3. Write to HMRC to request extension of Operation CeCe to Northern Ireland. Border Force and HMRC Operation CeCe only targets GB, if this was extended to Northern Ireland it would help with the importation of non-compliant e-liquids and cigarettes.

Unclassified

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**ITEM 9****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	16 May 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community & Culture
Date of Report	30 April 2024
File Reference	CW171
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: N/A
Subject	Arts & Heritage Advisory Panel Minutes
Attachments	Appendix A&H Advisory Panel Minutes 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2024

A meeting of the Arts and Heritage Panel was held online on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and the minutes are attached as appendix.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council note the minutes.

**APPENDIX****Meeting of Ards and North Down Borough Council  
Arts and Heritage Advisory Panel****Monday 5 February 2024 at 5.30pm****Via Microsoft Teams**

**Minutes** of the Meeting of Ards and North Down Borough Council Arts and Heritage Advisory Panel held online via Microsoft Teams on Monday 5 February 2024 at 5.30pm.

**Minutes Secretary:** Ms Emily Crawford (Arts and Heritage Manager - AHM)

**Chairperson:** Cllr Pete Wray

**Present:**  
Cllr Alex Harbinson  
Cllr Richard Smart  
Ms Jane McCann  
Mr Billy Carlile  
Ms Catherine Charley  
Ms Pandora Butterfield  
Ms Linda Wilson  
Mr Marcus Hunter  
Ms Eve Williams  
Ms Anna Smyth  
Mr Stuart Alexander

**In attendance:** Ms Emily Crawford (Arts and Heritage Manager – AHM)  
Ms Arlene Matthews (Museum Manager – MM)

**1. Apologies:** Ms Nicola Dorrian (Head of Community and Culture – HCC)  
Cllr Janice MacArthur  
Ms Moira O'Rourke

## **2. Minutes of Meeting on 6 November 2023**

AHM asked if those who were in attendance at the meeting could propose and second the minutes.

Cllr Pete Wray proposed that the Minutes be approved as a correct record. This was seconded by Cllr Richard Smart and Ms Catherine Charley and agreed unanimously.

## **3. Welcome to Cllr Harbinson**

AHM stated at the last meeting that she was unsure of the replacement for Cllr Karen Douglas, but that this had now been confirmed as Cllr Alex Harbinson. AHM welcomed Cllr Harbinson to the meeting.

## **4. Matters arising: Heritage Working Group**

AHM stated that at the last meeting, Mr Billy Carlisle had requested to have a Heritage Working Group. AHM and MM had discussed this after the meeting and concluded that bearing in mind there is already a Heritage Cluster Group, they would be happy to look at this as long as there is a purpose for the group i.e. if there were any specific subjects that required a working group to be set up.

MM stated that the Heritage Cluster meets four times a year and can raise any issues they want to be highlighted with Ms Moira O'Rourke. MM has been in discussions with The Ulster Architectural Society who are planning to do some work in the community to do with built heritage.

Mr Billy Carlisle stated that he felt the Heritage aspect of Tourism was poorly represented and that he felt a working group could develop this. AHM stated that this could be raised internally with Tourism. MM stated that Council don't own a lot of the properties within the Borough and that some would fall under HED.

A discussion ensued.

## **5. Update on Estimates 24/25 rates setting process**

AHM stated that the rate process has been challenging. It has still to go through Council so it is unsure as to whether the full budget has been retained. AHM will email the panel when she has been notified.

## **6. Update on activity at North Down Musuem/ Heritage Development – tabled**

MM highlighted the following points from the tabled report:

- January was a busy month with the take down of the Christmas pop up shop and installation of exhibitions. The pop-up shop proved very successful with over £8000 of local artists work being sold. This supported 29 local artists.
- The feedback has been great from the sensory packs.
- The HED funding application was successful for the Slans and Ardkeen graveyard restorations. Work has now begun on these projects.
- MM has been working in conjunction with another couple of museums to bring over Dr John C McManus who is a US Military expert from Missouri. He specialises in the US Military and WW11. He will give a couple of talks in June around D Day and the build up of troops in Bangor.

- MM also stated that they have saw an increase in the desire for talks and tours and have had lots of enquiries coming from mental health and dementia groups to try and get more programming into museums.

## **7. Report on Arts Activity/Community Arts Development – tabled**

AHM highlighted the following points from the tabled report:

- There have been another successful run of exhibitions including ‘The Collection’ from the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.
- The Creative Peninsula Fayre returned to the Arts Centre at Christmas time with 19 Artists and Makers taking part. This was held over a Friday evening and daytime Saturday. The formal feedback from the Artists and Makers hasn’t been received as yet. This brought in approximately 2000 visitors over the 2 days.
- The Christmas Night at the Movies which was held in Bangor Castle was a sell out.
- The Christmas Pantomime in the Queens Hall proved very popular with a public show on the Saturday afternoon and a school’s performance on the Monday morning.
- The Individual Artist and Multi-Annual grants have been awarded. The Project Grants and Bursaries have just been assessed and will go before Council for ratification.
- The Spring term of classes has resumed, all with really good numbers.

## **8. Report on the Enchanted House of Puppetry – tabled**

The festival was a great success with approximately 1400 – 1500 people in attendance over the Sunday and Monday. Around £2000 was taken in ticket sales with some events being free. It is planned to do a similar style event again in 2024 subject to budgets being approved.

## **9. ACNI Strategy 2024-2034 Consultation**

AHM informed the panel that the Arts Council’s new strategy is out for consultation. It is planned to do a response on behalf of the Council. Cllr Wray stated that he had put forward a notice of motion to Council which has been passed. ANDBC are now a signatory on the letter from Equity which is the union for the Arts. Cllr Wray also stated that there is a meeting planned with himself, Cllr Smart and Cllr Nesbitt, which is open to attend to get everyone’s views on the Arts Consultation and to see how they can generally support Arts & Heritage. Cllr Wray will send a formal invitation.

## **10. Priorities 2024 and Working Group verbal updates:**

AHM stated that it had been agreed at the last meeting, that the Disability Group no longer needed to be a running item on the agenda. It will continue to meet as and when required.

With regards to reviewing our own strategy, this was being held off until the Arts Council’s new strategy was revealed. It is planned to keep our strategy in tandem with the Arts Council and also the Council’s new corporate plan. The strategy is not being re-written but will be reprioritised. AHM has a list of volunteers from the panel to sit on this working group.

## **11. Any other Business**

Ms Catherine Charley mentioned that herself and Cllr Smart had a meeting before Christmas regarding the War Memorials. Ms Charley has put Cllr Smart in touch with the Museum Manager at the Northern Ireland War Memorial Museum as there may be a possibility of obtaining grants from them.

**Date of Next Meeting:**

Date and venue for the next meeting:

- Monday 8 April 2024 at 5.30pm via Microsoft Teams

As there was no further business the meeting closed at 6.25pm

Unclassified

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**ITEM 10****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	15 May 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	19 April 2024
File Reference	CW154
Legislation	Section 75 of the NI Act 1998
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Home Office Refugee and Asylum Seeker Funding
Attachments	None

In December 2021 Ards and North Down Borough Council became aware that a number of asylum seekers had been placed in hotel in the local area.

In January 2021 a Refugee and Asylum Forum (RAS) was established by North Down Community Network. The forum included members from local churches, community networks and groups, statutory agencies including PSNI, Health, NIHE and Education. Mears Housing who are responsible for the hotel accommodation were also engaged.

The RAS forum also assisted the service users on day-to-day issues e.g. registering with health providers, libraries, CVs, pastoral support and signposting and accompanying to meetings, food banks and clothing banks. Discussions and consultations with the individuals and families in the accommodation allowed the group to identify the needs and programme accordingly. Although individuals and families changed as they achieved refugee status and moved into dispersal accommodation often in other council areas, the needs of the new service users in the hotels usually remained the same.



Not Applicable

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Following the arrival of asylum seekers dispersal funding was awarded by The Executive Office to Ards and North Down Borough Council in 2022/2023 and 2023/2024. A total amount of £152, 939 was received. The total amount of the funding was provided by the Home Office with no requirement for match funding from Council. Funding was awarded to help integration, language barriers and resettlement into safe areas. Funding was managed in Council via the Good Relations Team.

North Down YMCA were working closely with Council in relation to newcomers to the Borough and a Service Level Agreement was set up with YMCA, as chair of the RAS, to manage a programme of engagement with the asylum seekers.

During 2022-2024 Home Office dispersal funding was used to provide the following:

**YMCA:**

- Bilingual, culturally sensitive support to refugees and asylum seekers arriving in Ards and North Down.
- Language support and advocacy services to refugees/asylum seekers arriving in Ards and North, such as access to health care, education, welfare and employment.
- Information and support to local organisations and individuals working with asylum seekers and hosting refugees.
- Weekly drop-in advocacy clinics at YMCA North Down (Bangor) and The Link (Newtownards) plus floating support across the Borough (including Ards Peninsula outreach).
- Facilitated access to ESOL classes for refugees/asylum seekers by local churches.
- Facilitated access to support groups and organisations for refugees/asylum seekers.
- Provided a meeting space for refugees/asylum seekers and those supporting them.
- 1216 advocacy sessions provided in Ards and North Down
- 403 refugees and asylum-seeking adults
- 32 sessions of Men's Group for asylum seeking men including sessions on culture, available activities and sexual health/personal hygiene.

As well as helping service users in hotels YMCA also offered wrap around sessions to Ukrainians, Syrians, settled refugees and migrants settled in the area who needed help and support. Sessions were delivered on coaching courses, financial support including access to food and clothing. Volunteering, housing issues, managed gym passes, biometric residence permits, driving licences, SIM cards, benefits claims,

Not Applicable

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healthcare availability, access to education, job seeking, starting your own business, immigration issues and mental health.

All programmes delivered were the result of a needs-based assessment carried out with all service users.

### **Boom Studios:**

Facilitation of art programmes encouraging service users to use various forms of art to express themselves, art therapy and community cohesion with local residents was delivered. The activities included metalsmithing, digitalaArts, Jesmonite Making, flow art, abstract art and ceramics. Visits to The Ulster Museum and Whitehead Railway Museum, North Down Museum, Sonic Arts Centre and Queens University were also organised. The number of people involved in each quarter were as follows.

Q1 - 170 participants, 6 facilitators, 9 volunteers

Q2 - 114 participants 13 sessions, 8 volunteers

Q3 – 105 participants, 13 sessions, 14 volunteers

Q4 - 103 participants ,12 workshops, 2 visits, 14 volunteers

Boom Studios are continuing to deliver a further 6 weeks with a total of 83 registered between service users and local community.

### **Volunteer Now**

Through Volunteer Now and local churches, volunteer opportunities provided to those who are interested. Volunteer roles were found for two service users and three volunteer roles found for others who then moved to Belfast.

### **Programmes.**

The following summarises programme activities that were provided.

- Gym passes - YMCA disseminated day passes as requested.
- ESOL classes supported by local churches, YMCA and SERC.
- Small World's Café – Four sessions were delivered with service users invited to take part, introducing different cultures, religions and diversity to the wider public.
- Transport was provided for service users to attend Eid in Belfast.
- Provision of football boots for weekly football programme in conjunction with local church group.
- Transport costs associated with Football programme and visits to Kiltonga Christian Centre re: Clothes and domestic supplies.

## Not Applicable

43

- Inclusion in Good Relations Shared Voices Programme.
- CV Writing Workshop for asylum seekers 17 attended – 8 from Marine Court, 7 from Rayanne House and 2 refugees living locally in Bangor.
- Christmas outing organised to the Ulster Folk Museum in Cultra for an evening of celebration and culture. 42 persons attended.
- Cooking programme organised and facilitated by Holywood Baptist Church.
- Assisting with school uniforms.
- Meetings organised and contacts supplied for a service user who is a dentist to explore the possibility of practising in Northern Ireland.
- Providing bags and suitcases as service users move on.
- Assisting service users with orientation of the area.

**Compass Project**

Compass is a project to help newcomers navigate life in Northern Ireland. Meetings were held to present the project to Good Relations Team, NDYMCA and the Asylum working group. The project was positively received, and permission granted to proceed. One of the service users who has excellent computer/technical skills volunteered and assisted with designing promotional leaflets, PowerPoints etc.

The course is twenty sessions of two-hour sessions per week.

Twenty-six service users registered. The average attendance is 16 service users per session. New arrivals have been given opportunity to join course and catch-up sessions organised.

Countries represented include - Syria, Iran, Eritrea, Sudan, Yemen, El Salvador and Columbia.

**Successes:**

Through provision of volunteer opportunities, some service users are able to continue their previous professions, interests, hobbies and use transferable skills, i.e., farming, filmography, musicians.

Service users have more access to activities, learn how services such as public transport, GP surgeries, Police and emergency services operate in Northern Ireland. Provides a better understanding of the society they are now part of and promotes integration.

Not Applicable

**Challenges:**

Language barriers pose the largest challenge, with many different languages spoken within the group of service users. ESOL classes have worked well and the progress made by some is very encouraging.

Local resistance to service users through protests outside Marine Court, have had a negative impact on service users mental health, confidence and sense of safety. Working with PSNI, YMCA and local churches we have attempted to ensure they are away on programmes or otherwise engaged during these times.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

Unclassified

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**ITEM 11****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	15 May 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure Services
Date of Report	30 April 2024
File Reference	CW74
Legislation	Recreation and Youth Services Order (1986)
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: Not relevant
Subject	Portavogie and Portaferry 3G pitch and Portaferry Sport Centre update response to NoM
Attachments	Appendix 1 Portavogie 3G pitch Update No 3 April 2024 Appendix 2 Minutes from Peninsula multi use 3g pitch Board meeting March 2024

**FOR INFORMATION**

In February 2024, Council agreed to the following,

*“that Council notes the closure of the training area at Portavogie Football Pitch due to health and safety concerns, recognises the negative impact this has on local provision and sports development and tasks Officers to bring forward a report on options to provide temporary training facilities in the village in the short term and repairs to the pitch in the long term. As a matter of urgency Council tasks Officers to bring forward a bimonthly progress report on the development of the Portavogie 3G Pitch, Portaferry Sports Centre and Portaferry 3G Pitch to this committee.”*

Not Applicable

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## Updates

The training pitch in Portavogie was closed following Health and Safety concerns raised by the local football team in December 2023. Upon inspection by Council leisure staff, the pitch was deemed to be safe to use and was immediately reopened. The Club returned to utilise the training facilities once they were reopened and continue to liaise with Council staff to make bookings. The Council's leisure team recognise that the grass training area is not suited to large groups of young people training for football and would encourage the Club to consider utilising the facilities at other venues if they believe the group size is too big or the grass is in poor condition due to heavy use or weather conditions. The Parks team continues to maintain the grass pitch within the normal levels of provision and would encourage the Club to utilise the area responsibly to ensure the pitch surface is maintained to its full potential.

A regular update on the Portavogie 3G development is produced and shared with the relevant stakeholders. The latest update is attached (Appendix 1).

The Portaferry 3G pitch Board had its most recent meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024. Minutes are attached (Appendix 2)

Council Officers are in regular contact with the school regarding the condition of the sports hall floor. To date no commitment has been given by the school as to when the facility will be repaired to facilitate both the school and public use of this critical facility. Council staff have managed to cordon of a small section of the hall which is deemed safe to use and will continue to utilise this space for class delivery.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this update.

**APPENDIX 1****Portavogie 3G Project**

**Information up to date as of 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024. As in previous months, the latest update is as follows and previous ones are copied for reference below this.**

**Planning application:** LA06/2020/0844/F (submitted on 21 September 2020)  
**Proposal:** Upgrade to existing football ground to include the placement of the existing grass pitch with synthetic surface, fencing and floodlighting along with replacement changing pavilion, additional car parking spaces and associated siteworks  
**Location:** Football ground to the rear of no. 8 and 10 New Harbour Road, Portavogie

### **Stakeholder Update Number 4 (May 2024)**

**NI Water Offsetting:** Our consultants have confirmed that legal permission from the Education Authority (EA), authorising drainage works within the grounds of Portavogie Primary School, is the only outstanding requirement, needed to secure NIW approval for a foul sewer connection from the development site.

Progress has been made towards securing the required EA approval. The EA technical team are now content with the detailed design proposal which has now been passed to the EA's solicitor. We await the outcome of their review and are pushing to establish a clear timeline for conclusion of this process.

In parallel, we are pursuing the request to 'condition' the requirement for EA legal permission, in order to expedite securing planning approval. Awaiting confirmation on this.

**NI Water Requisition:** The deposit for design development of the requisition sewer will be paid upon receipt of NIW revised quotation. Our consultants are liaising with NIW to acquire this as soon as possible.

**Planning Service update** - Shared Environmental Service responded to the HRA on 03 May 2024 requesting further information in respect of detail regarding proposed mitigation to prevent egress of any granular infill material entering the aquatic environment, and referencing consultation required with other bodies as part of the HRA. This response can be viewed [here](#). ANDBC design consultants are considering SES's request for further information and how best to respond in order to secure their approval.



### Stakeholder Update Number 3. (April 2024)

#### **A. KEY POINTS**

- 1. NI Water Offsetting:** Our consultants are continuing to work with NIW to secure its sign off through the planning consultation process. All requested information has been submitted and NIW are satisfied with all designs and responses provided to date. NIW sign off on the drainage offsetting proposal is subject to securing legal permission from the Education Authority (EA) to carry out drainage works within the grounds of Portavogie Primary School (PPS). Despite communication with the EA just this week, we have still not yet secured the EA's approval to carry out the works and discussion is ongoing to secure their acceptance of the proposed drainage proposal. In the meantime, a request has been submitted to find out if NIW will approve the drainage off-setting proposal and 'condition' the requirement for legal permission, in order to expedite securing planning approval. Our consultants will update, following receipt of a written response on this.
  
- 2. NI Water Requisition:** We await an updated quotation from NIW, for the design and installation of a sewer requisition, which is required to accept storm water drainage from the proposed development and offset drainage from Portavogie Primary School (subject to EA approval). We have provided all that is required and await the revised quotation to make a deposit payment as soon as possible in line with the Project Board approval. Our consultants are liaising directly with NIW on our behalf. As soon as NIW confirm the new quotation we will pay the deposit.
  
- 3. Programme:** As noted in March's update, a full review of the programme will be carried out when we have NIW approval and are able to estimate timescales with a little more certainty. All matters within our control are being progressed and requests for regular updates from third parties continue to be made for those matters which are being progressed by others.
  
- 4. Shared Environmental Service** was consulted on 26 March 2024 with the submitted Habitats regulations Assessment and we await its detailed response.

## **B. Further Comments**

### **Planning process**

The Planning Service has carried out consultations with the following statutory and non-statutory consultees:

- i. DFI Roads
- ii. ANDBC Environmental Health
- iii. NI Water
- iv. NI Environment Agency (NIEA)
- v. DFI Rivers
- vi. The Shared Environmental Service (SES)

**Planning/ Shared Environmental Spaces (SES) Consultation:** In response to the EU future ban of use of microplastics in artificial pitches, SES have reconsulted on all live planning applications affected by this decision, including Portavogie. They requested an HRA, which has been prepared and submitted to Planning for their onward consultation with SES. We await the outcome of this re-consultation exercise.

## Stakeholder Update Number 2. (March 2024)

### **B. KEY POINTS**

- 5. NI Water Offsetting:** Our consultants are continuing to work with NIW to secure its sign off. NIW is satisfied with all information submitted to date. Its sign off on the drainage offsetting proposal is subject to securing legal permission from the Education Authority to carry out drainage works within the grounds of Portavogie Primary School. This is being progressed and a request has been submitted to find out if NIW will approve the proposal and 'condition' the requirement for legal permission, to expedite securing planning approval.
  
- 6. NI Water Requisition:** A sewer requisition is required to accept storm water drainage from the proposed development. It is also required to accept the rediverted drainage from Portavogie Primary School. The developed detailed drainage design drawings and calculations have been issued to NIW for its review. An updated quotation for the design and installation of the requisition sewer is required, as NIW will not accept the £10K deposit until the revised quotation has been issued. We have provided all that is required and await the revised quotation to make payment as soon as possible in line with the Project Board approval.
  
- 7. Programme:** A full review of the programme will be carried out when we have NIW approval and are able to estimate timescales with a little more certainty. All matters within our control are being progressed and requests for regular updates from third parties continue to be made for those matters which are being progressed by others.

### **B. Further Comments**

#### **Planning process**

The Planning Service has carried out consultations with the following statutory and non-statutory consultees:

- vii. DFI Roads
- viii. ANDBC Environmental Health
- ix. NI Water
- x. NI Environment Agency (NIEA)
- xi. DFI Rivers
- xii. The Shared Environmental Service (SES)

**Planning/ Shared Environmental Spaces (SES) Consultation:** In response to the EU future ban of use of microplastics in artificial pitches, SES have reconsulted on all live planning applications affected by this decision, including Portavogie. They requested

an HRA, which has been prepared and submitted to Planning for their onward consultation with SES. We await the outcome of this re-consultation exercise.

### **Stakeholder Update Number 1. (February 2024)**

**DFI Roads** responded on 04/11/2020 with no objections subject to conditions, and on the basis that full off-street parking is provided as any overspill onto the public road will not be permitted;

Further to submission of an amended proposed layout confirming details of the acoustic barrier location and specification, and adjustment of the NE and SE floodlight poles, **Environmental Health** is content subject to conditions;

**NIEA – Marine and Fisheries Division** is content that there should be no adverse impacts on the water environment provided standing advice is adhered to.

**NIEA – Water Management Unit** advised that the proposal has the potential to adversely affect the surface water environment and has recommended detailed liaison with NI Water to ascertain capacity re the WwTW and sewer network.

**DFI Rivers** – in relation to the proposed development and surface water has requested appropriate correspondence from NI Water and/or DFI Rivers consenting to the discharge of storm water from the proposed development and resubmission of the outline drainage drawing for legibility.

**SES** – acknowledges that the Council is the competent authority and must undertake as much of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) as is required. It also noted the following:

- NIW has identified a sewage capacity issue, this should be addressed as part of any HRA undertaken by the Council.
- The proposal is potentially hydrologically linked to Outer Ards SPA/Ramsar site. Clarification may be required as to the outlet for storm water as the Drainage Assessment (DA) does not provide certainty in this respect.
- If a hydrological connection to a European site(s) is established, appropriate mitigation should be identified to prevent the egress of pollutants including fill material from the pitch to the marine waters during construction/operational phases.

Upon request SES will review any HRA undertaken on behalf of the Council to ensure that the Council fulfils its obligations under the Habitats Regulations.

The planning application can only be progressed to recommendation once all of the statutory consultees are content.

- 1. NI Water Offsetting:** NIW requested a Habitat Regulations Assessment, this was procured, prepared, submitted and accepted by NIW.

A legal agreement is now being progressed to formalise the Education Authority's consent to redirect the drainage layout within the grounds of Portavogie Primary School (PPS).

- 2. NI Water Requisition:** It is proposed that the drainage from PPS will connect into a new section of storm water drainage, which ANDBC is required to pay for. NIW will design and construct this and have requested a £10K deposit to commence the design. As there is now a greater level of confidence of securing NIW approval for the drainage offsetting solution, the decision was taken at the Project Board meeting 12/02/2024 to proceed with the payment of the £10K deposit for the design of the requisition sewer and this is being progressed.
- 3. Planning / Shared Environmental Spaces (SES) Consultation (11/12/2023):** In response to the EU future ban of use of microplastics in artificial pitches, SES has been reconsulted on all live planning applications affected by this decision, including this proposal in Portavogie.

SES stated they *“will require robust evidence of appropriate mitigation for artificial surfaces with linkages to designated sites. The most effective control is avoidance of infill materials entering the aquatic environment and all applicants must be able to demonstrate effective mitigation in this respect”*.

SES requested a HRA that was subsequently prepared and recommends the *“investigation of alternatives to artificial grass and use of underlying rubber crumb layer and the selection of materials which do not produce microplastics and rubber fragments through wear to avoid any risk of these harmful materials entering into designated sites”*.

Consequently, Council need to investigate and confirm if the current specification for Portavogie 3G pitch needs to be revised considering the EU future ban of use of microplastics in artificial pitches, SES requirements and the recommendation of the HRA.

Officers are in the process of considering various options to comply with the new legislation that we became aware of in December 2023. In line with Council’s governance procedures this requires a review of all feasible options, the impacts of each on everyone and everything involved, and they will be assessed both in monetary and non-monetary terms from a ‘whole life’ perspective to provide a recommendation on how to move the project forward.

Council is working with its consultants to establish if any additional supporting information is required to secure SES approval in support of the planning application.

# MINUTES

## MEETING TITLE

**Peninsula Multi-Use 3G Pitch Project Board**

## DATE

5<sup>th</sup> March 2024

## TIME

9:00 am

## LOCATION

MS Teams

## ATTENDEES

Graeme Bannister, Director of Community and Wellbeing **GB**  
 Ian O’Neill, Head of Leisure Services, **IO**  
 Andrew Dadley, Head of Strategic Capital Development **AD**  
 Eddie Abraham, Project Manager, McAdam Design, **EA**  
 Ken Rainey, Capital Projects Accountant, **KR**  
 Christopher Agnew, Capital Projects Officer **CA**  
 Lewis Porter, Compliance, **LP**  
 Briegin Bradley, Assistant Project Manager, McAdam Design, **BB**  
 Stephen Harding, McAdam Design, **SH**

## CHAIRPERSON

Graeme Bannister

## ORGANISER

Chris Agnew  
 E: christopher.agnew@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

## MINUTES BY

Emma Walker Administrative Officer

## COPIES TO

All Attendees

## APOLOGIES

Stephen Daye, Head of Parks & Cemeteries, **SD**  
 Jonny Bettes, Parks and Cemeteries Officer, **JB**  
 Ian Elliott, Leisure Services Officer, **IE**  
 Alan Johnston, Leisure Services Manager, **AJ**  
 Peter Caldwell, Head of Assets & Property, **PC**

		NOTE OR ACTION BY	WHEN
<b>1. Welcome and Apologies</b>			
1.1	GB welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies as above.	ALL	NOTE
<b>2. Conflict of Interest</b>			
2.1	None	ALL	NOTE
<b>3. Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>			
	The Minutes from the Peninsula Multi-Use 3G Pitch Project Board Meeting on 6 February 2024 were adopted as an accurate record.	ALL	NOTE
	<b>Key Actions</b>		
3.1	EA to arrange meeting with 3G pitch specialist and ANDBC to discuss rubber crumb infill options.	EA	MAR 24
3.2	EA/CA will review in the coming weeks once there is an agreed layout	EA/CA	MAR 24
3.3	EA, AD & CA will meet with the QS to review costs.	EA/CA/AD	MAR 24
3.4	Meeting to review the 3G pitches Council own and the costs in terms of capital, revenue and financing.	EA/CA/AD	MAR 24

	NOTE OR ACTION BY	WHEN
<p><b>4. Project Managers Report</b></p> <p>4.1 The reporting period relates to 1<sup>st</sup> February to 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024. EA presented the Project Manager Report. Key actions and notes detailed below.</p> <p>Site Conditions &amp; Constraints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilities – Pre-development enquiry sent to NI Water. A response was received and NI Water advised a wastewater treatment assessment and odour assessment. The process to obtain approvals for these assessments can take 4-6 months so this would need to be progressed quickly. These can only progress once the location for the pavilion has been agreed.</li> <li>Lands Appraisal – final land ownership drawings were confirmed with LP on 8<sup>th</sup> February.</li> </ul> <p>Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No major changes but EA/CA will review in the coming weeks once there is an agreed layout.</li> </ul> <p>Early Warning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NI Water assessments which will be progressed once the location of the pavilion is agreed. EA will advise on associated costs when appropriate.</li> </ul> <p>Risk Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EA will arrange a risk management/programme workshop to review the final layout to ensure there are no environmental issues before going to planning. The meeting relating to costs may impact on this also. EA will discuss with AD.</li> </ul> <p>Quality &amp; Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design Team meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January.</li> <li>The badger exclusion zone will have an impact on the layout of the pitch.</li> <li>The Design Team meeting has agreed that option 3 is the preferred option but with further changes to be made.</li> <li>The pitch size/location is acceptable, but the footprint of the pavilion is not yet correct (decision required on progressing a 2 changing room facility or 3/4 room facility).</li> <li>LP recommended once there is agreement with the school, engagement with the Department of Education would be helpful to obtain their commitment.</li> </ul> <p>Procurement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Surveys have been completed.</li> </ul>	EA/CA	MAR 24
<p><b>5. Any Other Business</b></p> <p>5.1 There will be a meeting over the coming weeks to review the 3G pitches Council own and the costs in terms of capital, revenue and financing. The issue of rubber crumb will be discussed to agree a strategic way forward. EA, AD &amp; CA will meet with the QS to review costs.</p>	EA/AD/CA	MAR 24



		<b>NOTE OR ACTION BY</b>	<b>WHEN</b>
<b>6. Date of Next Meeting</b>			
6.1	The next Project Board meeting date is to be confirmed.	<b>ALL</b>	<b>NOTE</b>

Unclassified

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**ITEM 12****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	15 May 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks and Cemeteries
Date of Report	29 April 2024
File Reference	PCA4
Legislation	n/a
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: Update on existing strategy
Subject	Tree and Woodland Strategy Update
Attachments	None

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the recent progress of the Council's [Tree & Woodland Strategy](#), agreed in 2021. The purpose of the Tree & Woodland Strategy is to recognise the importance of trees, the many benefits they afford us and the increasingly important role they can play in mitigating the effects of climate change. The strategy is required to ensure the Council's limited budget is focused on positive planting programmes and managing tree care and risks.

Our citizens are rightly proud of the greenness of our Borough, but it is something that is not static and which cannot be taken for granted. Trees play a significant role in improving environmental conditions and people's quality of life. Trees act as carbon sinks by absorbing carbon dioxide (the main greenhouse gas) and produce oxygen. In addition, trees filter, absorb and reduce pollutants. Trees can make our borough a healthier, more attractive, and more comfortable place to live and work. Trees provide food and shelter for wildlife such as birds, squirrels, and insects, as well as for people. Trees have been proven to increase property value and to help relax people by lowering heart rates and reducing stress.

Not Applicable

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Through its strategy, Council has committed to conserving and retaining existing trees and other features where it is considered that they have landscape or amenity value and will use its powers to protect trees where necessary. Council is also committed to ensuring improved tree cover within the Borough, and to promote the importance of trees to ensure several Corporate and Community Plan objectives are met. Council also has a legal 'duty of care' and will provide appropriate levels of management arrangements to ensure that users and neighbours of its land are reasonably safe.

### 2023/2024 Tree Plantings

The Council undertakes to replace a greater number of trees compared to those that need to be felled. It has an annual tree-planting programme which sees many trees of both native and interesting varieties planted over each Autumn/Winter season. For example, our **STAND4TREES** initiative aims to plant a tree for every person in the Borough, ie approximately 160,000 trees. In the 2023-2024 tree planting season more than 15,000 new trees were planted in the borough. Since the implementation of the **STAND4TREES** initiative, council has planted over 45,000 new trees. The yearly breakdown is as follows:

- 2021/22 – 12,435
- 2022/23 – 15,223
- 2023/24 – 18,269

In general, trees planted are native species such as oak, elder, hazel, hawthorn and birch, in line with Councils Local Biodiversity Action Plan, unless there is a specific ornamental scheme which requires cultivated species. An example of this is Castle Park (Bangor) and Ballymenoch Park (Holywood) which are regarded as historic tree arboretums and would require rare and unusual trees as replacements. This is intended to ensure that there is a diverse collection of tree colonies across the Borough.

A total of 18,269 small trees have been planted during the previous tree planting season (November 2023- March 2024). The locations of the new tree and hedgerow plantings are outlined below. For most of the sites, tree and hedgerow planting events were held in partnership with local community groups and schools participating.

- Castle Park, Bangor: Tree Planting: 83 standard trees planted throughout the park. A further 135 1.5L potted trees were planted across from Marquis Hall, Bangor.
- Valentine Pitches, Castle Park, Bangor: Tree Planting: 4,500 whips (3000m<sup>2</sup>)
- Skipperstone Community Centre to Bloomfield Road: Hedgerow Planting: 3,500 whips (700 metres)
- Ballymenoch Park, Holywood: Hedgerow Planting: 3,800 whips (1500 metres)
- Ballymenoch Park, Holywood: Tree Planting: 6 standard trees planted throughout the park.
- Londonderry Park, Newtownards, canal boundary: Hedgerow Planting: 5,000 whips (1000 metres)
- Ballycran Play Area, Kircubbin: Trees Planting: 250 whips (370m<sup>2</sup>)
- Bowtown Rewilding Site: Hedgerow Planting: 750 whips (115 meters)

Not Applicable

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- Kircubbin Cemetery Rewilding Site: Tree Planting: 75 Heavy Standard Trees
- Community orchards throughout the borough seen 170 mixed fruit trees planted.

### Commemorative Tree Planting

Members will be aware that Council have facilitated the planting of commemorative trees on Council land in conjunction with local groups and organisations in accordance with its approved policy. A total of 202 commemorative trees have been planted during the previous tree planting season (November 2023 - March 2024).

- Donaghadee Women's Institute 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: East Street Garden, Donaghadee, 1x *Betula utilis* var *jacquemontii* 'Moonbeam (Multi Stem Sliver Birch)
- RNLI 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Castle Park Bangor, 150x *Quercus petraea* 'Sessile Oak', 25x *Quercus Robur* 'Pedunculate Oak', 25x *Quercus Rubra* 'Red Oak'.
- Shore Street Girls Brigade: East Street, Donaghadee, 1x *Betula Pendula* 'Silver Birch'

### 2023/2024 Community Tree/Hedgerow Planting Events

Multiple community tree planting days were organised across the borough during the last tree planting season, as follows.

- Community Orchard Planting: Kerr Park, Holywood - To help kick start 2023 National Tree Week, members of Holywood Shared Towns and pupils from Priory Integrated College, Holywood Primary School, Glencraig integrated Primary School, Sullivan Upper School and Holywood Steiner School all came together to help plant Holywood's first community orchard.
- Tree Planting: Castle Park, Bangor – To celebrate 2023 National Tree Week, the councils' parks team hosted a tree planting event in Castle Park, Bangor. This tree planting seen members of the TCV (The Conservation Volunteers) and NIE (Northern Ireland Electricity) plant 2,500 native trees.
- Staff Hedgerow Planting Day: Londonderry Park, Newtownards -Council Employee Health and Wellbeing Group teamed up with parks section to offer a volunteering opportunity for staff to plant a new hedgerow.
- Community Orchard Planting: Laurel Bank Lane, Comber – Members of Comber Regeneration Community Partnership and pupils from Comber Primary School came together to plant a new community orchard in Laurel Bank Lane.
- 7x Hedgerow Planting Volunteer Days: Ballymenoch Park, Holywood, Londonderry Park, Newtownards and Bowtown Rewilding site, Newtownards - Ards and North Down Borough Council invited local volunteers to be a part of our **STAND4TREES** initiative to enhance the local environment! These 7

Not Applicable

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hedgerow planting days seen parks volunteers come together to plant native hedges in the borough parks.

- Commemorative Tree Planting: Castle Park, Bangor – to celebrate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the RNLI, council agreed to plant 200 oak trees in Castle Park, Bangor. Park officers organised a tree planting event with the local Sea Cadets and RNLI stations.
- Community Orchard Planting: The Green, Kircubbin – Members the local community in Kircubbin and pupils from St Marys Primary School came together to plant a new community orchard in Kircubbin.
- Tree Planting Event: Castle Park, Bangor – In partnership with Norther Ireland Forestry School Association (NIFSA), pupils from Bangor Academy and parks officers held a tree planting event with Serc students which seen 2,000 trees planted.
- Community Orchard Planting and Hedgerow Planting: Hunts Park, Donaghadee – With help from the Councils Parks Officer, members of the Donaghadee Community Development Association were awarded a tree grant from the Internal Tree Foundation to plant a new community orchard and Native Hedgerow in Hunts Park.

### **New Tree Plantings and Hedgerow Plantings 2024/2025**

A total of 15,000 tree whips will be ordered this year for the next tree and hedgerow planting season, which runs from November 2024 through March 2025. The locations of the new tree and hedgerow plantings are outlined below. For the majority of the sites, tree and hedgerow planting events will be held in partnership with local community groups, volunteering days and local schools.

Jacks Cut, Newtownards  
Tree Planting: 5,000 whips (5000m<sup>2</sup>)



Not Applicable

Greyabbey Community Orchard  
Hedgerow Planting: 650 whips (130 meters)



Londonderry Park Community Orchard  
Hedgerow Planting: 500 whips (100meters)



Not Applicable

Londonderry Park Community Orchard  
Tree Planting: 750 whips (1500m<sup>2</sup>)



Ballywalter Football Pitch, Ballywalter  
Tree Planting: 350 whips (700m<sup>2</sup>)  
Hedgerow Planting: 350 whips (60 meters)



Not Applicable

Upper Crescent, Comber,  
Tree Planting: 2,500 whips (2500m2)



Valentine Pitches, Bangor  
Tree Planting: 3,500 whips (3500m2)





Not Applicable

Kerr Park, Hollywood  
Hedgerow Planting: 250 whips (50 meters)



Cloughey Football Pitch, Cloughey  
Hedgerow Planting: 1,500 whips (300 meters)



Not Applicable

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## Community Orchard Plantings

As part of Council's commitment to successfully implement the Tree and Woodland Strategy, Park Officers identified potential sites on which community orchards can be planted. This has been carried out through a process of community engagement and internal site management. The aim is to achieve a target of 3 new Community Orchards each year.

Community orchards are an excellent place for people to come together, providing a space for celebrations and are a source of casual food. They can be used as educational resource for local schools, community groups and the wider public. Trees in general can reduce stress and illness by providing psychological refreshment and a sense of wellbeing, creating character and a sense of place and permanence.

Orchards encourage healthy eating and outdoor activities improving wellbeing, as well as making our towns, villages and neighbourhoods more pleasant places to live. Tree plantations of any type can symbolise community focal points and offer aesthetic, amenity and historic value and can act as landmark features within our settlements and open countryside.

Ards and North Down now has twelve new community orchards, each being planted by local community groups and schools, meeting the target for this stage of the Tree and Woodland Strategy. The 2023-24 planting season saw orchards planted at Kerr Park and Holywood Nature Park, Holywood, Laurel Bank Lane, Comber and The Green, Kircubbin.

There are now therefore 12 community orchards in the Borough at the following locations, with more planned for 24/25 in the locations indicated in the table below

- Ann Street, Portaferry
- Lawson Gardens, Portavogie
- Village Hall, Greyabbey
- Brice Park, Bangor
- Londonderry Park, Newtownards
- Cottown Open Space, Six Roads Ends
- Dickson Park, Ballygowan
- Kerr Park, Holywood
- Holywood Nature Park, Holywood
- The Green, Kircubbin
- Laurel Bank Lane, Comber
- Hunts Park, Donaghadee

### Schedule of Orchard Plantings 2024/2025

Town	Location	Trees
Groomsport	Springwell Crescent Playpark	20
Bangor	Linear Park	40
Helens Bay	Helens Bay Play Area	15

Not Applicable

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## Groomsport

In January 2024, Parks Officers, and members of Groomsport Village Association, identified a location of approx. 200 square meters of grassland within Springwell Crescent Playpark, suited to a community orchard. The orchard will contain up to 15 mixed fruit trees with consideration given to species most suited to the location. The orchard site will remain open and freely accessible to the community and is located on council-maintained land. Funding for trees and maintenance will be sourced by Parks Service. The proposed location has the potential to become a community focal point for the local residence. By enhancing this area as a community growing space, the local residence will have the opportunity to come together to grow food as well as holding community events such as orchard clean up days and harvest days. This orchard can also be used as educational resource for local schools, community groups and the wider public.



## Bangor

Following an onsite meeting in March 2024, Parks Officers and representative from the soon to be “Friends of Linear Park” community group, identified a approximately 550 square meters of grassland within Linear Park, suited to a community orchard. The orchard would contain up to 30 mixed fruit trees with consideration given to species most suited to that location. The orchard site will remain open and freely accessible to the community while the park is unlocked during the day and will be located within an existing community focal point. The proposed planting will be used as an extension to the well-used park facility. Planting will be carried out in conjunction with local schools and the local community. The proposed location is within walking distance of main residential areas and the local primary school. This proposed area is grassland under-utilised and regularly mown as part of Parks maintenance.

Not Applicable



### Helens Bay

Helens Bay and Crawfordsburn Residents Association engaged with Parks Officers to discuss a potential community orchard to be planted on approx. 170 square metres of grassland located at Helens Bay Play Area, with a target completion date of planting season 2024/25. The orchard would contain up to 17 mixed fruit trees with consideration given to species most suited to location. The orchard site will remain open and freely accessible to the community, located within an existing community focal point. The proposed planting will be used as an extension to the well-used park facility. Planting will be carried out in conjunction with local schools and community groups. The proposed location is within walking distance of Crawfordsburn town centre and main residential areas. A primary school and large secondary school are in close proximity. This proposed area is grassland under-utilised and regularly mown as part of Parks maintenance. Under 20% of the green space within the park would be required for planting, leaving the remainder for continued use as an amenity grassland.



Not Applicable

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### **Mobile Community Orchard**

Council officers developed the new Mobile Community Orchard in Hollywood Town Centre. The new mobile orchard sees the introduction of 8 mobile street planters being placed in Hibernia Street. Each contains one unique fruit tree along with a planting of mixed herbs and spring bulbs. The Mobile Urban Orchard project was discussed with members of Hollywood Shared Town as a solution to providing the more variety of trees/shrubs within the town centre due to lack of central greenspace.

The mobile orchard will be both educational, functional and aesthetically pleasing. Community orchards are an excellent place for people to come together, providing a community space for celebrations and are a source of food. They can be used as educational resources for local schools, community groups and the wider public.

Council officers have engaged with local schools to help plant up the new mobile orchards with a variety of herbs and bulbs. As the title suggests, the mobile orchard is movable therefore council officers are also in discussion with local schools who wish to have one of the planters based at the school grounds on a 6-month basis.

### **Seed2Leaf: Community Tree Nursery**

Engaging local people can take many forms with events and local community planting schemes being an essential mechanism to ensure wide community buy-in for the Councils Tree and Woodland Strategy which includes the **STAND4TREES** initiative. One other aspect of community engagement council officers has been developing is a network of Community Tree Nurseries and Community Seed Gathering Projects. The new initiative is called Seed2Leaf. Community tree nurseries allow the local community to come together and gather local tree seeds, plant them and care for them to become young trees. We all know that trees are important and the act of growing a tree can help create a link to nature for many people. It is also something that anyone, anywhere can get involved in. Council Officers developed an application pack which was then circulated to local community groups associated with past In Bloom funding. Groups were encouraged to apply for funding to help develop their new community tree nursery.

### **Selection Process and Participants**

A selection panel comprised of Officers from the Parks and Cemeteries Service evaluated the applications and choose the most suitable community groups to participate. After thorough review and consideration, the panel selected:

- Portaferry In Bloom
- Millisle & District Community Association

The selection criteria included factors such as the groups commitment to sustainability and environmental education, the availability of space and existing infrastructure for growing activities and the potential for community involvement.

Not Applicable

70

## **Northern Ireland Forest School Association (NIFSA)**

Parks officers have embarked on a partnership with the Northern Ireland Forest School Association (NIFSA) aimed at establishing and nurturing three forest schools annually. This collaboration underscores the council's commitment to environmental education and community engagement.

At its core, the initiative seeks to integrate nature-based learning into local communities, fostering environmental stewardship and enhancing the well-being of residents. Through structured outdoor experiences, forest schools provide a rich environment for children to explore, learn, and connect with nature, promoting physical activity, creativity, and social skills.

The Northern Ireland Forest School Association (NIFSA) has developed the only nationally recognised Forest School qualification specifically for Northern Ireland. NIFSA have trained hundreds of teachers to become accredited Forest School Level 3 Leaders in the process. There are now over 200 official NIFSA Forest Schools supporting over 5,000 pupils a month learning outside.

Crucially, this partnership is not only about establishing more forest schools within Ards and North Down but it's also about ensuring their sustainability. The councils Park service aims to fund 3 new Forest Schools per year at a cost of £1,000 per school.

By empowering teachers and pupils to become stewards of their natural surroundings and fostering a deeper connection with the environment, Ards and North Down Borough Council and NIFSA partnership is poised to make a meaningful and lasting impact on the community, paving the way for a more sustainable and interconnected future.

Applications to become a Forest School opened 4th January 2024 and 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024. In total, 8 schools from across the borough applied. A selection process by parks officers selected the following schools to be the new Forest Schools within Ards and North Down:

- Andrews Memorial Primary School, Comber
- Camphill Community, Holywood
- Portavogie Primary School, Portavogie

The selection criteria included factors such as the school's commitment to sustainability and environmental education, the availability of space and existing infrastructure for growing activities.

## **Calendar of Events 2024/2025**

A key aim of the Tree and Woodland Strategy is to actively engage and collaborate with the community and others in valuing trees as a vital community asset. Parks Service will continue to commit to a series of events and promotional initiatives that enhance the profile of trees, provide educational opportunities, and encourage community participation. These events and promotions will be in line with local and

Not Applicable

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national campaigns, such as Love Parks Week and Seed Gathering Season. Some themes and events for 2024-25 are outlined below.

May 2024	National Hedgerow Week Mobile Orchard Herb Planting Session
June 2024	Tree Tours of Castle Park, Bangor and Ballymenoch Park, Hollywood
July 2024	Love Parks Week
September 2024	Tree Care Month Community Tree Nursery Events and Tree Seed Gathering Season
October 2024	World Apple Day
November 2024	Orchard Planting Events Tree/Hedgerow Planting Events Mobile Orchard Bulb Planting Session
December 2024	Orchard Planting Events National Tree Week
January 2025	Community Tree/Hedgerow Planting Events
February 2025	Community Tree/Hedgerow Planting Events Orchard Planting Events Community Tree Nursery Application Launch
March 2025	Community Tree/Hedgerow Planting Events Orchard Planting Events
April 2025	Orchard Blossom Day

### **Scheduled Tree Works Completed in 2023/2024 Season**

Ards and North Down Borough Council uses a proactive approach in the management of its tree stock. We engage an expert consultant to periodically carry out full inspection surveys for each of our sites, to assess the risk of significant harm from a tree or branch fall. The inspection surveys recommended a number of trees to be felled and pruned. Parks Service understand that felling of trees is a sensitive area and is only completed when necessary. An explanation of where these steps may be taken is explained in the Frequently Asked Questions section on Councils website. Notice of scheduled tree work is also provided through the website and updated regularly.

Our aim is to carry out all scheduled tree works between 1<sup>st</sup> September and 28<sup>th</sup> February, but this is not always possible. The presence of nesting birds protected under the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 can only delay, not prevent, the felling of trees, hedgerows and woodlands. Generally, 1<sup>st</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> August is accepted as the breeding season. Work to hedgerows, trees and woodlands can take place at

Not Applicable

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any time, but the onus is on the person doing the work to avoid committing an offence under the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985.

### **Castle Park, Bangor**

Tree work commenced in Castle Park, Bangor on Wednesday 6th September and finished Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September. Tree surgeons completed 10 tree fells, 4 maintenance pruning's and 21 monolith creations on trees which have been deemed 'High Risk' based on the tree survey report.

### **Ward Park, Bangor**

Tree work commenced in Ward Park, Bangor on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November and finished Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November. Tree surgeons completed 34 tree fells, 3 maintenance pruning's and 7 monolith creations on trees which have been deemed 'High Risk' based on the tree survey report.

### **Glen Lyon, Holywood**

Tree work commenced in Glen Lyon Park, Holywood on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December and finished Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December. Tree surgeons completed 13 tree fells, 1 maintenance pruning's and 3 monolith creations on trees which have been deemed 'High Risk' based on the tree survey report.

### **Linear Park, Bangor**

Tree work commenced in Linear Park, Bangor on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> February and finished Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February. Tree surgeons completed 4 tree fells on trees which have been deemed 'High Risk' based on the tree survey report.

### **Brice Park, Bangor**

Tree work commenced in Brice Park, Bangor on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> February and finished on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February. Tree surgeons felled 6 trees on trees which have been deemed 'High Risk' on the tree survey report.

### **Tree Inspections**

Whether trees are managed for landscape, habitat, commercial or multipurpose objectives, the legal obligation to ensure the reasonable safety of others remains the same. The law recognises that there is a balance to be struck between the risks and benefits of trees. ANDBC, as owner and occupier of land, is required to consider the level of risk associated with a tree and whether it is reasonable to protect against that risk.

The duty is to identify apparent sources of danger and to make land safe, so far as is reasonably practicable. Liability is determined on the basis of whether a danger posed by a tree could have been foreseen and whether reasonable remedies could have been undertaken, which would have reduced the risks to an acceptable level.



Not Applicable

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The councils Tree and Woodland Strategy recognizes the practice of tree zoning. This permits council to inspect council owned trees on a cycle of 2 to 5 years based on the risk of the zone.

While this is common practice for most major landowners, council officers have been researching the need to enhance this practice to gather as much environmental data as possible. Developing ways to generate data which allows regular tree inspections on the entire tree stock within council owned/maintained land which allows the collection of up-to-date data on the tree's health and the trees environmental benefits. Zoning trees into low-risk zones and high-risk zones prevents council officers from gathering up to date data on every council owned/maintained tree as officers don't have to survey trees within low-risk zones for a least 5 years at a time.

As well as helping to mitigate against risks to safety as much as is practicable, collecting regular data from all council owned/maintained trees allows council officers to gather important environmental data such as Carbon Storage, Leaf Biomass and Water Retention. The environmental data collected will help give council the base line numbers which are needed to review the progress of the **STAND4TREES** initiative which will see council plant over 160,000 trees throughout the borough by 2032.

Recording and marking trees forms part of the regular tree inspection programme within Ards and North Down Borough Council. Council officers have again been researching, enhancing, and implanting new ways to record tree data and help assess the risk factor and environmental data of the tree. The enhanced method, Visual Tree Assessment (VTA) works alongside risk ratings for comprehensive management of their urban green spaces. VTA offers an evaluation of tree health, vitality, and structural integrity beyond mere risk assessment, providing a environmental view essential for informed decision-making.

The inspection of trees is and will continue to be undertaken in accordance with industry best practice guidelines and following the Visual Tree Assessment methodology (VTA) devised by Mattheck and Breloer (1994). The risk assessment element will be carried out following the recommendations and process defined by the National Tree Safety Group 'Common Sense Risk Management of Trees' (2011) and International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Tree Risk Assessment Best Practice Guidance. These processes identify all potential targets that could be impacted by the failure of a hazard. They then identify all potential hazards relating to the tree. Each hazard is then assessed to consider the likelihood of failure, the likelihood of the target being impacted in the event of a failure, and the consequence of that impact taking into consideration protection factors (e.g. other trees/structures between the identified).

The incorporation of VTA alongside risk ratings empowers Ards and North Down Borough Council to prioritise both safety and sustainability in managing their urban tree stock, ensuring the long-term well-being of residents and the environment.

### **Risk Management Threshold**

The assessment of risk has been determined by considering the likelihood of a noted hazard failing within three years from the date of the assessment. The reason for this

Not Applicable

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is due to maturity, size, and location of trees in proximity to high occupancy locations and targets.

The HSE has published guidelines relating to the management of risk from falling trees or branches (SIM 10/2007/05)<sup>2</sup>. This document follows the principles defined in the HSE document Risk Assessment – A brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace. This establishes the principle that the objective of a risk assessment system is to reduce a risk to “as low as reasonably practicable” (ALARP)<sup>3</sup>.

The risk system adopted for Ards and North Down Council will provide four levels of risk rating for every tree:

Rating	Description
Extreme	Failure is imminent with a high likelihood of the hazard impacting a defined target. The consequences of such an impact are severe, and likely to lead to death or highly significant injury. Remedial action will be required as soon as possible.
High	The failure of a hazard is highly likely to occur and the consequence of that hazard impacting a target would be significant, leading to a severe injury or damage to property. Remedial action will be required as soon as reasonably possible.
Moderate	The potential failure of a noted hazard is relatively low or minor, although it is still probable that it would impact a target. Mitigation options must be considered although the timing will be dependent on the tolerance of the land owner.
Low	Low risk hazards are those where the consequences of a hazard impacting a target would be insignificant or negligible, and/or where the likelihood of such an impact is low. Remedial action may be desirable but not necessary.

### Tree Risk Assessment Methodology

In order for risk to exist, there needs to be a hazard. A hazard is defined as something that has the potential to cause harm. In relation to trees, any part of a tree that could fail has the potential to be a hazard. Therefore, all trees are potentially hazardous.

A hazard is something with the potential to cause harm, whereas risk is the likelihood of potential harm from that hazard being realised. The extent of the risk will depend on:

1. the likelihood of that harm occurring.
2. the potential severity of that harm, i.e. of any resultant injury or adverse health effect; and
3. the target (person, property or infrastructure) which might be affected by the hazard.

The International Society of Arboricultural has devised a programme for tree risk assessment which assesses tree related risk uses two matrices to consider the likelihood of failure, the likelihood of a failed part impacting a target and the severity of that impact. The resulting output of the matrices provides an assessed risk rating (Extreme, High, Moderate & Low), but the management of that risk is retained with the landowner.

Not Applicable

Every person or organisation will have a different attitude to risk and therefore the risk threshold will differ. The Risk Assessment does not seek to set a threshold but instead to provide a reference point for the risk manager to base any decision upon.

In order to assist in determining the level of risk associated with a hazard, the risk assessor needs to follow several stages:

- 1) Assessment of the potential target: The assessor must consider everything, whether inanimate or animate, which could be impacted by a hazard. Having considered what each target is, the assessor must then provide an occupancy rating based on the criteria in Table 2.

Table 2 - Occupancy Rates

Occupancy Rates	
Constant	A target is present at all time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Frequent	A target is occupied for a large portion of the day or week
Occasional	The target zone is occupied by people or targets infrequently or irregularly
Rare	The target zone is not commonly occupied by people

- 2) Having considered the potential target/s, the risk assessor must then consider the likelihood of each specified hazard failing. Table 3 provides details of the likely failure definitions.

Table 3 - Likelihood of failure

Likelihood of Failure	
Imminent	Failure has started or is most likely to occur in the near future, even if there is no significant wind or increased load
Probable	Failure may be expected under normal weather conditions within the specified time period
Possible	Failure could occur, but is unlikely during normal weather conditions within the specified period
Improbable	The tree or part is not likely to fail during normal weather conditions and may not fail in many severe weather conditions, within the specified period.

- 3) Once the likelihood of failure has been determined, the assessor must then consider the likelihood of the hazard impacting on the target (on the assumption that the hazard has failed). Table 4 provide a summary of the likelihood of impact definitions.

Not Applicable

Table 4 - Likelihood of impact

Likelihood of Impact	
High	Failed tree or tree part will most likely impact the target
Medium	Failed tree or part is as likely as not to impact the target
Low	Not likely that the failed tree or part will impact the target
Very Low	The likelihood of the felled tree or tree part impacting the target is remote.

4) Having assessed the potential for failure and the potential of a hazard impacting the target, the assessor needs to consider the consequence of the hazard impacting the target. Table 5 provides details of the consequence definitions.

Table 5 - Consequence of failure

Consequence of Failure	
Severe	Serious personal injury or death, damage to high-value property or disruption of important activities
Significant	Personal injury, property damage of moderate to high-value or considerable disruption
Minor	Very minor personal injury, property damage of low to moderate-value, or small disruptions to traffic
Negligible	No personal injury, low value property damage, or disruption that can be mitigated or repaired.

Once all of the likely or potential outcomes have been considered, the risk assessor is able to reach a conclusion as to the risk rating, using the matrices provided in Table 6 - Likelihood of Failure vs Likelihood of Impact Table 6 and Table 7.

Table 6 - Likelihood of Failure vs Likelihood of Impact

		Likelihood of Impact			
		Very low	Low	Medium	High
Likelihood of failure	Imminent	Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely
	Probable	Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely
	Possible	Unlikely	Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Likely
	Improbable	Unlikely	Unlikely	Unlikely	Unlikely

Table 7 - Risk Rating

		Severity of Impact			
		Negligible	Minor	Significant	Severe
Results of Table 1	Very Likely	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme
	Likely	Low	Moderate	High	High
	Somewhat Likely	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate
	Unlikely	Low	Low	Low	Low

Not Applicable

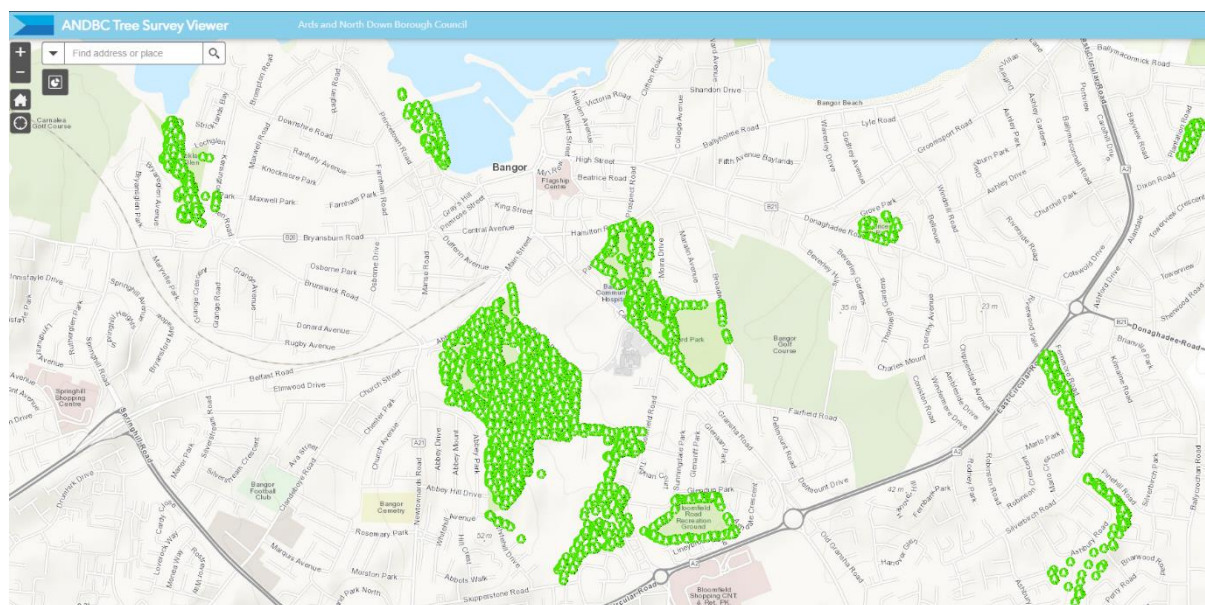
The principle that has been adopted for Ards and North Down Borough Council has been to ensure that mitigation is proposed to reduce all risks to as low as is reasonably possible.

### Ards and North Down Borough Council's Tree Map

Over the past year, council officers have been developing a new interactive tree map which will be available for public view via the council website. The Ards and North Down Borough Council's new tree map reflects a progressive commitment to environmental stewardship and community engagement. This initiative aims to catalogue and display the diverse array of trees within Ards and North Downs Borough Woodlands, Parks, and Urban areas, promoting awareness of the region's rich biodiversity.

The tree map serves as an interactive tool, allowing residents to explore and learn about individual tree species. The map contributes to a sense of community involvement, as residents can actively participate by reporting tree-related issues or suggesting potential locations for new tree plantings.

The technology helps create a user-friendly and accessible tree map and demonstrates a forward-thinking approach to environmental conservation and community engagement, fostering a sense of pride and responsibility among residents for their local green spaces. This map will also allow residents to view upcoming scheduled tree works.



Ards and North Downs Borough Council Tree Map: [ANDBC Tree Survey Viewer \(arcgis.com\)](http://arcgis.com)

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council note the progress of the Tree and Woodland Strategy to date and continue to support future initiatives.

Unclassified

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**ITEM 13****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	17 April 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks and Cemeteries
Date of Report	30 April 2024
File Reference	CW30
Legislation	N/A
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: N/A
Subject	North Down Coastal Path Working Group Minutes
Attachments	Appendix Minutes North Down Coastal Path Working Group 23rd January 2024

The first meeting of the North Down Coastal Path Working Group was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024.

When approving the attached minutes at a subsequent meeting, the chair commented that references to discussion about a map of Councils ownership of lands being provided was not included in the minute. Since the meeting, members of the group have been provided with access to such a map.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council notes the attached minutes.

## APPENDIX

**ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

A Meeting of the North Down Coastal Path Working Group of Ards and North Down Borough Council was held on Tuesday 23 January 2024 at 6:00 pm.

**PRESENT:**

**In the Chair:** Councillor McKimm

**Alderman:** Graham (6.08pm)

**Councillors:** Cochrane  
Harbinson  
Holywood  
Irwin  
W Irvine  
Martin (6.05 pm)  
McKee  
McRandal  
Rossiter (6.27 pm)

**Officers:** Director of Community and Wellbeing (G Bannister), Head of Parks & Cemeteries (S Daye), Communications Manager (C Jackson) and Democratic Services Officer (H Loebnau)

**1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

The Director of Community and Wellbeing presided over the election of a Chair for the Group.

Proposed by Councillor McKee, seconded by Councillor Cochrane, that Councillor McKimm be nominated to the position of Chair.

**AGREED.**

There being no other nominations, Councillor McKimm took up the position of Chair and welcomed Members to the Working Group and hoped that it could lead to something positive which the community could look forward to.

**NOTED.****2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for non-attendance had been received from Councillors Creighton, McCracken and McLaren.

**NOTED.**

(Councillor Martin entered the meeting at 6.05 pm)

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chairman asked for any Declarations of Interest and none were made.

**NOTED.**

### **4. INTRODUCTION**

Members' attention was drawn to the presentation which had been circulated previously. The Director stated that the agenda detail was contained in this presentation and encouraged the group to reflect and move forward and consider decisions for the new Working Group, beginning with governance.

(Alderman Graham entered the meeting at 6.08 pm)

**NOTED.**

### **5. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

The historical background to the Ards and North Down Coastal Path Working Group was outlined by the Director, beginning in 2016 when the Department for Infrastructure had published 'A Strategic Plan for Greenways' to the decision locally in January 2023 to remove the Greenway project from the North Down coast.

The road ahead was now to get Members involved in a different way than previously and when asked by Alderman Graham what planning permission existed for the Greenway it was explained that there was no permission in place for the North Down coast but planning permission had been granted for other sections of the Greenway network.

**NOTED.**

### **6. GOVERNANCE (EXTERNAL MEMBERSHIP, TERMS OF REFERENCE, ETC)**

Members of the Working Group were reminded that they were not to agree the Terms of Reference as this had been done by the Council in setting the group up in September 2023.

Under these terms of reference the working group were able to consider a number of things in order to make further decisions, including how the Working Group would



involve Social Partners and Expert Guests. Those represented could include a diverse range of interests in areas such as cycling, walking, environmental and outdoor recreation groups and be made up of people of all backgrounds and ages.

It was proposed that the position of Social Partners would be advertised requesting applications from interested parties with up to ten groups being represented. Only one Member would attend from each of those groups to represent its interests.

It was proposed that a vetting process would take place: a written application process with the Chair and two Council officers putting a recommendation to the Working Group. The application form would include, name of person, group represented, contact information, how often they used the coastal path and a brief written description of why they wished to be a member of the Ards and North Down Coastal Path Working Group and what skills and expertise that they would bring.

Councillor McKee asked if changes could be made to the terms of reference and stressed the need to ensure Section 75 interests were adhered to. He welcomed the Social Partners and Non-Permanent partners for those who had specific interests. It was explained that Permanent Members did not have to be from a constituted group so there was no barrier to being represented. The Director advised that the Terms of Reference were set by Council and as such the process in standing orders was applicable in terms of making changes in advance of any formal review and recommended updates. However, the detail under discussion could be decided by the group now under existing terms covered in the current document.

Councillor McRandal thought that there was merit in also splitting consultations into distinct geographical areas such as Holywood, Helen's Bay and Crawfordsburn as opposed to the Working Group risking being Bangor centric. Many local areas had strong and active interest groups and those should be considered.

Alderman Gaham referred to the suggestion of having up to ten Social Members on the Working Group and expressed concern about that becoming too large and therefore could lead to the group becoming cumbersome. He also thought there could be a degree of overlap in the interests of social groups.

Councillor Martin concurred with that view noting that one of the failings or challenges previously had been the lack of engagement with wide variety of stakeholders and he was aware that many people felt very passionately about the path and wanted to be involved. Generally, he considered five to eight people was best for a working group, but the proposal laid out could result in the North Down Coastal Path Working Group easily having thirty members which made it almost the size of the full Council.

Councillor McRandal disagreed with the views expressed by Alderman Graham and Councillor Martin and thought that if the size of the Working Group was constricted it

would miss having consultation with a varied group of interests and that had been a criticism previously.

(Councillor Rossiter entered the meeting at 6.27 pm)

Councillor Irwin stressed the importance of rebuilding trust within the local community and the Working Group would stall if it was seen to be excluding people.

The Chair referred to the engagement the Council made in other areas such as the rural partnership meetings and suggested that that could be an example of how to include a diverse range of stakeholders effectively.

In response to Councillor McRandal and Councillor Irwin's comments, Councillor Martin made it clear that what he was suggesting did not have the intention of excluding any interest but saw a tension between wanting to see action and the efficiency of the Working Group if it became too large. He pointed to the fact that larger groups often produced slow decision making and might not deliver outcomes effectively.

Alderman Graham was also troubled with the idea of Permanent Members and the word 'permanent' troubled him so he queried why groups could not make representation without the need for them to be permanently represented on the group.

Councillor McRandal was confident that Members and the larger Working Group would come to agreement on the way forward.

The Head of Parks and Cemeteries did not believe that all the groups would be represented or would be needed at any one time to sit on the Working Group and he agreed that lessons had been learned by the Council. The Director agreed to bring back a report on how communities could be represented, how statutory organisations could be represented and that the way the Rural Partnership was made up would be examined.

**AGREED.**

## **7. LESSONS LEARNED FROM PREVIOUS ACTIVITY**

The lessons learned from the Greenway experience were listed:

- Insufficient Revenue Budgets
- Better Sustained Engagement
- Difference between Consultation and Engagement
- Larger Survey
- Dedicated Officer for all Path Networks
- Building a Network of Support and Community Champion

- 'One Path Initiative' Workshops / Awareness
- Planning Application was too large and complicated
- Need for Non-Technical Drawings

The Director explained that there was a revenue budget set aside for the decisions of the Working Group and the 'One Path Initiative' remained which was of great importance since everyone would share the path and that would need to be done in a respectful way. He added that in hindsight the previous planning application could have been split into smaller sections to make it more manageable.

Councillor McKee believed that the Greenway plans had been officer and Council centric and the uniqueness of the path as a natural resource seemed to have been lost in the planning so the Working Group needed to make sure that these two points were addressed as the plans moved forward.

Councillor Martin was of the opinion that the Greenway had failed because it seemed inappropriate to many people so stressed the importance of setting what the goal should be for any part of the path and look for the funding to meet that.

The Director stated that it was the intention for the Working Group to gather the thoughts of all its Members and the Chair added that the views expressed would come to the Council and would be in the public domain.

Alderman Graham agreed with Councillors Barry and Martin and suspected that the Council had let the project slip too far before it was eventually stopped. Most of the comments he had heard came from people who referred to the uniqueness and the natural beauty of the path and was of the view that rugged could be more attractive in the natural environment against something too 'shiny' or artificial.

The Communications Manager stated that those opinions would be examined along with the best method of addressing them. The Head of Parks and Cemeteries agreed with that and suggested that those comments be brought back to the Working Group with a final document on how to move forwards.

**AGREED.**

## **8. ROUTE AND OWNERSHIP OF NORTH DOWN COASTAL PATH**

It was explained that along the length of the North Down Coastal Path there were 115 plots of land in total of which 78 were registered. The owners included; Ards and North Down Borough Council, Northern Ireland Water, Department for Infrastructure, Ministry of Defence, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Department for Environment, Crown Estate, National Trust, Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and other private landowners some of which were unknown.

Photographs were shown of sections of the existing path and some were in need of repair, and some straightening in places. Flooding frequently occurred in some places too and that should be addressed.

Alderman Graham suggested that not many people set out with the intent of walking the entire length of the coastal path and it might be appropriate to think of the path as being made up of many different and distinctive parts. Councillor McKee was in agreement and thought that by greatly straightening the path something vital could be lost and therefore it may be impossible to view the path as an A to B route. The path was varied and therefore suitable for the differing needs of walkers and cyclists.

The Head of Parks and Cemeteries stated the importance of identifying a vision for the path with the knowledge that there was a limited supply of funding to do that.

Councillor McRandal considered that the maintenance issues that already existed were priorities but he would be uneasy to have plans in place which straightened or widened the road in some places. Since the Greenway plans had been stopped Councillor McRandal had become aware of some of the ramifications such as at Station Road, Craigavad, a private road at risk of erosion. Residents there were putting off doing repairs to their road in the hope that the Council would take initiative for that as a maintenance issue.

The Working Group was informed that the Council owned very little of the path and agreements would need to be put in place to deal with the large numbers of landowners. The Director also suggested that the work would need to be done in manageable chunks and not all at once pointing that the North Down Coastal Path was almost 30 miles long.

Councillor McKee agreed that there could be many quick wins but there was time to do the improvement works right. Referring to coastal erosion he thought that and flooding should be kept in mind as a priority.

**NOTED.**

## **9. BENEFITS OF THE COASTAL PATH**

The Head of Parks and Cemeteries outlined the benefits of the Coastal Path:

- Connecting communities
- Providing safe, traffic-free routes
- Safe and easy access to fresh air and exercise
- More people journey by foot or bicycle
- Promoting physical/mental health and well-being
- Supporting climate change adoption plans

- Can improve quality of life for everyone
- Can create business opportunities
- Can increase property values

The officer encouraged the Working Group to consider what the vision was for the Coastal Path. Across social media there was talk of the tensions between cyclists versus walkers and that needed to be considered as well as the possibility of creating a hierarchy of use on the Path. In respect of accessibility it might be considered that not all parts of the Path needed to be accessible. He explained that if changes were made to any part of the Path Section 75 would come in to play. When consultation had taken place many people did not believe the entire path should be accessible to all. He referred to the development of Cairn Wood close to Hollywood which had been improved for walkers and was now much more widely used leading to criticism by some that it had been more enjoyable to walk in that place when fewer people visited.

Councillor McRandal thought there was a need to clarify the terms of reference and if the path should be made accessible to everyone and the Chair suggested that some reasonable adjustments could be made.

Councillor McKee thought that biodiversity and the natural environment should be front and centre of all considerations and the Director thought there was an opportunity to engage with the Council in the Biodiversity Action Plan.

Alderman Graham referred to the tension between cyclists and walkers and while the majority of users were mannerly in conduct a small number caused problems and there was a need to reconcile those different priorities.

Councillor Rossiter believed the Path to be a wonderful asset of the Council's and thought that more could be done to maximise it through the tourism strategy. In response the Head of Parks and Cemeteries said that tourism potential had been excluded since that had been the biggest criticism of the Council's previous plans. That was a matter that needed further careful consideration.

**NOTED.**

## **10. SUPPORT AND SURVEY**

The Head of Parks and Cemeteries explained that in March 2022, the Council commissioned Social Market Research (SMR) to undertake a programme of research to inform the previous proposal.

The research was based on two elements:  
A survey among a representative sample of Council residents  
A survey of existing users of the North Down Coastal Path

**Use of the existing path**

74% used the existing coastal path (50% do so at least monthly: existing users, 84%).

There was greater use among residents who were younger, economically active and better educated.

Residents used the path mostly for walking (73%), dog walking (21%) and running (18%)

(existing users: walking (57%) dog walking (42%) and running (13%))

Benefits: exercise/health reasons (26%), fresh air/outdoors/open space (15%)

(existing users: exercise/health reasons (18%), sea air/fresh air (15%))

76% were satisfied with the existing path (dissatisfied, 2%, neither 22%, don't know 1%)

(existing users: 90% satisfied (4% dissatisfied, 6% neither))

**Council's Proposal to Develop the Path**

40% of residents were aware of the proposal (existing users, 54%)

85% of residents would likely use the path if developed in line with the proposal (existing users, 98%)

Poor mobility, not going out, distance from the path were reasons for not using it.

Walking (79%), dog walking (24%), cycling (21%) and running (76%)

75% of residents said they would use it at least monthly (existing users, 76%)

**Survey of Residents (323)**

Good development for the area (19%)

Good for area and people / families living nearby (16%)

Encourages people to get out more (9%)

Extra green space / longer more enjoyable walks (7%)

Safe area for families (6%)

Brings communities together / good for communities (6%)

Good for exercise and health (5%)

Good for walking / hiking (5%)

**Existing Users (65)**

Longer path – good for commuting / connecting areas (22%)

Encourages more people to get out and about (19%)

Bring more people / tourists into area (10%)

Exercise / health and fitness (8%)

Better access for disabled / older people (5%)

Good and safe for families / children (5%)

Pathway surface needs upgrading / improved (4%)

Makes most of beautiful area /scenery / wildlife (5%)

The Communications Manager explained that those who had conducted the survey had delivered what the Council was able to afford with a limited budget. The results had shown that the public was relatively happy with what existed already and a lot of satisfaction had been expressed. Work should be carried out on why people chose not to visit the Path.

Some Members asked for clarification on what the North Down Coastal Path comprised and were informed that it stretched from Holywood to Donaghadee.

**NOTED.**

## **11. OPPORTUNITIES AND LOOKING AHEAD**

The Working Group was informed that £150k had been added to the estimates process for the group in its first year. Priority areas for improvement could be investigated with surveys and evaluation works and the Council's Head of Assets and Property Services would provide technical expertise for the minor improvements to the existing facilities.

The Director thought that the first meeting of the Working Group had been successful and suggested a further meeting in one month's time to bring back further reports on the Group's objectives.

**NOTED.**

## **12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was suggested that the date of the next would be set for the end of February and that officers were open for further views and communication up to that point.

## **CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting terminated at 7.57 pm.

Unclassified

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**ITEM 14****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	15 May 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Environmental Health Protection and Development
Date of Report	26 April 2024
File Reference	CW22
Legislation	Food Safety (NI) Order 1991
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: N/A
Subject	Food Service Plan 2023-2024 performance
Attachments	None

**Delivery of the Food Service Plan 23/24****Background**

This report demonstrates the delivery of the Food Service Plan 23/24 which was approved by Council on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023. The plan set out the inspections and activities to be carried out by the Food Control team during the year.

Food Hygiene and food standards interventions are carried out as defined in the Food Law Code of Practice and priority has been given to higher risk premises and manufacturers. Intervention activities have been prioritised in accordance with the advice provided by the Food Standards Agency.

Throughout the year the Food Standards Agency has carried out returns to monitor how we are delivering on the plan.



Not Applicable

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## Service Delivery

During the year the food service has had some movement of experienced Officers, new Officers, and 131 new businesses registered, all creating operational challenges. There have been challenges regarding the recruitment of experienced EHO's and there have been several recruitment processes. Overall, Officers have noted a decline in standards of premises, in particular structural repairs, and an increase in pest activity. This has also been experienced in other food safety sections in neighbouring councils. It is thought that the decline in standards is due to a combination of the increase in utility, commodity, and food prices along with the challenges in attracting staff into the food sector.

The tables below show the total number of food hygiene and food standards inspections completed in the year 23/24 including the backlog from 2022 and newly registered food businesses. The figures show that the food team have met or exceeded the targets in the high-risk categories and 197 low risk inspections remain outstanding.

The food hygiene risk rating of a premises determines the frequency of inspection. Category A premises are the highest risk and are inspected every 6 months, category B every 12 months and category C every 18 months. The food hygiene risk rating is determined by several factors such as supply (local, national, or international), type of product, method of handling, hygiene, structure, and the Officer's confidence in how the business manages food safety.

## Food Hygiene Inspections

Food Hygiene risk rating of premises.	Inspections due in 2023-2024 (including backlog from 2022)	New premises registered in 23-24	Inspections completed 2023-2024 (includes new premises)	Outstanding inspections
A	6	0	6	0
B	44	10	54	0
C	80	27	104	3
D	247	51	204	94
E	238	43	181	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>197</b>

From the table there are 3 outstanding category C premises which have been inspected in April (1 premises was in the recent fire in Conway Square and the other 2 premises had limited access). As highlighted in the Food Service Plan 23/24 there was a backlog of approx. 680 inspections in the lower risk category premises rated D & E, so the team has made good progress in addressing this leaving 197 inspections outstanding moving into the 2024-25 year.

Not Applicable

### Food Standards Inspections

Food Standards risk rating of premises.	Inspections due in 2023-2024	New premises registered in 23-24	Inspections completed. 2023-2024	Outstanding inspections
A	4	0	4	0
B	103	27	70	60
C	430	104	134	400
<b>Total</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>460</b>

The Food Service Plan 23/24 reported food standards inspections due. From the table above 208 inspections were completed leaving 460 inspections outstanding which will be addressed in the coming year as the new Food Standards Delivery model will be introduced in November 2024. Two additional temporary posts are being established (subject to funding and approval) to assist with the backlog of food hygiene and standards inspections.

### New Business Registrations

All food businesses are legally required to register with the Local Authority. **131** new businesses registered **during 23/24**, this is a slight decrease in last year’s registrations. New business registrations are triaged by the Service Unit Manager and are then inspected by an Officer, with a target of inspection within 28 days of registration.

### Investigation of food poisoning and other infectious diseases

Investigation of food poisoning is provided by Council on behalf of the Public Health Agency. The Food Service Plan estimated 80 individual cases per year however, this year the team have undertaken 88 investigations regarding infectious diseases. **79** cases (**89.8%**) of these were reported from the Public Health Agency and **9** (10.2%) cases were reported by members of the public alleging illness from food consumed within the Borough.

### Further information

The Council provides a comprehensive service to consumers and food businesses such as education, advice, and signposting to other resources e.g. Food Standards Agency online allergen training.

Not Applicable

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## Sampling

The Northern Ireland Food Managers Group policy for food sampling been implemented within the Council's Food Control Service. The target number of bacteriological samples for routine analysis is 12 per week totalling **650-700** for the year. During 23/24 **589** ready to eat food samples were collected with the results showing **90.5 %** satisfactory and **9.5%** unsatisfactory. Unsatisfactory samples are repeated, and advice is given to the business until a satisfactory result is received. Unsatisfactory samples may arise from poor handling practices, poor temperature control or incorrect storage conditions.

The Food service plan collected **220** routine chemical samples. The samples were collected and analysed for composition and labelling, allergens, and food complaints **1%** of samples failed for composition, **47%** were non-complaint for labelling and **52%** were complaint.

The Food Control Service assists business to achieve compliance with the labelling regulations and provides guidance in new product development.

The service participated in the following FSA surveys:

- Nutritional composition of traybakes
- Acrylamide in baked goods
- Mycotoxins in coffee beans

These surveys are part of a UK wide intelligence gathering process to highlight any emerging food risks such as food fraud, and to develop data on nutritional composition and calorie composition.

An inhouse survey was conducted in butcher's premises for speciation test and levels of Sulphur Dioxide (preservative) in mince beef. The results were as follows:

- Speciation tests 100% compliance
- Sulphur Dioxide was present in 4 samples 28% -Formal samples will be resubmitted in May 2024 after the businesses have been informed of the results.

## Complaints and Service Requests

The food section responded to **546** complaints and service requests mainly from members of the public. Of these **342** related to hygiene standards in premises or issues with food products. All service requests are responded to within two days, however depending on the nature of the request they may be acted on immediately where there is an imminent risk to public health e.g., rodents in a commercial kitchen.

## Enforcement Actions

The service operates within the Councils Regulatory Services Enforcement policy. A summary of the formal enforcement activity for the year is summarised below:

Not Applicable

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17 Hygiene Improvement Notices

5 Remedial Action Notices

3 Voluntary Closures

### **Advice and Education**

As outlined in the Food Service Plan, Officers have provided advice and education to businesses including the following:

- Food hygiene training to **5** volunteer catering groups in church settings
- Facilitating a food safety talk to event managers at SERC
- Inspecting and advising food vendors at Sea Bangor in June 2023 and Christmas 2023
- Allergen seminars in Bangor and Newtownards with **126** delegates representing **86** food businesses.

### **2023/2024**

A food Service Plan for 2024/25 is currently under development and will be presented to Council at the June 2024 meeting.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council notes the delivery of the Environmental Health Protection and Development Service Food Service Plan.