

March 5th, 2025

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Wednesday, 12th March 2025 at 7:00 pm** in **Hybrid Meeting - Church Street, Newtownards & Zoom.**

Agenda

Agenda

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1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interest

3. Deputations

3.1. Saint Vincent de Paul

3.2. Bangor Asylum & Refugee

Reports for Approval

4. In Bloom Funding

Report attached

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5. Mind Body Business Grants Scheme Approval

Report attached

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6. Public Analyst

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7. VE Day 2025 - Additional Dates

Report attached

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8. Heritage Grants

Report attached

[!\[\]\(c507f772dba2b921f86777f01218e570_img.jpg\) *8. Heritage Grants.pdf*](#)

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9. Good Relations Strategy 2025-2028 and Action Plan 2025-2026

Report attached

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10. Policing and Community Safety Strategy (2025-2028) and Action Plan (2025-2026)

Report attached

[!\[\]\(7d1d6890825e83a6a4a51febe2dcc7f3_img.jpg\) *10. Policing and Community Safety Strategy 2025-2028 and Action Plan 2025-2026.pdf*](#)

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11. Service Plan 2025-2026 Community and Culture

Report attached

[!\[\]\(aff7c69c44a5e015f18c35867ef3f5c3_img.jpg\) *11. Service Plan 2025-2026, Community and Culture.pdf*](#)

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[!\[\]\(1ed10657a19f9137278430c48fd18626_img.jpg\) *11.1 Appendix 1 - Service Plan 2025-26 Community & Culture.pdf*](#)

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12. Service Plan 2025-2026 Leisure Services

Report attached

[!\[\]\(2885535958616e9ec6b97903614c334b_img.jpg\) *12. Service Plan 2025-26 Leisure Services.pdf*](#)

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13. Service Plan 2025-2026 Environmental Health Protection & Development

Report attached

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14. Service Plan 2025-2026 Parks and Cemeteries

Report attached

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15. Commemorative Tree Planting Request - Portaferry WI

Report attached

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16. Display Bed Applications - Ards FC

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17. Ards FC Consultation Response

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Reports for Noting

18. Dementia Friendly Update February 2025

Report attached

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19. Play Refurbishments 2025-2026

Report attached

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20. Donaghadee Sports Facilities

Report attached

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21. Bi-Monthly Update on Portavogie 3G, Peninsula 3G and Portaferry Sports Centre Floor

Report attached

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22. Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants (WG March 2025)

Report attached

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23. Sports Forum Grants Review

Report attached

[23. Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants and Capital Grants Review.pdf](#)

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24. Notices of Motion

24.1. Notice of Motion submitted by Alderman Adair and Councillor Edmund

That Council task officers to bring forward a report on options and potential funding opportunities to enhance and improve Council Football Pitches at Islandview Road Greyabbey to ensure future intermediate football standards by the local sporting clubs and community of Greyabbey.

25. Any Other Notified Business

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

Reports for Approval

26. Bonfire Clearance Tender Extension - Provision of Pre and Post Bonfire Services

Report attached

[26. Bonfire Clearance Tender Extension - Provision of Pre and Post Bonfire Services.pdf](#)

Not included

Reports for Noting

27. NCLT Q2 2024-2025

Report attached

[27. NCLT Quarterly Report Q3 2425.pdf](#)

Not included

[27.1 Appendix 1 - Q3 2024-25 NCLT Trust Report.pdf](#)

Not included

[27.2 Appendix 2 - NCLT Financial Report Q3 2024-25.pdf](#)

Not included

28. PCSP Minutes

Report attached

[28. PCSP Minutes.pdf](#)

Not included

- 📄 28.1 Appendix 1 Full PCSP minutes 9.09.24.pdf** ***Not included***

- 📄 28.2 Appendix 2 Minutes Full PCSP 25.11.24.pdf** ***Not included***

- 📄 28.3 Appendix 3 Minutes Full PCSP 27.01.25.pdf** ***Not included***

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

5 March 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a hybrid meeting (in person and via zoom) of the Community and Wellbeing Committee of Ards and North Down Borough in the Council Chamber, 2 Church Street, Newtownards and via Zoom on **Wednesday 12 March 2025 commencing at 7pm.**

Yours faithfully

Susie McCullough
Chief Executive
Ards and North Down Borough Council

A G E N D A

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Deputations
- 3.1 Saint Vincent de Paul
- 3.2 Bangor Asylum & Refugee

Reports for Approval

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5. Mind Body Business Grants Scheme Approval (Report attached)
6. Public Analyst (Report attached)
7. VE day 2025 - Additional Dates (Report attached)
8. Heritage Grants (Report attached)
9. Good Relations Strategy 2025 -2028 and Action Plan 2025-2026 (Report attached)
10. Policing and Community Safety Strategy (2025-2028) and Action Plan (2025-2026) (Report attached)
11. Service Plan 2025-2026 Community and Culture (Report attached)

12. Service Plan 2025-2026 Leisure Services (Report attached)
13. Service Plan 2025-2026 Environmental Health Protection & Development (Report attached)
14. Service Plan 2025-2026 Parks and Cemeteries (Report attached)
15. Commemorative Tree Planting Request - Portaferry WI (Report attached)
16. Display Bed Applications - Ards F.C (Report attached)
17. Ards FC Consultation Response (Report attached)

Reports for Noting

18. Dementia Friendly Update February 2025 (Report attached)
19. Play Refurbishments 2025 - 2026 (Report attached)
20. Donaghadee Sports Facilities (Report attached)
21. Bi-Monthly Update on Portavogie 3G, Peninsula 3G and Portaferry Sports Centre Floor (Report attached)
22. Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants (WG March 2025) (Report attached)
23. Sports Forum Grants Review (Report attached)
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ITEMS *IN CONFIDENCE*****

Reports for Approval

- 26. Bonfire Clearance Tender Extension - Provision of Pre and Post Bonfire Services (Report attached)

Reports for Noting

- 27. NCLT Q2 2024-2025 (Report attached)
- 28. PCSP Minutes (Report attached)

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE (16 MEMBERS)

Alderman Adair	Councillor Douglas
Alderman Brooks (Chair)	Councillor Hollywood
Alderman Cummings	Councillor S Irvine
Alderman McRandal	Councillor W Irvine
Councillor Ashe	Councillor Kendall
Councillor Boyle (Vice Chair)	Councillor McBurney
Councillor Chambers	Councillor McClean
Councillor Cochrane	Councillor Moore

ITEM 4

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks & Cemeteries
Date of Report	28 February 2025
File Reference	PCA85
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	In Bloom Funding 2025
Attachments	Appendix 1 - In Bloom Funding 2025

The purpose of this report is to consider the 21 applications for the annual Ards and North Down in Bloom funding grants.

Ards and North Down Borough has a reputation for leading the way with our floral displays. The Borough has won regional and national competitions in recent years and the common theme throughout all the success is the incredible hard work and enthusiasm shown by our staff and the local communities they work with.

The grant scheme assists the Ards and North Down in Bloom initiative which has been developed with three overlapping objectives: horticultural excellence, community participation and environmentally sustainable practices. These are in line with objectives of Translink Ulster in Bloom and other regional awards schemes.

By actively supporting this competition, applicants not only make their communities more attractive, but also contribute to the Borough's entry to the Translink Ulster in Bloom Competition and other regional awards. In recent years this has proved to be a great success, particularly in the towns of Comber (runner-up through 2021 and

Not Applicable

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2022) and Donaghadee (Winner 2021, 2022 and 2024). Donaghadee have also been nominated for the prestigious Britain in Bloom Competition 2025, a fantastic advertisement for the borough.

Ards and North Down Borough Council currently makes budget provision for the allocation of funding to community groups in order to assist with floral displays in the city, towns and villages throughout the borough, to assist with the council's commitment to the Translink Ulster in Bloom competition.

The allocation for funding is intended to supplement floral display and amenity area maintenance currently carried out by the councils Parks and Cemeteries Service. This may be in the form of hanging baskets, planters, flower beds, sustainable wildflower displays etc. either on council or other statutory bodies land or privately owned non-domestic areas in public view.

The maximum limit for floral funding is £1250 per annum per group. This increase was approved by council at Community and Wellbeing Committee in January 2025. A further grant may be provided for funding, in whole or in part, for appropriate liability insurance covering the floral display work over and above the group's normal insured activities. Insurance grants can be provided for up to 40% of the total project costs. Funding will be allocated with 80% advance payment, with the further 20% paid upon the receipt of invoices.

Council wish to encourage a collaborative approach by groups, where there are more than one group applying in a city, town or village, consideration may only be given to one project.

The 21 applications were assessed against the following criteria:

- Meet the core objectives of Ards and North Down in Bloom – Horticultural excellence, Environmental Sustainability and Community.
- Provide a vision as to how the funding will enhance the particular areas and how this will be sustained in subsequent years.
- Evidence of approval from relevant landowner where works are to be carried out.
- Where appropriate insurance liability cover is in place, copy of certificate and schedule to be submitted.
- How the works are to be carried out, and by whom.
- Detailed breakdown of how funding will be utilised, and receipts submitted accordingly.

Appendix 1 summarises how each application met the criteria. In the assessment, 19 of the applications were considered to have met the criteria. 2 applications were declined with the reasoning for this detailed in Appendix 1.

However, the Council acknowledges that not all community groups may fully understand the sustainability requirements and objectives associated with its funding initiatives. As such, the Council is committed to raising awareness of these important factors when distributing grant funding, ensuring that all recipients have a clear

Not Applicable

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understanding of the expectations and opportunities for sustainable impact. With this in mind, two groups have had their funding slightly reduced to exclude the use of weed killers as requested in their application. This is in line with Council's Herbicide Reduction Policy.

Currently, there is a budget allocation of £31,000 for the In Bloom programme. The 19 applications amount to a total of £22,472.59. A further round of funding will be advertised in late summer to utilise the remaining unused budget.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council awards funding to the 19 applicants marked with 'approval' in appendix 1.

Appendix 1

In Bloom funding 2025

CRITERIA									
GROUP	Please state the nature of the proposed project: (500 WORDS)	Explain how the project will meet the core objectives of Ards and North Down In Bloom - <i>Horticultural, Environment and Community</i>	Provide a vision as to how the funding will enhance the particular areas and how this will be sustained in subsequent years.	Evidence of approval from relevant land owner where works are to be carried out	When appropriate insurance liability cover is in place, copy of certificate and schedule to be submitted.	How the works are to be carried out, and by whom.	Detailed breakdown of how funding will be utilised, and receipts submitted accordingly.	Amount of funding requested	Recommendation
Ballygowan Community Association	<p>The Community Association will be replenishing planters and baskets within the village with bedding plants. Local residents will be given the opportunity to get involved in both the planting and the watering/maintenance.</p> <p>The Association were recently provided with two, three tiered planters which will be positioned in the village also. It is hoped that we can position these in other areas throughout Ballygowan as currently, the planters are all centred around the community centre and it would help extend the colour out to the other main routes into the village.</p>	Replenishing the flowers around the village provides us with a great opportunity to get the people in our village involved. When individual are involved in the planting process, they feel more invested with a sense of ownership and will want to help maintain/water the flowers. The flowers will also add a much needed splash of colour to the village which lacks green space and is mainly built up.	The surfaces within Ballygowan village are mainly black tarmac and contains very little green space. Provision of this grant will enable us to replenish all the planters and baskets and help soften the public spaces, providing a splash of colour. Many of the planters are located beside public seating areas which will make them more attractive for those who wish to sit and enjoy the flowers. BDCA members will maintain the planters throughout the year with the help of both In Bloom funding and our own fund raiser events	Yes	Yes	Planting will be carried out by BDCA members and volunteers within the community who will also provide any follow up maintenance.	Yes	£528 80% of total project.	Approval
Ballyhalbert Park Residents Association	To purchase hanging baskets, planters and perennials and roses and winter flowering plants. To enhance and brighten our environment, which is showing signs of age.	Our residents average age is 70, some live alone. We recognise the need to have a good community spirit and engagement, to ensure residents are not lonely and left to their own devices. We	The committee and volunteers take pleasure in maintaining the floral areas when they have been established and delight in the colourful displays.	Yes – site currently but for sale and in administration but administrators are happy to proceed.	No – stated none required	Committee members and volunteers	Yes	£960 100% of total project	Approval

Appendix 1

In Bloom funding 2025

		help each other out in times of need.							
Ballywalter Community Action Group	The nature of the proposed project is a rolling joint venture using an intergenerational approach between Ballywalter Community Action Group, Ballywalter Primary School and the Ballywalter Over 50s Gardening Club. The three groups work in partnership to ensure that the project runs smoothly so Ballywalter can Bloom all year round. We wish to continue to maintain the Peace and Memorial Garden on Main Street which helps build civic pride through creating a sense of community ownership, community identity and spirit. This is a focal point in Ballywalter and widely used by the wider community and tourist, it also adds beauty to the village of Ballywalter and heightens people's awareness and appreciation for living things. We also maintain the free-standing planters sited throughout the village and the recently added wall mounted entrance features which include a rowboat and a ships wheel.	<p>Our project, Blooming Ballywalter will meet the core objectives of Ards and North Down in Bloom through the following:</p> <p>Horticultural Excellence – Regular meetings to plan the design and themes, upkeep and maintenance of the planting scheme</p> <p>Community participation – At present we have 22 members of the community from other groups within the village involved in the maintenance and upkeep of the planting scheme</p> <p>Environmental sustainability – Where possible we recycle and resuse plants, and use eco friendly compost. In our recently acquired polytunnel housed at the primary school we cultivated seedlings together which are used to enhance the floral displays throughout the village. Cultivating the seeds and plants alongside the primary school children is educational and can help improve social and emotional development such as cooperation, communication, responsibility, empathy and self esteem. Gardening can provide opportunities for</p>	Joint project with multiple groups in Ballywalter. Plan to continue planting and maintaining flower displays at peace and memorial garden and throughout village. Sustained by volunteers, NIHE staff and Over 50's gardening club.	Yes	Yes	Community volunteers, local primary school children, local gardening club, supported by contactor and NIHE staff.	Yes Works detailed in full, contractor to supply plants, shrubs, equipment	<p>Total allocated £845</p> <p>Requesting £995</p> <p>Reduce by £150 due to inclusion of weed killer in line with councils reduction policy.</p> <p>£995-£150 =</p> <p>£845</p> <p>100% of total project.</p>	Approval

Appendix 1

In Bloom funding 2025

		children to work together, share ideas, take turns, and help each other.							
Bangor Chamber of Commerce	The Hamilton Road In Bloom project aims to revitalize the neglected intersection at Hamilton Road and Main Street in Bangor City Centre by transforming the area with vibrant floral displays, addressing issues such as anti-social behaviour, public urination, fly-tipping, and overgrown weeds. By maintaining existing hanging baskets and adding four new slate planters, the project seeks to create a welcoming environment that encourages positive engagement and a destination for visitors. The initiative, in partnership with DFI and Council efforts like the Bingham Lane project, mirrors successful urban regeneration projects in Belfast and contributes to the overall enhancement of the city centre.	The installation of hanging baskets and planters at Hamilton Road and Main Street aims to transform neglected urban spaces into vibrant, welcoming areas, enhancing the city centre's appeal while fostering community pride and deterring anti-social behaviour. By incorporating seasonal, sustainable plantings, the initiative improves the environment, boosts local business visibility, and encourages foot traffic, all while promoting a positive, engaging atmosphere that benefits residents, visitors, and businesses alike. The project also contributes to environmental goals by enhancing air quality and biodiversity within the city centre.	The use of durable, reusable planters aligns with sustainability goals, as they can be stored and reused each year, minimizing environmental impact. A long-term maintenance plan will be implemented, involving a team of volunteers and local professionals who will care for the displays. Community involvement will be encouraged through workshops and the adoption of planters by residents and businesses, ensuring the project's sustainability for years to come.	Yes	Yes	Commerce group, Local tradesmen, local volunteers	Yes	£1250 100% of total project.	Decline Similar proposal from Gifted Ltd, we will encourage Bangor Chamber of Commerce to work in partnership
Bayburn Community Association (formerly Helen's Bay and Crawfordsburn)	This project proposal builds on work from 2024, with over 60 flowerbeds and planters now maintained by BCA Committee members across Helen's Bay, Crawfordsburn, and the area between the two villages. In Helen's Bay, key areas	Building on the voluntary work already undertaken, the project will expand community participation in maintaining flowerbeds and planters, fostering horticultural excellence with seasonal planting and maintenance plans.	The funding will enhance the area by supporting the creation of vibrant and well-maintained community spaces in Helen's Bay and Crawfordsburn, enabling the villages to compete at higher levels in regional and national Ulster In Bloom	Yes	Yes	Volunteers x30, local primary school, volunteers from St John's Church and Now Disability Group.	Yes	Total allocated £1750 requested £1250 95% of total	Approval

Appendix 1

In Bloom funding 2025

	<p>include the large flowerbed at Bridge Road/Craigdarragh Road, Fort Road Car Park, Station Square, and 50 planters along Church Road in collaboration with Clandeboye Estate. In Crawfordsburn, efforts include maintaining planters on Main Street, improving the Glen River corridor, enhancing the Crawfordsburn Dam area, and upgrading the village entrance. Between the villages, volunteers are improving the Townswomen's Guild Wood by planting trees, bulbs, and installing bird and bat boxes, while working with Crawfordsburn Primary School to create a fairy trail. The project aims to expand with more planters and creative floral displays at key junctions and village entrances to further enhance the area.</p>	<p>Environmental goals will be met through the creation of a Community Orchard and Garden at Fort Road, Helen's Bay, and Crawfordsburn Glen Park, alongside increased biodiversity efforts like installing bird and bat boxes and woodland management. The project also promotes community involvement, working with local schools and residents to enhance environmental awareness and improve the aesthetic appeal of both villages, which are also entered into the Ulster In Bloom Awards and Translink competition.</p>	<p>Competitions. Building on the success of previous In Bloom initiatives, the project will expand community engagement in maintaining flowerbeds and planters, ensuring long-term care. Plans for a community garden, polytunnel, and raised beds at the Helen's Bay tennis courts will enable the team to grow their own flowers, herbs, and vegetables, sustaining the project for future years. A seasonal maintenance plan will ensure continuity and ongoing upkeep.</p>					<p>project. +£750 requested insurance costs to be reduced to £500 in line with In Bloom Policy. £1250 + £500 = £1750</p>	
<p>Comber Regeneration Community Partnership Ltd(CRCP)</p>	<p>CRCP have over 50 self watering hanging baskets around the Town and are in the process of discussions with local traders to install more. Steel brackets for these heavy baskets are expensive at £30 plus vat and to ensure they are erected securely CRCP employ an experienced person to erect them at further expense. CRCP also have several Flower Beds which require replanting twice per year. CRCP Volunteers will be planting up the self watering baskets and hanging them</p>	<p>CRCP will be planting their existing street planters and hanging baskets to give Comber a colourful display in the Town. New planters will be installed in new areas with the intention to widen out the planting programme and new hanging baskets installed. CRCP have recently installed ne horal planters to in Comber Square to compliment the Council planting programme in the Square. Work is ongoing to establish some planting below the silver birch in the</p>	<p>To purchase plug plants and bring on in polytunnel for planting in the various areas around the town. Purchase peat free compost. To re plant existing planters hanging Baskets and ongoing maintenance.</p>	Yes	Yes	Works completed by CCRP volunteers, local youth groups, senior citizens. Supported by contactor.	Yes	<p>£1250 50% of total project.</p>	Approval

Appendix 1

In Bloom funding 2025

	<p>up at end of May and taking down and storing at end of September. Large 2 tier and 3 tier planters will also be planted up at end of May and plants replaced during September and October. CRCP have been in contact with local traders via Comber Commerce and Development Group regarding installing more hanging baskets to make the town more colourful.</p>	<p>Square. CRCP use peat free compost in their street planters and hanging baskets. CRCP have recently taken over the Council floral planter at end of Killinchy St which has now been adopted by Comber Rotary Club.</p>							
<p>Conlig Community Regeneration Group</p>	<p>Through this project, we will work in partnership with locally based charity Praxis (working with adults with learn disabilities) and Conlig Presbyterian Church to improve and enhance the appearance of Conlig, by creating bright and colourful floral displays throughout the village, building on our community garden and orchard.</p>	<p>This project addresses the concerns of Conlig residents, who feel disconnected from their community and the disappearing natural environment due to housing developments and limited green spaces. Through regular consultations, residents expressed frustration with issues like littering and neglect of outdoor spaces. In response, the project aims to create vibrant floral displays throughout the village, brighten the area, and encourage outdoor engagement. The initiative will also utilize a newly created accessible community garden and natural walkway as a venue for teaching horticultural skills, fostering a sustainable way of life, and improving residents' mental and physical well-being. By partnering with local organizations like Praxis and</p>	<p>Collaborative project with local PRAXIS group to install and maintain wooden planters throughout the village, complementing the existing floral displays. The planters will be retained for future displays, sustained by the group.</p>	<p>A.N.D.B.C., N.I.H.E. and DFI, not clear if agreed – however, planters were installed in 2024. Private land usage agreed.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Works completed by local volunteers and PRAXIS group members.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>£1250 75% of total project.</p>	<p>Approval</p>

Appendix 1

In Bloom funding 2025

		Conlig Presbyterian Church, the project ensures broad community involvement, meeting the core objectives of horticulture, environmental sustainability, and community cohesion.							
Donaghadee Community Development Association	This year, in collaboration with residents, we are creating a VE Day Floral Walkway in Hunter's Lane to honor those who served in WWII and foster community spirit. With support from the In Bloom grant, we will provide window boxes for every house and install wooden planters with coordinated floral displays. Additional funding will help create a colorful entrance arch, featuring "Donaghadee Remembers – Lest We Forget" and handmade crochet poppies, along with WW2 memorabilia and interpretative panels highlighting Donaghadee's wartime role. Running from April to September, this project will be part of Donaghadee's entry in the Britain in Bloom competition, creating a lasting tribute for future generations.	The project enhances Hunter's Lane through sustainable planting, supporting environmental responsibility by using upcycled materials and encouraging residents to maintain window boxes. Coordinated floral displays will bring colour, biodiversity, and longevity, showcasing horticultural excellence in both public and residential spaces. By collaborating with local groups, the initiative fosters community pride and participation. The project also supports Donaghadee's bid in the Britain in Bloom competition, enhancing its Ulster in Bloom standing with a creative, impactful, and meaningful installation that combines environmental, horticultural, and community goals.	Resident Involvement & Ownership – Encouraging homeowners to maintain their window boxes ensures the floral walkway has the potential to be a longterm feature. 2. Seasonal Planting Rotation – By planning a mix of perennial plants and seasonal flowers, the displays can be refreshed annually with minimal replanting costs. 3. Volunteer Gardening Groups – The project could lead to the formation of a "Friends of Hunter's Lane" gardening group who could help maintain and expand floral displays on different themes in the years ahead. 4. Reuse & Repurpose Materials – The wooden planters and entrance arch are designed to be durable, meaning they can be repainted and replanted annually rather than replaced.	Yes - We have met and written to each householder and all are supportive of the project	Yes	The residents will be supported by team of volunteers and shown how to plant out and maintain their floral displays.	Yes	£1250 71.4% of total project	Approval

Appendix 1

In Bloom funding 2025

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Gifted enterprise	<p>Main Street In Bloom We wish to install Heritage Urn street furniture planters at the front elevation the site on Main street, to compliment the existing hanging baskets and the council installations on the barriers at the road crossing outside. This will add to our large hanging baskets at the front of the building which is part of our heritage regeneration of the Old Market House which is a listed heritage building, dating to 1770.</p>	<p>The project aims to support the Borough's InBloom objectives by implementing a long-term sustainability plan to enhance the local landscape. This plan involves the use of durable planters that will be filled and maintained annually, ensuring continued success for the annual InBloom program. Focusing on the City Centre and Main Street, the initiative will contribute to the broader Ulster in Bloom program, enhancing the visual appeal of public spaces and fostering a sustainable, aesthetically pleasing environment for the community.</p>	<p>Main Street, in need of aesthetic improvement, will be revitalized through environmentally conscious planters, filled annually to maintain their appeal across seasons. This sustainable approach ensures longevity and adaptability while actively involving volunteers in both installation and maintenance, fostering community participation and environmental stewardship, and enhancing the initiative's impact and legacy.</p>	<p>Not given on application, application is being given approval based on permission provided by DFI for street installation.</p>	Yes	Volunteer teams and local businesses	Yes	<p>£1250 100% of total project.</p>	Approval
Groomspport Village Association	<p>With the funding, the group will maintain and enhance Groomspport's award-winning horticultural displays, including new plants and compost, and participate in In Bloom and Community awards. They will manage walking routes, especially beach paths, promoting natural beauty and responsible dog ownership to address dog fouling. The group will also maintain shrub areas around the bug house and improve grass management. They plan to take on the management of the neglected Fairy Wood area, creating a safe space for children's play while preserving the woodland feel. Additionally, they aim to enhance village entrance displays, establish a dedicated storage shed, and</p>	<p>The GVA has taken on maintaining several footpaths, amenity areas, and floral displays in the village, traditionally handled by the Council, to add value to limited resources. The welcoming "gorilla" plantings at village entrances promote civic pride and encourage residents to beautify their own properties. Floral displays are designed to support pollinators, with year-round blooms and wild paths that enhance the local ecosystem in line with the Local Biodiversity Plan. The group also aims to address dog fouling by promoting shared ownership of village pride. All work is carried out by volunteers and is seen as a community effort, fostering a sense of collective responsibility.</p>	<p>This will achieved in partnership with community and business sponsorship of displays working with other village organisations.</p>	<p>In conjunction and agreement with ANDBC Parks & Cemeteries.</p>	Yes	<p>The Association will liaise with local businesses and organisations to complete. Volunteers and residents.</p>	Yes	<p>£1200 57% of total project</p>	Approval

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	support the Stand4Trees initiative with tree planting opportunities. To mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day in 2025, they will create a floral tribute for the village.								
Kilcooley Allotments	The project will be a joint effort between members of Kilcooley Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership. Proposal involved bringing people together in Kilcooley to refurbish x3 flower beds, providing habitats for pollinators and other wildlife. Additional we will provide hands on learning experiences for participants to learn new skills, transferring knowledge to maintain the flower beds. Flower beds have seating areas as part of design and used daily by parents collecting children from school. Adult groups will attend gardening classes, and include intergenerational element working with local primary school.	The project will increase environmental responsibility within the community, transforming these spaces into green spaces that will enhance areas for pollinators and wildlife in urban area. The project will provide hands on experience for participants, gaining experience in gardening and horticulture. The collective learning of young and old proposed throughout will foster intergenerational learning. Create a sense of ownership and strengthen community bonds among residents, by using the cut lavender in winter with groups in craft and wellness projects.	To ensure the projects sustainability in subsequent years, group will engage the community in the maintenance and care of flower beds. By involving the local school, senior citizens and community groups, in the restoration and upkeep efforts we will foster sense of ownership and pride. Active community participation will likely ensure the projects long term success and continued maintenance. Plants used will be of a hardy and herbaceous nature and low maintenance – we hope to use plants such as lavender and sage, which will have calming benefits as well as aesthetic appeal.	Yes – NIHE land letter of approval can be provided	yes	Volunteers from multiple local groups led by Kilcooley Allotments	yes	£1250 100% of total project	Approval
Kilcooley Womens Centre	The project aims to transform a neglected rear yard at the Bangor social supermarket (1 Kilcooley Square) into a vibrant urban garden courtyard. The initiative will create a green space for volunteers and staff to relax, connect with nature, and enjoy an aesthetically pleasing environment. The space, currently underused and associated with anti-social behaviour, will be revitalized to improve the area's appearance, support mental	Horticultural: The project will introduce climbing plants, hanging baskets, planters, and vertical gardens, enhancing the aesthetics and biodiversity of the space. Native plants will be used to encourage environmental responsibility and strive for horticultural excellence. Environment: Sustainable practices, such as rainwater harvesting, composting, and the use of eco-friendly materials, will be incorporated to minimize	The funding will enable the creation of a multi-functional garden courtyard that serves as a peaceful retreat for volunteers, enhancing the well-being of both individuals and the wider community. The garden will contribute to improving the appearance of the social supermarket and its surroundings, transforming a currently uninviting space into a welcoming green oasis. The project's long-term sustainability will be ensured through eco-friendly	Yes	Yes	Volunteers and staff	Yes	£1250 100% of total project	Approval

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	<p>health, and contribute to the regeneration efforts of the surrounding building.</p> <p>Purchasing hanging baskets tubs, soil and plants</p>	<p>environmental impact and promote sustainability.</p> <p>Community: The project will involve local volunteers in planning, planting, and maintaining the garden, fostering a sense of community ownership. It will also provide educational opportunities in gardening, sustainability, and environmental stewardship, creating a space for social interaction and skill-building.</p>	<p>practices, community involvement in maintenance, and the use of hardy plants that require minimal upkeep. The garden will continue to provide enjoyment and benefit to the community for years to come.</p>						
LADYBIRDS CHILDRENS SERVICES Children & Family Centre	<p>The "Old Belfast Road in Bloom" project aims to install children's benches and floral furniture planters at the front of a currently run-down site. This addition will make the area more appealing and provide a space for parents and children to relax, while also being visible to the public. The project extends previous efforts by adding to the infrastructure for planting in 2025, complementing existing large hanging baskets. It will enhance ongoing horticultural and floral programs, encouraging children to engage with planting and horticulture from an early age. The project will also refresh existing planters and tubs with new materials, supported by InBloom.</p>	<p>The project will support the Borough's InBloom objectives by enhancing the area with durable, long-lasting planters that will be maintained annually, aligning with the Ulster in Bloom ethos. It will improve the appearance of the NIHE area at Old Belfast Road, ensuring the sustainability of the annual InBloom program. The floral installations will contribute to the broader Ulster in Bloom initiative and enhance the area's aesthetics with vibrant displays, particularly during the summer months.</p>	<p>New planter bench will be installed, Existing large self watering planters and baskets will be refilled and refreshed for the summer months. As we will be using sustainable planters, they can be filled annually to enable subsequent seasons and years to utilise the planters, usable in both summer and autumn seasons. It will enable us to include parents and children into the sustainable planting programme, by encouraging volunteering in the installation and maintenance of the project</p>	yes	Yes	Local garden centre suppliers, volunteer team.	Yes	£1250 100% of total project	Approval
Lawson Learners	<p>To continue to plant areas of the Lawson Estate with shrubs, plants, bulbs, hanging baskets, with 2 boat displays. Prepare a sensory area and small solar powered fountain. To</p>	<p>The areas will continue to be enhanced by various displays. They have been sustained for several years and can be viewed by whole community. Bird feeding</p>	<p>Continue to plant areas of the Lawson estate with bulbs, plants, shrubs and other displays</p>	Yes	Yes	Volunteers of local community groups	Yes	£1250 100% of total project	Approval

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	continue to attract wildlife to the area.	station attracts a variety of birds.							
Lisbarnett and Lisbane Community Association	<p>Lisbane has limited 'green space' and very little council-owned space so we therefore have to make the most of the areas we can brighten up with planters and pots.</p> <p>We have received support from the in Bloom Project over the last number of years . We plan to replant existing pots/boxes with summer bedding and replant again in early 2026 with spring bedding for the Community Centre and seating area on the main road . Also outside the Old Post Office to 'Brighten Lisbane'. We aim to encourage as many people to get on board with our project as possible. Our ASC children participate in the planting as do our Senior Club members and volunteers</p>	<p>Our Floral display will perfectly enhance the Area and promote pride in our village and increase environmental responsibility</p> <p>Other local establishments will be encouraged to participate in striving for horticultural excellence and to possibly enter in regional our village for regional awards .</p> <p>In addition our project will encourage community participation and will substantially contribute to the wellbeing of our residents and visitors .</p>	<p>The funding will be used to plant up existing planters and pots at various locations around the village to help improve and brighten the village and encourage everyone who lives and works in the village to take pride in it. We have used support from In Bloom for the last number of years . There is minimum area available in Lisbane for Community based planting . We always have an enthusiastic team of volunteers .In addition we incorporate our planting and gardening activities into the After School and Easter and Summer programmes for our Children</p>	Yes	Yes	Volunteers, and after schools club	Yes	£1250 100% of total project	Approval
Mill Village Gardening Club	To introduce and enhance the Mill Village by expanding the number of large and small plants, and shrubs; plant summer bedding plants for colour; trees and make environmental improvements to provide projects for participants to help with mindfulness.	Enhancing of floral displays for resident and residents by introducing seasonal and long-term planting.	Club will maintain and re-plant in future as have done for 4 years.	Yes Land owned by Mill Village management.	N/A	Volunteer work by club members	Yes	£1250 100% of total project	Approval
Millisle Health and Wellbeing Group	Plants and flowers will be grown from seed in polytunnel and transplanted to planters around village enhancing floral displays.	We will provide colourful displays in the various planters and this will as always be an ongoing project which will be enjoyed	Our vision is to supply a variety of colourful plants to the local area. We want to maintain the sense of pride in our village both for local	Yes - Permissions and leases in place	Yes	Group volunteers will grow seeds in their polytunnel	Yes	£ 1039.59 100% of total project	Approval

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	Replanting out 9 concrete council owned containers and x11 floral containers. Our project is to have a wonderful colourful floral display over the summer months and into the autumn and winter which villagers and visitors can enjoy and feel uplifted by. We have also tidied up and planted various banks to give colour and we do our best to contain the weeds growing on the footpaths by the containers	by everyone who walk or drive past. We have had many compliments on how uplifting the planters make people feel. Our black containers have colourful stickers which inform readers that we are supported by Ards and North Down Council In Bloom grant.	residents and visitors. We find our displays encourage locals to admire and talk about the plants and that this encourages friendship and mindfulness and on asking questions people learn some new skills and ideas for their own gardens and they ask for cuttings			and transplant once ready.			
Portaferry In Bloom	Alongside seasonal planting blitz in various areas of Portaferry PIB organise “tidy up” sessions of the numerous shrub beds and planters positioned throughout the village. We will organise a series of themed workshops and activities mostly based at our community poly tunnel area, local markets and in the community centre. These introduce, encourage and further develop skills and knowledge of residents as well as PIB volunteers in growing plants and using natural materials to celebrate the seasons. Participation in all our activities will be open to all ages and abilities.	By planting and maintaining the many highly visible non council owned public areas throughout Portaferry, Portaferry In Bloom contribute to ANDBC 's aim to make the borough, and Portaferry in particular, an attractive and welcoming place in which to live, work, visit. As well as potentially an area for investment. PIB strive to be environmentally responsible and aware of increasing biodiversity in choice of planting and use of chemicals and plastics. Volunteering in such a visible way in our own area contributes to heighten sense of community and belonging and encourages increased responsibility and a “you can do” approach.	By publicly showcasing attractive and biodiverse schemes it is hoped members of the public will be inspired to replicate some elements in their own planting especially in the residential areas and thus enhance areas not managed by Portaferry In Bloom. We will also promote the personal and community benefits, both mental and physical, of engaging with nature and our environment. PIB organise workshops and seasonal activities for residents to raise our public profile and opportunities to volunteer thus increasing our pool of volunteers to continue the valuable community contribution of Portaferry In Bloom in future years.	Yes	Yes	In Bloom group will undertake all work with volunteer support.	Yes	<p>Total allocated = £1150</p> <p>Requested £1250</p> <p>100% of total project</p> <p>Reduce by £100 due to inclusion of weed killer/ slug control in line with councils reduction policy.</p> <p>£1250 - £100 = £1150</p>	Approval

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<p>Portavogie Regeneration Forum</p>	<p>Purchase of Eco planter, summer and winter bedding and compost. This proposal aims to foster intergenerational community involvement by bringing together young and older members of Portavogie to build relationships, learn about horticulture, and enhance the village's aesthetics. Building on a similar project funded in 2016, this initiative will continue to ensure Portavogie remains 'in bloom' year-round. Primary 7 pupils from Portavogie Primary School will learn to plant potatoes, tomatoes, and bedding flowers. The project includes summer planting, maintenance, watering, and winter planting. Additionally, four new planters, made from recycled wood by Portaferry Men's Shed, will be maintained with the help of East Coast Day Opportunities and volunteers.</p>	<p>In the several years that PRF has received funding from 'In Bloom' we have demonstrated that we meet the core objectives of Ards and North Down 'In Bloom'. We have enhanced the area in terms of how the village looks aesthetically, while developing skills of our residents. We have also increased community spirit and volunteering. Helping to inspire children to grow their own food. Produce has been distributed to school children and elderly neighbours surrounding the school area. We have sustained the project for over seven years while expanding each time. We have always sought permission from landowners and our governance is excellent.</p>	<p>The funding will enhance Portavogie by improving key areas, especially Harbour Road, with durable, recycled planters. Local primary school children and East Coast Day Opportunities will help plant and maintain flowers and vegetables, fostering community involvement. Annual plant replenishment and expanding the project will ensure long-term sustainability, with the potential to extend to other village areas and the walking trail.</p>	<p>Will receive approval from business and landowner as required.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Works completed by group volunteers and local primary school pupils.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>£1250 100% of total project</p>	<p>Approval – based on pending land owner approvals</p>
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Appendix 1

In Bloom funding 2025

<p>Regency Carpet Manufacturing</p>	<p>The project aims to introduce two beehives to promote biodiversity and sustainability, addressing the decline in bee populations. With a bee-friendly garden already in place, the hives will be maintained by trained staff, and beekeeping training will be offered. The initiative will engage the community, support biodiversity, and align with sustainability goals. The honey produced may be used for fundraising or educational purposes, contributing to environmental stewardship and community involvement.</p>	<p>Horticultural Excellence: The beehives will enhance pollination, leading to more vibrant and diverse plant life. We have planted bee-friendly plants to create a supportive environment for both bees and the community.</p> <p>Community Participation: This project offers employees the opportunity to engage in beekeeping, learn about pollination, and contribute to sustainability efforts. The garden next to the hives provides a peaceful retreat to improve mental well-being. It also promotes teamwork and supports corporate social responsibility goals.</p> <p>Environmentally Sustainable Practices: The beehives provide crucial habitats for pollinators, supporting local ecosystems. The project emphasizes organic practices and the responsible use of resources, aligning with sustainability goals.</p>	<p>To ensure the project's longevity, we will establish a team of trained volunteers responsible for ongoing hive maintenance and community outreach. Additionally, we plan to collaborate with local schools and organizations to integrate beekeeping education into their programs, ensuring sustained community interest and participation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hive Setup: Two beehives will be sourced and installed with supplier support. 2. Staff Training: One to two staff members will be trained in beekeeping. 3. Hive Care: Regular checks and seasonal management will be carried out. 4. Employee Safety: Guidelines and protective gear will be provided. 5. Sustainability: Ongoing planting of pollinator-friendly plants to support the hives. 	<p>N/A - land owned by the company</p>	<p>Application states yes however requesting £150 insurance in cost breakdown – possibly for bee activities.</p>	<p>Staff members, possibly local community</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Requesting £1830 funding 100% of project</p>	<p>Decline *see below for further detail</p>
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Appendix 1

In Bloom funding 2025

<p>Rooted in the Dee</p>	<p>The "Rooted In Bloom 25" project aims to expand the community garden with support from a grant. Key activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expanding the garden with new raised soil beds made from upcycled materials. - Planting more organic and heritage Irish seeds for fruit, vegetables, and flowers. - Increasing biodiversity by attracting pollinators through chemical-free plants. - Adding compost containers, seating, and a covered bed for seedlings. - Diverting organic waste from landfill through composting. - Producing local food, reducing food miles, and enhancing food knowledge. - Hosting school visits and increasing community engagement through social media and local outreach. - Collaborating with local groups to improve health, biodiversity, and address the climate crisis. <p>The project will build on past successes and further involve volunteers in this inclusive, community-driven initiative.</p>	<p>The project aims to transform a previously neglected area into a sustainable community garden. By improving raised beds with longer-lasting materials, better pathways, and seating, the garden will become a permanent feature that encourages local residents to enjoy and engage with the space. It aligns with the In Bloom project's core objectives, focusing on environmental responsibility, horticultural excellence, community participation, and supporting other local groups. The garden promotes sustainability by reusing discarded materials, composting organic waste, and reducing carbon emissions as it absorbs more CO2 than it releases. It also grows organic heritage fruit, vegetables, and flowers, attracting pollinating insects. The project provides a valuable opportunity to share good gardening practices with the local community. It fosters community involvement, with volunteers from Donaghadee and Millisle, and supports local horticultural groups like DCDA and Dee in Bloom. The garden will also offer opportunities for classroom visits and educational outreach, strengthening local partnerships and building relationships within the community.</p>	<p>The grant will enable Rooted in the Dee to realise our plans to improve the raised beds, expand the garden to include trees and more seating, make the garden more resilient for future weather extremes by collecting rain water and providing a shelter belt, reach new audiences, tackle the biodiversity and climate crises and build community.</p>	<p>yes</p>	<p>yes</p>	<p>Volunteers</p>	<p>yes</p>	<p>£1250 100% of funding</p>	<p>Approval</p>
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*Additional information regarding Regency Carpet Manufacturing

Although additional bee species within an area can help with pollination services there is also a number of associated risks. These risks can have serious consequences on local biodiversity and need to be considered.

We have one native honeybee on the island of Ireland known as the 'Native Black Honeybee' (NBH). Beekeepers across the country can use the NBH's but can also legally buy and import non-native honeybees for use in hives. There are a number of risks associated with buying and importing non-native bees:

Imported Diseases: Imported bees can carry pests, diseases and pathogens, which could threaten all of Ireland's 98 bee species e.g. Varroa mite is currently the most serious problem affecting honey bee health in Ireland. Once infected, colonies not treated will die out in a few years. The mite transferred from the Asian to the European honey bee and reached Europe in the 1970s and then was accidentally introduced to Ireland in 1998. As a result, there are very few feral bee colonies remaining in Ireland.

Hybridisation: Non-native species may breed with our native bees, producing offspring that are less well adapted to the Irish climate. They may also develop different traits and characteristics. Irish black bees are less aggressive, less prone to swarm and are best adapted to pollinate native wildflowers.

In addition to the potential risks listed above placing new honeybee colonies, in locations can **increase competition between native pollinators for forage**, putting even more pressure on the wild species that are already in decline. Researchers can assert that honey bees and wild bees largely visit the same plant species and thereby risk competing for the same resources. Negative consequences are most marked in areas where there are fewer flowers or higher densities of honeybee hives, and could potentially be serious where vulnerable populations of wild bees are present.

Too many honeybees can threaten wild bees, please see following link which details recent research into honeybee hives
<https://pollinators.ie/too-many-honey-bees-can-threaten-wild-bees/>

The following link is Bumblebee Conservation Trusts position statement regarding managed honeybees, it highlights adopting the precautionary principle <https://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/managed-honeybees/>

Location: Industrial Estate location is not suitable due to limited food source all year round, traffic and high levels of pollution.

Health and Safety: The concept of engaging with children is a positive idea however the Health and Safety risks are too high.

Unclassified

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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	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development
Date of Report	19 February 2025
File Reference	EHPD 19
Legislation	The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 2002
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Mind, Body, Business Grants Scheme Approval
Attachments	Ards and North Down Mind Body Business Grants Scheme

Background

The purpose of this report is to align the current Mind, Body, Business (MBB) small grants scheme with the Council's new Grants Policy approved by Council in 2024 with a formalisation of the process into a policy document.

Mind, Body, Business (MBB) is a project originally funded to the value of £6000 per year by the Public Health Agency (PHA). For the year 2025/26 Council has agreed to fund this as the PHA have withdrawn this funding. The purpose of the project is to facilitate and encourage businesses in Ards and North Down to prioritise employee health and wellbeing. This is in recognition of the fact that a healthy workforce contributes greatly to the success and economic well-being of the business and hence the local community.

Not Applicable

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Ards and North Down Borough Council currently provides allocation of a small amount of 'one off' in year funding to business groups who sign up to the MBB project.

In 2023/24, 25 businesses with over 1093 employees benefited from various Health and Wellbeing Initiatives through MBB including the Small Grant Scheme. This year 2024/25 to date: 12 businesses received the small grant, benefitting 738 staff. 27 businesses also availed of the health checks (75 places) and 16 businesses were represented on the first aid courses (23 places).

The MBB Small Grants Scheme attached sets out the guidelines and criteria for Mind, Body, Business (MBB) funding applications, how the funding should be utilised and how success will be evaluated.

By adopting this, it will:

- Formalise the protocol previously used to award the MBB Small Grants
- Provide general alignment with the Council Grants Policy approved in 2024
- Allow up to £250 per business per grants tranche with priority given to first time applicants in line with the purpose of MBB i.e. to encourage businesses to support employee health and wellbeing

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council adopts the attached Ards and North Down Mind, Body, Business (MBB) Small Grants Scheme.



Ards and North Down

‘Mind, Body, Business’ Small Grants Scheme

Title	Ards and North Down “Mind, Body, Business” (MBB) Small Grants Scheme
Version	V1
Summary	The purpose of this document is to set out the guidelines and criteria for Mind, Body, Business funding applications and how the funding should be utilised.
Source / Author	Environmental Health Manager (Health & Wellbeing)
Date of Council Approval	Proposed for March 2025
Implementation Date	Proposed for April 2025
Next Review Date	Every 3 years
Officer Responsible for Review	Head of Environmental Health Protection and Development

Revision History

Date	Changes Made	Version
February 2025	New Scheme Created	V1

1. Introduction

Mind, Body, Business (MBB) is a project originally funded to the value of £6000 per year by the Public Health Agency (PHA), and is now funded by Council budget to the same extent. The purpose of the project is to encourage businesses in Ards and North Down to prioritise employee health and wellbeing. This is in recognition of the fact that a healthy workforce contributes greatly to the success and economic well-being of the business and hence the local community.

The allocation of grant funding is one part of MBB and is intended to compliment the work undertaken by the project i.e. encouraging businesses for put employee health and wellbeing prominently on their business agenda.

Ards and North Down Borough Council currently makes budget provision for the allocation of 'one off' in year funding to business groups who are signed up to the MBB project. The purpose of this document is to set out the guidelines and criteria for Mind, Body, Business (MBB) funding applications and how the funding should be utilised.

In April of each year, an email will be sent to all businesses currently signed up to the MBB scheme, as well as advertised in the monthly business ezine circulated by Economic Development to encourage new sign ups.

Total funding availability will be subject to budget approval on an annual basis but with a maximum of £250 per business in any funding tranche.

The scheme is applied in line with Ards and North Down Borough Council's Grants Policy.

Grant Timescales

Scheme Open / Advertisement	April
Closing date for 1 st grant submissions	End May
Date of Assessment 1 st round	June
1 st round Award and regret letters issued	June
Letter of acceptance received	June
2 nd round advert if low uptake	June
2 nd round closing date	End July
2 nd round Assessment	August
2 nd round Award and regret letters	August
2 nd round letter of acceptance	August
Completion of 1 st round period	September
Claim & Evaluation form to be submitted 1 st grant period	By end of September
Completion of 2 nd round period	December
Claim & Evaluation form to be submitted 2 nd round period	December
Close of Scheme	January

2. Guidelines

Once submitted, applications will be assessed using set criteria and will be brought to Council for information purposes as per the Grants Policy.

The maximum limit for funding is £250 per tranche per individual business premises. In the event of the grant scheme being oversubscribed, priority will be given to businesses who have never availed of the grant before and this will be stipulated in the application criteria. In the event of the grant scheme being undersubscribed, a second round of grants may be made available to encourage uptake. Any funding not utilised by the close of the scheme in January (underspends, non-delivery, unclaimed, etc) shall remain in the main MBB budget to be used to support the other activities of the project.

For appeals process, please refer to the Council Grants Policy.

[Grants Policy v2.0 FINAL.pdf](#)

3. Criteria for Funding

Mind Body Business is offering a small grant of financial support, up to £250 (per business and excluding VAT), to businesses based in Ards and North Down Borough who are interested in providing a workplace health and wellbeing initiative for their employees.

A small grant of financial support will be provided to businesses who propose to run a health and wellbeing initiative that meets the 'Take 5 Approach to Wellbeing', outlined below:

Most of us know when we are mentally and physically well, but sometimes we need a little extra support to keep well.

There are five simple steps to help maintain and improve your wellbeing. Try to build these into your daily life – think of them as your 'five a day' for wellbeing.



Connect

Connect with the people around you: family, friends, colleagues and neighbours at home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these relationships as the cornerstones of your life and spend time developing them. Building these connections will support and enrich you every day.



Be active

Go for a walk or run, cycle, play a game, garden or dance. Exercising makes you feel good. Most importantly, discover a physical activity that you enjoy; one that suits your level of mobility and fitness.



Take notice

Stop, pause, or take a moment to look around you. What can you see, feel, smell or even taste? Look for beautiful, new, unusual or extraordinary things in your everyday life and think about how that makes you feel.



Keep learning

Don't be afraid to try something new, rediscover an old hobby or sign up for a course. Take on a different responsibility, fix a bike, learn to play an instrument or how to cook your favourite food. Set a challenge you will enjoy. Learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun to do.



Give

Do something nice for a friend or stranger, thank someone, smile, volunteer your time or consider joining a community group. Look out as well as in. Seeing yourself and your happiness linked to the wider community can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around you.

Criteria for funding ctd

- a) Business located in Ards and North Down Borough Council area,
- b) Apply **one** application per individual business by the owner/manager.
- c) Applications can include more than one activity provided the total cost does not exceed £250
- d) Initiatives should be easily delivered / continued by the individual or employer (at their own expense) in the future should the initiative be successful.
- e) Applicants shall agree to source a local provider from the Ards and North Down Borough Council area where possible; regional charitable providers can also be used.
- f) Businesses shall be responsible for ensuring that their own liability insurance is in place to cover the remit of the funded scheme.
- g) Applicants shall agree that no activities can commence until they have received written confirmation that their grant has been approved up to the specified amount
- h) Applicants shall agree to complete a Subsidy Control Declaration, an evaluation form and submit detailed receipts, invoice for payment on completion of the initiative and NO LATER THAN 30th September (round 1) or 13th December (round 2).
- i) Evaluation form must be returned once the initiative is complete with evidence of activity, e.g. photographs, sign-in sheets, staff feedback on activity, before payment can be processed.

Grants will only be offered to businesses who meet the eligibility criteria. Priority will be given to new applicants.

Period of Grant Assistance

Grant assistance is available from the period June – end September (1st tranche) and August – 15th December (2nd tranche)

Grant Limit

The maximum grant assistance which can be applied is £250.00 *

*For businesses that are VAT registered, we will pay up to £250 excluding VAT, on approved activities.

*For small businesses that are not VAT registered, we will pay up to a maximum of £250 including VAT on approved activities.

5. What the Council will not fund

The following will not be considered for funding:

- Membership fees,
- Beauty treatments,
- Team building events,
- Taxi/transport costs
- Projects, events, activities undertaken, or equipment purchased outside the specified award period
- Projects, events, and activities where the primary benefit is outside the Borough
- Events, projects or activities which conflict with any Council run project, event or activity
- Projects, events, activities not compliant with the Council's aims and objectives
- Or other costs not associated with this grant and deemed ineligible by the Council.

6. Evaluation of Application

Application assessment process

- Applications will be acknowledged in writing;
- Fully completed and signed applications received by the closing date and time will be assessed against the criteria detailed in the application pack by an assessment panel;
- Assessment panels will apply a minimum pass mark of 80%; marking criteria will be detailed in the award criteria (below) and supporting guidance notes; details of a situation where the amount of grant funding exceeds the available grant budget will be outlined in the grant criteria and supporting guidance notes; and
- All applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome of the assessment process.

Award Criteria

Applicants must meet all the eligibility criteria, the following criteria will be use to score applications;

Award Criteria		Weighting
1:	Initiative relating to the Take 5 Approach to Wellbeing	40%
2:	Impact and benefit of initiative on employer and employees	40%
3:	Cost breakdown	20%
	Total	100%

Applications must clearly demonstrate proposed initiatives relating to responses to each of the areas in the Take 5 Approach to Wellbeing: Connect, Keeping Learning, Be Active, Take Notice and Give. The applications must also provide clear details of how the initiative will impact the business and the impact it will have on the business owner/manager and the employees.

A full cost breakdown on ALL items proposed to purchase under the grant scheme for the initiative must also be provided.

Responses for each criterion will be given a score out of five using the scoring matrix below:

Measure	Score
Excellent response that meets the requirements. Indicates an excellent response with detailed supporting evidence and no weaknesses.	5
A good response that meets the requirements with good supporting evidence and few weaknesses	4
Meets Requirements. The response generally meets the requirements but lacks sufficient detail to warrant a higher mark.	3
A response with reservations. Lacks convincing detail to demonstrate that the proposed response will meet the requirements.	2
An unacceptable response with serious reservations. Very limited detail to demonstrate that the proposed response will meet the requirements.	1
The Tenderer failed to address the question.	0

Grant retention: The grant will not be awarded until the applicant has submitted all financial claims, evidence and monitoring information.

Monitoring and Evaluation: The Council is required to monitor the progress of all projects, events and activities supported through grant aid. To support this, this grant scheme requests two photographs of the activities funded in addition to receipts during claims process.

Marketing: Successful applicants will be encouraged to contribute to future publicity/provide case studies for the Mind, Body, Business project.

7. Issuing of Grant Advances

Grants will be paid retrospectively in all cases in order that the necessary proof of activity and required monitoring information can be assured.

In exceptional circumstances, where the business specifically requests advanced assistance, the grant payment may be made in advance directly to the service provider.

8. Additional Support for Applicants

Council officers will provide support for applicants via detailed guidance notes produced to advise potential applicants on the purpose of the grant and the application process. They will also be available for individual telephone support if necessary.

The scheme has been screened by the Council's Equality Working Group. No negative impacts were identified and the scheme was screened out for EQIA.

ITEM 6

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development
Date of Report	06 February 2025
File Reference	CW61
Legislation	Food Safety (Northern Ireland) Order 1991
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Public Analyst Services
Attachments	

Public Analyst Appointment

The Council had previously collaborated with Belfast City Council in setting up and using a contract for the provision of Public Analyst Services. The existing contract is due to expire on 31 March 2025.

A new collaborative tendering exercise for the provision of Public Analyst Services was recently undertaken by Antrim & Newtownabbey Council, with Ards and North Down Borough Council named as a user of the contract along with the other ten Northern Ireland Councils.

The prices achieved had proved to be very competitive and demonstrated that collaboration, where it makes sound business sense, enhanced buying power and achieved improved value for money savings.

Eurofins Food Testing Ireland Ltd (Public Analysts) Public Analyst Scientific Services Ltd was awarded the contract for a two-year period, commencing 1 April 2025, with the option to extend for up to a further 24 months.

Not Applicable

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the continued use of the collaborative contract and enters into agreement with Eurofins Food Testing Ireland Ltd (Public Analysts), Public Analyst Scientific Services Ltd.

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	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	24 February 2025
File Reference	CDV 26
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	VE day 2025 - Additional Dates
Attachments	None

Council agreed in February 2025 to offer grants for VE Day events taking place from 8 May - 12 May 2025, for constituted organisations and community groups.

During the Council grants information sessions held on 20 February 2025, a number of those attending asked if the VE day commemorations could be held between Monday 5 May to 12 May 2025 to allow them to be held on the Bank Holiday, if required.

The application process for the VE Grants funding is due to be launched on 10 March 2025 in order for successful applicants to receive letters of offer and enable groups to plan for events.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council grants approval for VE day events to be held from Saturday 3 May to 7 May 2025 in addition to dates already approved, so that

Not Applicable

communities can avail of the May Bank Holiday weekend for their event if they wish, and for this to be included in the grant application pack.

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	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	31 January 2025
File Reference	HER 01/R1 03/25
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Heritage Grants Report
Attachments	

Background

The 2025/2026 Heritage Grants opened in November 2024 and closed at 12pm, on 21 January 2025. Seven applications were received. The grants were advertised under the previous grants policy and therefore require approval. The Heritage grant scheme will be tabled at a future meeting to enable the 2026/2027 grants to be awarded under the updated grants policy.

Three members of the Arts and Heritage Panel assessed the applications along with the Heritage Development Officer.

The grants were advertised in the local press, social media and on the Councils web site.

There is a total of £5,000 available with a maximum of £500 per application awarded. As shown in the accompanying Scoring Matrix, each application is scored out of 100. Recommendation for award of grant is based on a minimum score of 60.

Not Applicable

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Application Assessment Scoring

GRANT REF:	ORGANISATION	PROJECT TITLE	SCORE	AWARDED
HER-PG001/2526	Portaferry & Strangford Trust	Booklets - A Wee Bit of Maritime History	90	£500.00
HER-PG002/2526	Kilcooley Women's Centre	Research & Exhibition - Her Story	58	0.00
HER-PG003/2526	Discover Groomsport	Leaflets – Little Bits of History of Groomsport	78	£500.00
HER-PG004/2526	Ards Historical Society	Booklet – Newtownards the Town I Know so Well by Ivan Coffee	83	£500.00
HER-PG005/2526	Upper Ards Historical Society	Journal - The 2025 Journal of the Upper Ards Historical Society	86	£500.00
HER-PG006/2526	Donaghadee Community Development Association	VE-Day History Panels and Floral Display - Donaghadee: Least We Forget	75	£500.00
HER-PG007/2526	Donaghadee Heritage Preservation Company	Booklets - The Story of the Sir Samuel Kelly: A Children's Guide to Donaghadee Lifeboat	75	£500.00
		Total awarded		3,000.00

The total amount recommended for award is £5,000 leaving £2,000 available for a further application process to be undertaken during 2025/2026. The unsuccessful applicant above will be provided with feedback on their application and encouraged to apply for Round 2.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council award grants as outlined in the table above.

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	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	24 February 2025
File Reference	GREL433
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Good Relations Strategy (2025-2028) and Action Plan (2025-2026)
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Ards and North Down Borough Council Good Relations Strategy (2025-2028) Appendix 2 - Good Relations Action Plan (2025-2026)

The Council's current Good Relations Strategy and annual Action Plan is due to end on 31st March 2025 and in order to access funding from The Executive Office a new three-year Strategy and Annual Action Plan had to be submitted by 31st January 2025. The attached Draft Strategy and Draft Action Plan has been submitted, subject to Council approval.

Third Sector Connect were appointed in October 2024 to carry out the necessary consultation to inform the development of the Strategy and Action Plan in tandem with the PCSP Strategy and Action Plan. A comprehensive consultation process has been undertaken as follows:

Not Applicable

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Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation

Engagement with stakeholders to ensure the strategy was rooted in the needs and priorities of the community. This began with a series of face-to-face consultations held across the Borough, with at least one event in each District Electoral Area (DEA). These consultations provided residents, council staff, and local stakeholders with a platform to discuss their specific community safety concerns and suggest improvements. By hosting at least one event in each DEA, it ensured representation across the Borough, allowing PCSP to capture diverse local insights and priorities.

DATE	VENUE
4/11/24	Hamilton Hub Community Centre
4/11/24	Donaghadee Community Centre
5/11/24	Redburn Community Centre
6/11/24	Portavogie Community Centre
7/11/24	Comber Community Centre
8/11/24	Ballygowan Village Hall
11/11/24	Ards Arena
12/11/24	Kilcooley Women's Centre, Bangor
12/11/24	St Patrick's Community Centre, Portaferry

Alongside the face-to-face sessions, a survey was designed and distributed to widen the reach of the consultation process. This survey was designed to gather perspectives from a broad audience, including the public, council staff, elected members, PCSP members, and other stakeholders. It was distributed via social media and to those on the community database. The survey data helped identify recurring themes and unique community safety challenges, while also providing a quantitative measure of community feeling. Several 1 to 1 meetings were also held via Microsoft Teams with key stakeholders. These individual sessions provided an opportunity for detailed discussions on specific topics and allowed stakeholders to share perspectives in a confidential setting.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the attached Good Relations Strategy 2025 -2028 and Action Plan 2025-2026.



**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council

Ards and North Down Borough Council Good Relations

Strategic Plan 2025-2028



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Executive Summary

The Ards and North Down Borough Council Good Relations Strategy outlines a comprehensive plan to promote inclusivity, cohesion, and positive community engagement across the Borough. Developed through community consultations including focus groups, one to one meetings and survey responses, the strategy identifies key challenges and prioritises action areas in alignment with the "Together: Building a United Community" (T:BUC) framework.



Ask DM for caption Shared Education Programme, Somme

The strategy focuses on four key themes: Our Shared Community, Our Safe Community, Our Children and Young People, and Our Cultural Expression. Community feedback highlighted the need for shared spaces, improved youth engagement, community safety, and greater support for inclusive cultural expression. Stakeholders also emphasised the importance of tackling socio-economic disparities, addressing paramilitary influence, and creating more opportunities for inter-community dialogue.

The programmes included in the one-year action plan aim to promote the use of shared spaces, provide educational programmes for young people, and develop targeted cultural expression programmes. It also prioritises support for inclusive cultural events and education on shared history. By addressing entrenched divisions and leveraging opportunities for collaboration, the strategy aims to build a thriving and peaceful Borough. The action plan will be reviewed annually and developed based on community needs

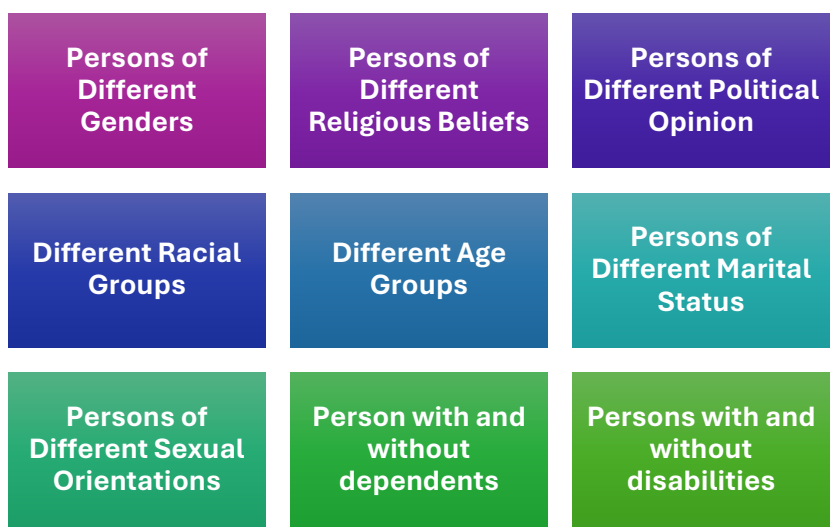
The strategy will be delivered in partnership with local authorities, community organisations, and other stakeholders to ensure its relevance and sustainability. By fostering cross-community engagement, supporting youth development, and promoting cultural inclusion, the Ards and North Down Borough Council aims to create a safer, shared, and more inclusive community for all residents.

Introduction and Background

Good Relations in Northern Ireland

Good Relations in Northern Ireland is a fundamental aspect of community development, focusing on fostering respect, understanding, and collaboration among individuals and groups from diverse religious, political, and cultural backgrounds. It seeks to address the divisions and challenges arising from Northern Ireland’s history of conflict and sectarianism, building a foundation for a more inclusive and cohesive society. Good Relations emphasises reconciliation and the creation of a shared future, where communities can thrive together in mutual respect and understanding.

A key framework behind Good Relations in Northern Ireland is Section 75 (S75) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, which places a legal obligation on public authorities to promote equality of opportunity and good relations. S75 identifies nine categories of individuals protected under equality legislation:



The Act not only mandates equality but also explicitly requires public bodies to actively promote Good Relations between individuals of differing religious beliefs, political opinions, and racial groups. This legal framework ensures that Good Relations is an integral consideration in policymaking and service delivery across Northern Ireland.

The *Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC)* strategy, introduced in 2013 by the Northern Ireland Executive, builds on the principles of S75 and provides a practical framework for advancing Good Relations. T:BUC outlines a vision of "a united community, based on equality of opportunity, the desirability of good relations, and reconciliation." It sets out clear priorities to tackle sectarianism, racism, and inequality while fostering shared spaces, promoting meaningful cross-community engagement, and addressing barriers to integration.

T:BUC prioritises initiatives across four key areas:



Good Relations in Northern Ireland also includes practical efforts to address barriers to integration, such as supporting shared housing and education. These initiatives reflect the T:BUC vision of a more inclusive society, where individuals can live, learn, and thrive together regardless of their background. At the same time, the strategy acknowledges and celebrates cultural diversity, encouraging people to express their identity in ways that foster mutual respect and understanding.

In summary, Good Relations in Northern Ireland is about building bridges between communities, addressing historical divisions, and embedding equality and respect in all areas of society. It is supported by the legal framework of Section 75, which ensures equality and the active promotion of Good Relations, and by the strategic guidance of T:BUC, which provides a roadmap for creating a more united and inclusive society. Together, these frameworks ensure that Good Relations is not just an aspiration but a practical and achievable goal for Northern Ireland.

Ards and North Down Borough Council- Good Relations

Ards and North Down Borough Council plays a key role in developing Good Relations across the Borough. The Borough is home to a diverse population, with distinct urban, rural, and coastal communities, each contributing to the area’s rich cultural heritage. While it has its unique strengths, the Borough also faces challenges linked to Northern Ireland’s wider societal issues, such as managing contested spaces, addressing inter-community tensions, and promoting greater inclusion for minority groups.



Figure 1: Living History programme, Dublin

The Council’s Good Relations programme operates as part of the Community and Culture department, working in partnership with statutory bodies, community and voluntary organisations and residents. The Community and Culture department is one of four departments which sit under the Council’s Community & Wellbeing Directorate. It aims to create opportunities for individuals from different backgrounds to come together, build trust, and address shared challenges. These initiatives are delivered under the principles of T:BUC and are aligned with the wider vision of fostering a more cohesive, inclusive, and united community.

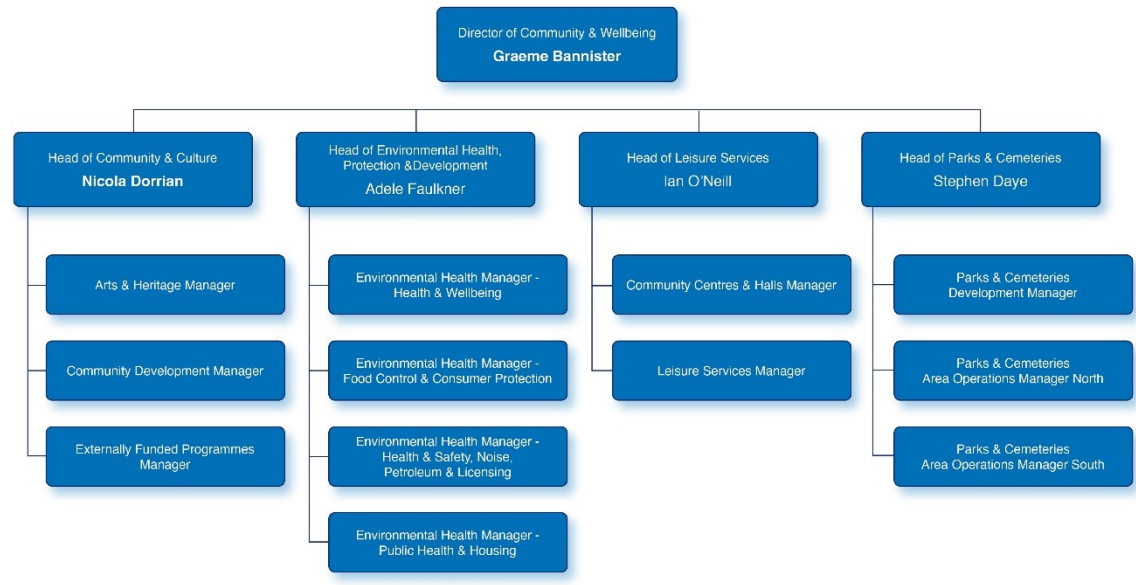


Figure 2: Organisational Chart of ANDBC Community & Wellbeing Directorate

Ards and North Down Borough Council has a strong track record of delivering successful Good Relations programmes, creating opportunities for cross-community engagement, cultural understanding, and respectful collaboration.



Figure 3: Game of 3 Halves, Holywood

Shared Voices Programme (2023/2024)

Eleven primary and post-primary schools participated in the Shared Voices programme, including Model Primary, Greyabbey Primary, and Bangor Grammar, among others. The programme engaged 125 children in Council-led summer schemes across Portavogie, West Winds, Ballygowan, Donaghadee, and Bangor. Evaluations showed a measurable increase in young people's understanding of different religions, cultures, and backgrounds, fostering greater respect and empathy. Participants provided overwhelmingly positive feedback:

*"It was nice talking to different people with different stories."
"The programme made me more confident about other people from different backgrounds. It was really fun."*

Community Cup

The Community Cup was a six-week programme delivered at Londonderry Park, Newtownards, in partnership with ANDBC Football Development Officers. Sixteen sports clubs from across the Borough participated, representing areas like Comber, Ards, Millisle, and Belfast. Over 200 children and young people from diverse genders and backgrounds were involved, with a focus on respect, inclusion, and positive attitudes. Handouts were provided to parents and supporters, encouraging respect for all participants regardless of team or background. The project successfully promoted grassroots football as a tool for fostering inclusion and mutual respect.

Holocaust Memorial Event (2024)

The Council hosted a poignant Holocaust Memorial Day event at Bangor City Hall, attended by over 90 participants. Dr Alfred Garwood, a Holocaust survivor, shared his powerful story, while Millisle Primary School students recited poems reflecting on the connection between Millisle and Holocaust history. The event highlighted the importance of shared history in fostering understanding and compassion, closing with a moving performance from Andrew McBride. Attendees praised the event for creating an atmosphere of reflection, education, and unity.

These programmes demonstrate the Council's commitment to delivering impactful initiatives that engage individuals of all ages, promote understanding of different cultures, and support inclusive community relationships.



Figure 4: Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration, Bangor

Contextual Analysis of Ards and North Down Council (AND)

Ards and North Down Borough Council – Good Relations Statistics

The population of the Ards and North Down Council area on Census Day in 2021 was 163,659, residing across 70,445 households.

The resident population was 51% female and 49% male, with an age demographic presented as follows:

Age Bracket	Ards and North Down	Northern Ireland
0 – 14	17%	19%
15 – 39	27%	31%
40 – 64	34%	32%
65+	22%	17%

Overall, the AND area has a more elderly population than the Northern Ireland national average.

Diversity and Inclusion (Ethnicity, country of birth, and religion)

On Census Day in 2021, the resident population of the Ards and North Down Council Area was composed 87% of people who were born in Northern Ireland, with a further 8% born elsewhere in the UK or Republic of Ireland. 5% were born in other countries. The resident population of AND was 98% from a white ethnic group. In terms of religious background, 68% of citizens residing in Ards and North Down identified as being from a Protestant background, with 14% from a Catholic background. 17% did not identify with any particular religious background, with just 1% associating with another, non-Christian faith.

Key Economic Stats

(Source: ONS, 2022 unless otherwise stated)

- Economic Inactivity in the Ards and North Down Borough Council area is 25.2%, lower than the Northern Ireland rate of 26.3%

- The local employment rate is 72.8%, higher than the Northern Ireland rate of 71.9%
- Median Gross Annual Pay in the AND Area was £23,377, lower than the Northern Ireland median of £28,825
- Gross Value Added per hour worked was £36.50
- The Council area has 4,645 active businesses, including 400 new businesses and 450 business deaths in 2022.
- As of July 2024, the claimant count in Ards and North Down is 2.9% of the working age population. The Northern Ireland rate is 3.2% of the working age population.

In 2023, Ards and North Down had an annual average claimant count of 2,662. This equates to 2.7% of the borough's working age population, which is lower than the Northern Ireland average of 3.1%.

Health & Wellbeing

- 81.1% of the AND working age population enjoy 'Very good or good health', higher than the NI average of 80.7%.
- 20.2% of the AND population stated their day-to-day activities were 'limited' by a long-term health problem or disability, slightly lower than the NI average of 20.7%.
- 33.6% of the AND population stated they had at least one long-term health condition, higher than the NI average of 32.1%.

Skills & Qualifications

The population of AND boasts a higher skills profile than the NI average rates for each recognised level of attainment. In addition, AND has a lower rate of the working age population with no qualifications (9.2%) than the NI average (13.6%). This rate has fluctuated in AND over the past 15 years but is markedly lower than the high of 15.8% recorded in 2013.

Population of Each DEA

For the purposes of contextualising crime statistics, the respective populations for each District Electoral Area in the ANDBC Council area have been presented below:

DEA	Population	% of Total Population
Newtownards	29,395	18.0%
Bangor Central	26,637	16.3%
Ards Peninsula	24,964	15.3%
Bangor East and Donaghadee	22,850	14.0%
Hollywood and Clondeboye	20,809	12.7%
Bangor West	19,517	11.9%
Comber	19,487	11.9%

The Newtownards area records the largest population of all seven DEAs in the ANDBC area, with almost 30,000 residents. This is almost 10,000 residents greater than the two smallest DEAs – Bangor West and Comber, which have 19,517 and 19,487 populations respectively.

SUMMARY OF DEPRIVATION AND DISADVANTAGE

An assessment of deprivation and disadvantage was carried out by NISRA in 2017, which assessed the relative areas of deprivation within communities across multiple measures. This analysis brought to the fore several considerations pertaining to ANDBC communities, namely:

- The Scrabo 2 area of Newtownards, which falls within the 10% most deprived communities in Northern Ireland overall, but most notably in terms of income, employment, and skills.
- The Glen 1, Central, Conlig 3, Harbour 1, Donaghadee South 1, and Portaferry 2 Super Output Areas all fall within the 25% most deprived areas in Northern Ireland overall.

INCOME DEPRIVATION

Income deprivation takes account of a single indicator, which is the proportion of the population living in households with an equivalised income below 60% of the NI median. In total, 13 Super Output Areas in AND are ranked within the 25% most deprived areas in NI in relation to this measure, with Central and Glen 2 both falling within the 10% most deprived, and Scrabo 1 within the 5% most deprived.

EMPLOYMENT DEPRIVATION

Employment deprivation is used to define the proportion of the population who are involuntarily excluded from the labour market. In total, ten Super Output Areas in AND fall within the 25% most deprived areas in NI in relation to this measure. These neighbourhoods are spread across the Borough, in major towns such as Newtownards, Bangor, and Donaghadee, but also in smaller towns and villages such as Ballywalter, Portaferry, Conlig, and Portavogie.

HEALTH & DISABILITY DEPRIVATION

Health and disability deprivation considers a range of measures for each Super Output Area, including preventable death ratios, ratios of people registered as having cancer, ratios of people with a long-term health problem or disability, and ratios of people with multiple prescriptions (as well as others). The Conlig 3 Super Output Area ranked 86th out of 890 in this measure, placing it amongst the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in NI. A further six Super Output Areas in Newtownards, Comber, and Portaferry also ranked amongst the 25% most deprived in relation to this measure.

EDUCATION & SKILLS DEPRIVATION

The education and skills deprivation measure takes into consideration a combination of indicators such as absentee rates, proportion of young people not in education, training, or employment (NEET), and the proportion of adults with no qualifications or a low level of educational attainment.

Education and skills deprivation is a concern in 12 of the Council area's 86 statistical districts, all of which fall within NI's 25% most deprived areas in relation to this measure. Of particular concern is the Glen 1 and Scrabo 2 Super Output Areas in Newtownards, and the Comber North 1 Super Output Area in Comber, which all fall amongst the region's 10% most deprived areas in relation to this measure.

Hate Crimes

The following analysis presents statistics related to crime incidents with either a racist or sectarian motivation in the Ards and North Down Borough Council area between 2019/20 and 2023/24. A combined total of 253 incidents were recorded in the area during this period.

Crimes with a Racist Motivation:

The table below depicts all crimes which have been recorded in the ANDBC area with a racist motivation:

DEA	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Ards Peninsula	2	1	1	7	1
Bangor Central	4	8	14	12	9
Bangor East And Donaghadee	3	0	1	4	1
Bangor West	6	1	1	4	2
Comber	1	1	1	0	3
Hollywood And Clondeboye	4	0	0	7	6
Newtownards	6	6	12	7	7
Grand Total	26	17	30	41	29

Source: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, Motivation for Crime by DEA

A total of 143 incidents of a racist nature were recorded in the ANDBC area between 2019/20 and 2023/24. The overall trend across the area is that crimes of a racist motivation have declined over one year, but are still higher than levels experienced at the turn of the decade. In each year (with the exception of 2019/20), the Bangor Central DEA emerges as the area with the highest incidents of race-related crime, with

the Newtownards DEA recording the second-highest incidents across the 5-year period.

Crimes with a Sectarian Motivation:

DEA	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Ards Peninsula	2	2	1	7	5
Bangor Central	3	4	7	5	2
Bangor East And Donaghadee	0	0	3	2	0
Bangor West	0	7	3	6	4
Comber	4	0	3	0	2
Hollywood And Clondeboye	1	0	4	4	1
Newtownards	8	2	5	7	6
Grand Total	18	15	26	31	20

Source: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, Motivation for Crime by DEA

With 110 recorded incidents between 2019/20 and 2023/24, crimes of a sectarian nature in the ANDBC area have been lower than incidents motivated by racism. Whilst overall, a similar trend emerges in that levels of recorded crime are lower in 2023/24 when compared to 2022/23, but are higher than 2019/20 levels.

The Newtownards DEA emerged as the area with the highest numbers of recorded incidents of a sectarian motivation over this 5-year period, with the Bangor Central DEA and Peninsula DEA also experiencing higher occurrences of crime of this nature compared to the Comber, Bangor West, Bangor East and Donaghadee and Hollywood and Clondeboye areas.

Northern Ireland Life and Times Data

The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILT) records the attitudes, values and beliefs of adults to a wide range of social policy issues. This annual survey has been running since 1998.

A summary of the most recent NILT Survey, using three year rolling average results from 2021-23, highlights a number of key findings within the responses provided by the population of the Ards and North Down Borough Council area¹. These key findings are noted below:

Relations between Protestants and Catholics compared to 5 Years Ago

When asked to comment regarding relations between Protestants and Catholics compared to five years ago, sentiments of citizens in the ANDBC area remained largely unchanged between 2019-21 and 2021-23. Whilst the same percentage (35.2%) believed that relations had improved, a higher percentage in 2021-23 (13.3%) compared to 2019 (9.7%) believed that relations had become worse. The prevailing sentiment (46.6% of responses in 2023) however was that relations over the past five years were 'About the same'.

The outlook within the ANDBC area is slightly more pessimistic than the Northern Ireland averages for this measure – ANDBC ranked 2.6 percentage points lower than the national average in terms of those who stated relations were better compared to five years ago, and 1.1 percentage points higher than the NI rate in terms of those who believed relations had deteriorated. This was also true in 2019-21, however the gap between ANDBC and NI has not widened during this time.

Relations between Protestants and Catholics in 5 years' time

A similar trend was uncovered during analysis of perceptions of relations between Protestants and Catholics in 5 years' time. 29.0% of respondents in the ANDBC area believed that relations would improve, compared to 32.4% across Northern Ireland overall.

Shared Spaces

Several questions in the NILT survey asked respondents about their perceptions of a wide range of public amenities, including:

- Shops and Shopping Centres;
- GP Surgeries;
- Leisure Centres;
- Parks; and
- Libraries

A consistent trend across responses received in relation to all of these amenities was that public amenities and spaces in the ANDBC area were shared and open to Protestants and Catholics, with at least 87.5% of respondents responding 'Yes, probably' or 'Yes, definitely' when asked. These sentiments do not represent a marked change from attitudes displayed during the 2019 NILT survey.

¹ NILT Survey data for each LGD is presented as a group of the most recent three years. 2023 data therefore also incorporates survey results from 2022 and 2021.

One sizeable swing in opinion however was when NILT Survey respondents were asked if they believed that Protestants and Catholics tended to go to different shops or avail of separate services. 34.9% of respondents in 2021-2023 believed that this happened 'Not at all.' This figure was 7.8 percentage points lower than the Northern Ireland national response for this question and 16.5 percentage points lower than the percentage recorded to the same question in 2019, highlighting an increased perception of segregation.

Integrated Education and Housing

The survey results displayed a strong preference for mixed housing and education, with 77.7% of respondents stating that they would prefer to send their children to a mixed-religion school, and 79.1% of respondents highlighting that they would prefer to live in a 'mixed-religion neighbourhood.' The results witnessed for ANDBC to these questions were 4.3 and 9.6 percentage points higher than the respective Northern Ireland averages.

Attitudes Towards Cultural Symbolism

Several NILT questions alluded to the attitudes of those living in the ANDBC area in relation to murals, kerb paintings and flags, which brought to the fore several key findings:

- Overall, there is increasing discontent with murals, kerb paintings and flags – levels of intimidation and annoyance were higher for both republican and loyalist symbols in 2021-23 than in 2019-21.
- The ANDBC area recorded higher levels of intimidation and annoyance with loyalist symbols than with republican symbols.
- Overall, a greater percentage of survey respondents from the ANDBC area stated that they were personally annoyed by murals, kerb paintings and flags as opposed to being intimidated by them.

Sense of Belonging

There was a high sense of belonging to Northern Ireland amongst the ANDBC survey respondents, with 83.6% of respondents stating that they 'Definitely' or 'Probably' felt a sense of belonging to Northern Ireland. This was higher than the Northern Ireland average of 79.2%, but lower than the levels of 87.2% recorded in ANDBC in 2019-2021.

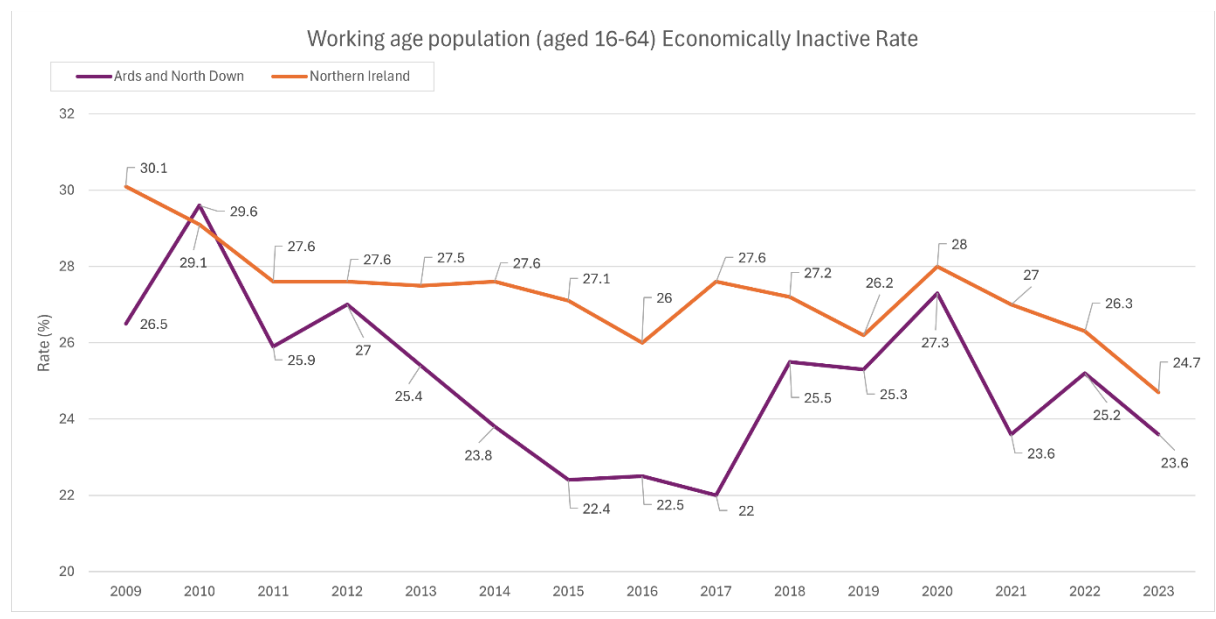
81.4% of survey respondents from the ANDBC area stated that they had a sense of belonging to their neighbourhood – a decrease of 3.5 percentage points since 2019-2021.

There were mostly positive sentiments expressed in relation to respect for cultural identity. 51.4% of respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that their own cultural

identities were respected, declining from 54.2% in 2019-21. A further 27.5% stated that they 'didn't agree or disagree' with the statement.

Economic Statistics

Economically Inactive Rate



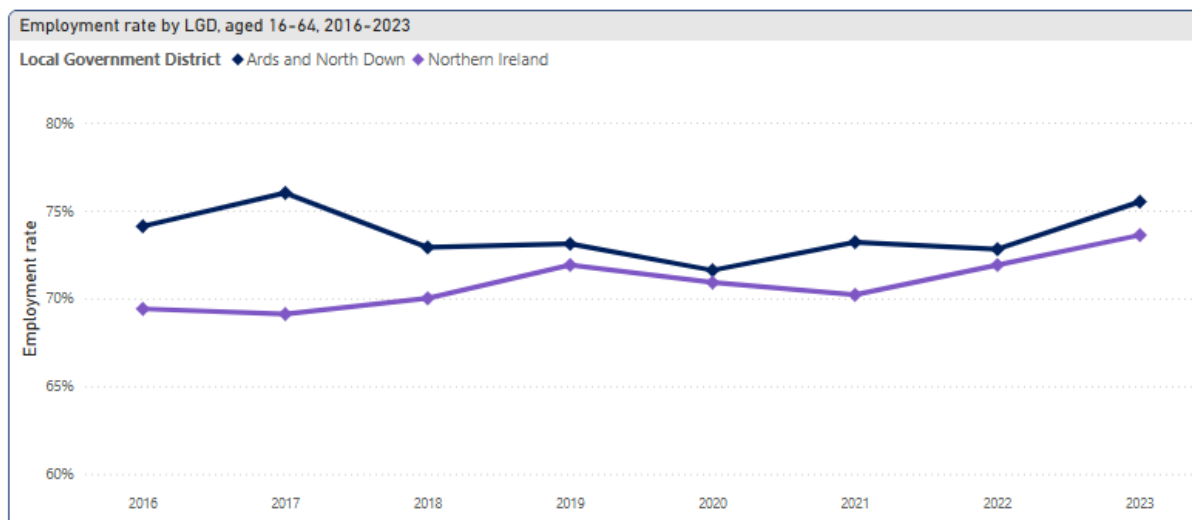
(Source: Labour Force Survey, NISRA)

The most recently available Labour Force Survey data highlights that the economically inactive rate within the Ards and North Down population fell back to its 2021 level of 23.6% in 2023, continuing to be lower than the Northern Ireland rate of 24.7%.

These figures represent an improvement in the economically inactive rate compared to 2022 levels, when the rate for NI population aged between 16 and 64 was 26.3%, with AND recording a slightly lower rate of 25.2%.

Unemployment

The employment rate for AND rose in 2023 to 75.5% from its 2022 level of 72.8% and is 1.5 percentage points higher than the Northern Ireland rate of 73.6%. Unemployment in the ANDBC area fell from 2.7% in 2022 to 1.1% in 2023.



(Source: Labour Force Survey, NISRA)

Employment Rate per Age Category

	16-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Total
AND Employment Rate	60.5%	92.6%	88.0%	66.3%	11.4%	75.5%
NI Employment Rate	55.8%	83.4%	84.6%	66.0%	12.0%	73.6%
Variance (+/-)	+4.7%	+9.2%	+3.4%	+0.3%	-0.6%	+2.2%

The ANDBC employment rate outperforms the Northern Ireland average in nearly every age group. Most notably, the employment rate amongst 25-34 year olds is 9.2 percentage points higher than the national rate. The sole age category where the ANDBC Council area falls behind is in the '65+' category, where the local average is 0.6 percentage points below the NI rate.

Economic Statistics per Ethnic Group

Analysis of economic statistics, broken down by ethnic groups residing within the ANDBC area, shows that overall, those belonging to ethnic minority groups who are

of working age have higher levels of economic inactivity and unemployment compared to those of a White ethnic background.

	Total Population 16 - 64	Economically Inactive %	% Unemployed
White	95345	25.7%	3.3%
Black	327	17.7%	8.9%
Asian	1315	29.6%	4.4%
Mixed	559	30.9%	5.9%
Other	222	31.1%	5.9%
Total	97768	25.8%	3.3%

It should be noted that the above data has been drawn from Census 2021 data, and not Labour Market sources used to calculate 2024 rates of economic inactivity and unemployment in the ANDBC area.

Conclusions

There are a number of key conclusions which can be drawn from this statistical summary of the population of the ANDBC area:

Economic Profile – the economic performance of the ANDBC area is mixed when compared to economic indicators for Northern Ireland as a whole. Economic Inactivity, Employment Claimant Rates are more favourable than the national average, Median Earnings fall short of the NI rate.

Health & Wellbeing – the physical wellbeing of the population of the ANDBC area is higher than the Northern Ireland average in terms of the proportion of the population enjoying ‘Very Good’ or ‘Good’ health, as well as the proportion of the population stating that their activities were limited by a long term health problem or disability. The percentage of citizens with at least one long term health problem was however slightly higher than the national average.

Skills & Qualifications - The population of AND boasts a higher skills profile than the NI average rates for each recognised level of attainment. In addition, AND has a lower rate of the working age population with no qualifications (9.2%) than the NI average (13.6%). This rate has fluctuated in AND over the past 15 years but is markedly lower than the high of 15.8% recorded in 2013.

Deprivation – The main neighbourhoods within the ANDBC area which experience the highest levels of socio-economic deprivation include the Scrabo 2 area of Newtownards, which falls within the 10% most deprived communities in Northern Ireland overall, as well as Glen 1, Central, Conlig 3, Harbour 1, Donaghadee South 1, and Portaferry 2 Super Output Areas, all of which fall within the 25% most deprived areas in Northern Ireland.

Hate Crimes – a combined total of 253 incidents were recorded in the area during this period, of which 143 were incidents of a racist nature and 110 incidents of a sectarian nature. There is an overall trend with each of these categories that of recorded crime that show that incidents are lower in 2023/24 when compared to 2022/23, but are higher than 2019/20 levels.

Perceptions and Attitudes – Although sentiments expressed were that relations in the ANDBC area has marginally declined in comparison to levels 3-5 years ago, strong sentiments were expressed in relation to a willingness for further integration of housing and education.

There is increasing discontent with murals, kerb paintings and flags – levels of intimidation and annoyance were higher for both republican and loyalist symbols in 2021-23 than in 2019-21. Moreover, the ‘sense of belonging’ amongst residents of the ANDBC area experienced a relative decline during the same statistical reporting period.

Good Relations in the Media

Important in the context of this Strategy and Action Plan are several notable events which have taken place in the Ards and North Down Borough Council area within the last 24 months which could have significant implications on the delivery of Good Relations activities and programmes. These include:

- Protests held at the Marine Court Hotel in Bangor, perceived to be anti-refugee in nature;
- Ongoing intra-loyalist tensions in Newtownards; and
- Arson attack on an Islamic Meeting House in Greenwell Street in Newtownards.

These are incidents which have taken place within communities in the Ards and North Down Council area, but this Plan has also been developed with a cognisance to recent protests and attacks on businesses which have taken place in Belfast in Summer 2024. These can safely be described as being anti-immigration in nature.

STRATEGY	AIMS/ OBJECTIVES OF STRATEGY	RELEVANCE TO GOOD RELATIONS
<p>Corporate Plan 2024-28</p>	<p>The Ards and North Down Borough Council Corporate Plan for 2024 – 2028 sets out the Council’s priorities in terms of providing civic leadership, promoting prosperity and delivering essential services to people who live, work and visit Ards and North Down. The 7 key outcomes which the Council have prioritised as being integral to creating a Sustainable Borough include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment. 2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets. 3. A thriving and sustainable economy. 4. A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors. 5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing. 6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy. 7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high-performing organisation. <p>Under each of these outcomes are various key strategic actions which it is anticipated will see these outcomes realised.</p>	<p>There are several of the outcomes contained within the Ards and North Down Borough Council Corporate Plan which are explicitly relevant to the Council’s Good Relations priorities.</p> <p>Specifically, Outcome 5 relates to ensuring that the Borough is safe, welcoming and inclusive and that its resident communities have the opportunity to flourish. This outcome prioritises Good Relations in that it sets out to create welcoming communities where all citizens can feel safe and comfortable.</p> <p>The ANDBC Good Relations Strategic Assessment and Action Plan also fits with Outcome 7, in that the programmes selected to be delivered are based on best practice and what ANDBC are confident will deliver the most beneficial outcomes for its citizens.</p>

'The Big Plan'**Ards and North
Down Borough
Council
Community Plan**

'The Big Plan' sets out Ards and North Down Borough Council's community planning priorities and objectives for the 15-year period from 2017 to 2032.

The Big Plan outlines how public service providers in Ards and North Down work together to maintain and improve the well-being of citizens in line with the five outcomes.

In 2022, following a review of the Big Plan, the Big Plan | Part II: Our Big Priorities was published. In 2024, the Big Plan and the Big Plan | Part II were further reviewed, and additional amendments made.

The key outcomes which ANDBC are seeking to deliver through the successful delivery of 'The Big Plan' following a further review in 2024 are set out as follows:

Outcome 1 - Opportunities to fulfil their lifelong potential

Outcome 2 - Being equipped to enjoy good health and wellbeing

Outcome 3 - Benefit from Communities where they are respected, are safe and feel secure

Outcome 4 - Benefit from A prosperous and inclusive economy

Outcome 5 - -Benefit from an environment that is valued, well-managed and accessible.

The cross-cutting themes which underpin 'The Big Plan' include:

The ANDBC 'Big Plan' contributes to bettering Good Relations across the Council area in a number of ways, in that all Outcomes are people focused and highlight the need for all residents to have equal access to opportunities and services.

This Community Strategy also seeks to safeguard the various cultural identities which make-up the population of the Borough, and ensure that everyone is confident in the expression of their own beliefs without fear of intimidation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have empowered, resilient individuals and communities; • To reduce inequalities; • To promote good relations and sustainability; and • To improve the accessibility of all public services. 	
<p>EA Local Assessment of Need: ANDBC-2023</p>	<p>Undertaken by the Education Authority, this Assessment of Need takes into consideration demand for Youth Services across the ANDBC area in order to inform the allocation of staff and resources in response to priority policy areas. The Local Assessment of Need specifically focuses, amongst other thematic areas, on Good Relations amongst young people in the Borough, as well as providing commentary on Inclusion, Diversity and Equality of Opportunity.</p> <p>The key findings of this assessment are presented below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey Findings highlighted that 79% of young people in the ANDBC area felt that they had opportunities to meet, learn and socialise with young people from other community backgrounds*. The key barriers to further engagement were down to a lack of interest or limited opportunities to do so. • When asked which types of activities could be provided to improve engagement and opportunities to meet with those from different cultural backgrounds, the most salient responses included outdoor learning activities; school based programmes and creative arts. • As a Council with a PUL majority, it was highlighted that there could be improved opportunities for those 	<p>The ANDBC Good Relations Strategic Assessment and Action Plan contains a number of key initiatives aimed at building bridges amongst young people within the ANDBC area and fostering an increased sense of respect, understanding and awareness of all identities and traditions which exist in the Borough.</p> <p>Programmes such as Shared Voices, Youth Council and No Hate Here will avail of various platforms and media in order to facilitate impactful engagement and lasting better relations amongst young people, and will be delivered in both formal and non-formal education settings.</p>

	<p>from a Protestant background to meet and develop friendships with those of a CNR background.</p> <p>Challenges to Good Relations were also highlighted, with strong paramilitarism and intra-community tensions around the cultural expressions associated with the 'Marching Season' in July cited as pertinent barriers.</p>	
<p>'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most'</p> <p>Northern Ireland Draft Programme for Government 2024 – 2027</p>	<p>The Northern Ireland Programme for Government 2024-2027 was published in September 2024, with a public consultation on the priorities contained within it concluding in November 2024.</p> <p>'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most' sets out a three-year agenda for the Northern Ireland Executive across the following cross-cutting priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy • Deliver More Affordable Childcare • Cut Health Waiting Times • Ending Violence Against Women and Girls • Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Education Needs • Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing • Safer Communities • Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment • Reform and Transformation of Public Services 	<p>The range of Good Relations Programmes to be delivered through this Action Plan for the benefit of the ANDBC population align with multiple key objectives of the Northern Ireland Draft Programme for Government.</p> <p>Specifically, the PfG aims to champion safer communities – this is a key priority of the ANDBC Good Relations Strategic Assessment and Action Plan, and will deliver a range of initiatives aimed at breaking down barriers between communities and fostering improved engagement and understanding for both young people and adults in the Borough.</p>

<p>'Together: Building a United Community' (T: BUC) Strategy</p> <p>The Executive Office</p>	<p>The T: BUC Strategy sees a society founded on principles of equality of opportunity, fostering positive relationships, and promoting reconciliation. It serves as a comprehensive roadmap for government action aimed at addressing the pressing issues of sectarianism, racism, and various forms of intolerance, while simultaneously working to bridge divisions, counter hate, and promote unity.</p> <p>With a focus on collaboration between the Government, community, and individuals, the T: BUC Strategy outlines 4 key priorities that serve as the cornerstones of progress:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Empowering Our Youth: The strategy recognises the critical role of children and young people in shaping our future. By investing in their education, providing opportunities for personal growth, and nurturing their potential, we strive to create an inclusive and harmonious society for the generations to come. 2. Fostering a Shared Community: Emphasising the strength in our diversity, the T: BUC Strategy seeks to build a cohesive society where individuals from various backgrounds can come together, share experiences, and appreciate each other's cultures and perspectives. 3. Cultivating a Safe Community: Ensuring the safety and security of every citizen is of paramount importance. The strategy aims to address the root causes of violence and hostility, promoting a safe environment where everyone can thrive without fear of discrimination or prejudice. 	<p>All four of the key pillars of Together Building a United Community are explicitly relevant to the ANDBC Good Relations Strategic Assessment and Action Plan.</p> <p>The Plan contains multiple programmes aimed at bringing together young people from across the Borough and engaging them in various activities to promote increased awareness and understanding of each other's backgrounds and traditions.</p> <p>The Plan also includes various events and programmes which will stand to generate increased understanding of the range of historical perspectives which exist within the local population through a range of focused talks, workshops and trips / excursions.</p> <p>Cultural expression will also be prioritised through a targeted programme, aimed at celebrating culture and key events in a way which is open and inclusive to all citizens of the Borough.</p>
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	<p>4. Celebrating Cultural Expression: Acknowledging the richness of our cultural heritage, the T: BUC Strategy encourages the celebration and preservation of diverse cultural expressions, fostering an environment where creativity and identity flourish harmoniously.</p> <p>Through the collaborative efforts of the Government, communities, and individuals, the T: BUC Strategy seeks to forge a path toward a society that embodies inclusivity, respect, and solidarity. By addressing these key priorities, we can create a more unified and progressive nation, leaving behind the burdens of division and intolerance and embracing a brighter, shared future for all.</p>	
<p>Northern Ireland Community Safety Framework</p> <p>Department of Justice, October 2020</p>	<p>The purpose of the Community Safety Framework is to ensure effective connectivity between the community safety work of the responsible agencies and provide an operational roadmap on how to collectively deliver the safer community objectives set out in the PfG and Community Plans, whilst providing the mechanism to respond proactively and reactively to operational need.</p> <p>The Framework recognises the ongoing relevance of many of the priorities, approaches and need for collaborative working among agencies, as set out in the previous “Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities, A Community Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-17” which centred on reducing crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB), fear of crime, building community confidence and ensuring local solutions to local concerns.</p>	<p>One of the key aims of the ANDBC Good Relations Action Plan is to create safer, more confident communities in which all citizens feel secure in expressing their own cultural identity and participating in their own culture’s various traditions and festivals.</p> <p>These sentiments align with the Northern Ireland Community Safety Framework priorities in multiple ways.</p> <p>The Plan is a local solution to address local challenges, and has been designed with engagement from a range of local stakeholders and engaged citizens. Through its work aimed at young people,</p>

	<p>Overall, the Framework stands to prioritise community safety by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing local solutions to local problems • Placing prevention and early stage intervention as the primary aim • Focusing on wider social issues, including anti-social behaviour, fear of crime, quality of life issues, and related public health, social and economic factors • Delivering through a partnership approach, involving the statutory, voluntary and private sectors, as well as community groups and individual citizens; and • Offering holistic and problem-oriented solutions. 	<p>the Plan also prioritises early intervention and fostering good relations from an early age.</p>
<p>Department of Education - Children & Young People's Strategy 2020-2030</p>	<p>This strategy, spanning from 2020 to 2030, supersedes the previous Cross-departmental Children and Young People's Strategy that covered the period from 2019 to 2029. The new strategy serves as a comprehensive framework to advance various children's issues effectively. Its main purpose is to establish an all-encompassing and cohesive structure that guides and monitors departments in their efforts to achieve eight specific outcomes, all aimed at enhancing the well-being of children and young people. By doing so, the strategy aims to drive positive progress and improvements in the lives of children and young individuals across the region. The eight specific outcomes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted • Children and young people are physically and mentally healthy 	<p>This Action Plan aligns with the priorities of the Children and Young People's Strategy in that it will deliver a range of activities and programmes aimed at improving relations amongst young people of different backgrounds across the ANDBC area, using education, history, the arts and a Youth Council initiative to do so.</p> <p>The Plan will also ensure that young people are given the skills and confidence to make a positive contribution to their own communities, and that their own traditions and cultural backgrounds are respected and celebrated by their</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people enjoy play and leisure • Children and young people learn and achieve • Children and young people live in safety and stability • Children and young people experience economic and environmental well-being • Children and young people make a positive contribution to society • Children and young people live in a society which respects their rights 	<p>neighbours and fellow citizens of the Borough.</p>
<p>Racial Equality Strategy 2021 – 2025</p>	<p>The Racial Equality Strategy 2015-2025 plays a pivotal role as an all-encompassing framework, guiding government departments and other stakeholders in their concerted efforts to effectively address racial inequalities. Its core purpose is to combat racism and hate crime while concurrently nurturing harmonious race relations and social cohesion, in perfect alignment with the T: BUC strategy.</p> <p>This strategy presents a systematic approach, strategically designed to confront and overcome racial disparities head-on. It staunchly advocates for a society where no individual or community suffers discrimination or injustice based on race or ethnicity.</p> <p>The strategy consists of seven shared aims:</p> <p>Shared Aim 1: Elimination of racial inequality Shared Aim 2: Combating racism and hate crime Shared Aim 3: Equality of service provision Shared Aim 4: Participation Shared Aim 5: Social cohesion</p>	<p>In order to mitigate against racism and sectarianism within the ANDBC area are several actions contained within this Good Relations Action Plan which will seek to promote better understanding between newcomer and indigenous communities, as well as increasing respect for the various traditions and cultures which exist within the Borough.</p> <p>These initiatives have been specifically designed to promote greater understanding amongst young people, to ensure that all residents of the Borough feel safe and secure in participating in expressions of their own respective cultures, and that a broader sense of community safety is achieved by minimising incidents of hate crime, racism and sectarianism.</p>

	<p>Shared Aim 6: Capacity building Shared Aim 7: Cultural identity</p>	
<p>The Executive Office- Draft Refugee Integration Strategy 2022-2027</p>	<p>As part of the 2015-2025 Racial Equality Strategy, a dedicated effort was made to establish a comprehensive Refugee Integration Strategy. In recent years, the global count of displaced individuals has surged, and although immigration falls beyond devolved responsibilities, the Executive assumes a crucial role in providing support and assistance to those seeking refuge from conflict and persecution within its borders.</p> <p>In the strategy, the Executives commitment is to ensure that refugees and asylum seekers are provided with ample opportunities to realise their full potential. Additionally, the Executive aims to extend their support to both these individuals and the communities they settle in, fostering a genuinely integrated and inclusive society, irrespective of race or ethnicity. To achieve this vision this Refugee Integration Strategy identifies four High Level Outcomes and associated actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refugees and Asylum Seekers are valued and respected. 2. Refugees and Asylum Seekers are safe and feel secure. 3. Refugees and Asylum Seekers exercise their rights and responsibilities. 4. Refugees and Asylum Seekers are supported to reach their full potential. 	<p>TBC</p>

PEACEPLUS

As the PEACE IV and INTERREG VA Programmes come to an end, the European Commission have made provision for a new PEACEPLUS Programme. The new Programme will continue the commitments made by the Commission, the UK Government and the Irish Government to support peace and reconciliation.

The programme has been divided into six themes. Each new programme aims to address longstanding social and economic challenges which have and continue to impact communities. Within each theme there are several investment areas - these will have a more specific focus and target specific organisations such as local authorities or community groups.

- Theme 1 – Building Peaceful and Thriving Communities
- Theme 2 – Socio-Economic Regeneration and Transformation
- Theme 3 – Investing in Young People
- Theme 4 – Healthy and Inclusive Communities
- Theme 5 – Supporting a Sustainable & Better Connected Future
- Theme 6 – Building and Embedding Partnership and Collaboration

The Ards and North Down Good Relations Strategic Assessment and Action Plan complements the PEACEPLUS Programme in that it stands to contribute towards building peaceful and thriving communities across the Borough through the delivery of a range of initiatives aimed at bringing people from all backgrounds together in a spirit of togetherness and social cohesion.

The Plan will also bring about the delivery of initiatives aimed at breaking down barriers and promoting better understanding and respect amongst young people across Ards and North Down, laying the foundations for better relations and a more cohesive society in the future.

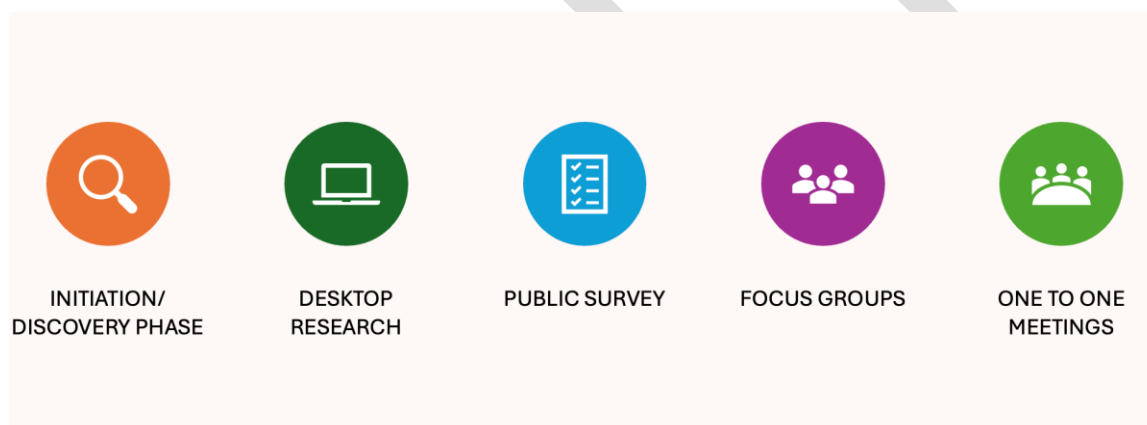
*A key caveat to this statistic is that 'different backgrounds' in this context may relate to young people from other estates or towns.

Consultation and Community Engagement

- Methodology
- Key Findings (Survey/ Focus Groups/ One to One's/ Staff feedback)
- Partnership Working
- Key Barriers and Best Practices Identified

Methodology

The methodology for developing the Ards and North Down Borough Council Good Relations Strategy was structured into five phases- Initiation/Discovery Phase, Desktop Research, Public Survey, Focus Groups, and One-to-One Meetings. This phased approach ensured that the process was inclusive, evidence-based, and reflective of community needs and priorities.



Desktop Research

To ensure that the Good Relations Strategy aligned with the broader policy landscape, a detailed review of relevant local and regional strategies and policies was undertaken. At the Borough level, this included strategies related to community cohesion, economic development, PEACEPLUS, and public health. This analysis identified areas of overlap and opportunities for strategic integration, ensuring that the Good Relations Strategy complemented and enhanced existing plans within the Borough while addressing specific good relations objectives.

Regionally, the strategy was informed by the priorities outlined in the Northern Ireland Executive's *Together: Building a United Community (T:BUC)* strategy, which sets a framework for fostering good relations and addressing sectarianism, racism, and division. Additionally, other regional strategies promoting diversity, inclusion, and shared community goals were reviewed. This alignment ensured the strategy was consistent with *T:BUC*'s overarching themes, including children and young people, shared spaces, and safe communities, while meeting regulatory requirements. By embedding the strategy within this comprehensive policy context, opportunities for synergy were maximised, supporting a cohesive approach to advancing good relations

across the Borough while remaining consistent with wider strategic goals and the *T:BUC* vision.

Analysis of Key Statistics

In collaboration with the Council's Data and Evidence Analyst, a comprehensive analysis of statistical data was undertaken to ensure the Good Relations Strategy was grounded in objective evidence. The review focused on key indicators related to good relations, crime, and perceptions on key cultural symbols such as flags, murals, and kerb paintings.

This quantitative analysis was designed to complement qualitative feedback from stakeholder engagement, ensuring the strategy was evidence-based and reflective of the lived experiences and trends within the community. By integrating these insights, the strategy was positioned to address the specific needs and aspirations of residents while driving measurable improvements in good relations.

Benchmarking of Best Practices from Other Councils

A benchmarking exercise of good relations strategies, projects, and programmes implemented by other Councils across Northern Ireland was conducted. This exercise assessed the effectiveness of various approaches to fostering community cohesion, promoting diversity, and addressing challenges related to sectarianism and division. By examining best practices and successful initiatives, the benchmarking provided valuable insights into potential enhancements or innovative approaches that could be tailored to the unique needs and priorities of the Borough.

Public Survey

This involved the design and dissemination of a public survey to gather input from a wide range of stakeholders, including residents, Council staff, elected members, and community partners. The survey was distributed online via social media platforms and the Councils community databases, allowing for broad participation across the Borough. The survey aimed to capture both quantitative data—such as recurring themes and challenges—and qualitative insights into unique community issues. The findings from this survey were instrumental in shaping the strategy's focus, as they provided a broad measure of community sentiment and highlighted priority areas for action.



Focus Groups

To explore key themes in greater depth, focus groups were conducted across all District Electoral Areas (DEAs). Each session brought together a diverse range of participants, including residents, elected representatives, statutory organisations, community and voluntary groups, business owners, and individuals who had participated in previous Good Relations programmes. This inclusive approach ensured a broad spectrum of voices and perspectives were heard, fostering meaningful discussions that reflected the unique dynamics and priorities of each DEA. The focus groups provided valuable qualitative insights, enabling the strategy to address the nuanced needs and aspirations of the Borough's communities.

DATE	VENUE
4/11/24	Hamilton Road Community Hub
4/11/24	Donaghadee Community Centre
5/11/24	Redburn Community Centre
6/11/24	Portavogie Community Centre
7/11/24	Comber Community Centre
8/11/24	Ballygowan Village Hall
11/11/24	Ards Arena
12/11/24	Kilcooley Women's Centre, Kilcooley
12/11/24	St Patrick's Community Centre, Portaferry

One-to-One Meetings

This included a series of one-to-one meetings conducted with key stakeholders. These sessions were held virtually via Microsoft Teams. Stakeholders had the opportunity to share specific concerns and recommendations in a secure setting, allowing for a more personalised and focused exploration of issues. These individual meetings complemented the insights gained from the public survey and focus groups, providing a well-rounded understanding of stakeholder perspectives.

This methodology ensured a structured yet flexible approach to developing the Good Relations Strategy. By combining evidence-based research, community consultation, and targeted stakeholder engagement, the strategy is firmly rooted in the community's needs and priorities while aligning with broader policy objectives at the local and regional levels.

Focus Group and One to One Findings

The focus group discussions provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities in fostering good relations across the Borough. The themes explored reflect the nuanced perspectives of participants on community cohesion, cultural expression, youth engagement, and safety. Participants highlighted entrenched issues such as sectarianism and paramilitary influence, while also recognising successful initiatives and the potential for positive change. This section of the strategy analyses each key theme, detailing the challenges, opportunities, and priorities for future action.

Barriers to Good Relations

Barriers to good relations in the Borough are deeply rooted in structural, cultural, and socio-economic challenges. Participants frequently highlighted the physical and symbolic divisions marked by paramilitary flags, graffiti, and symbols. Transport issues and economic disparities further exacerbate isolation, limiting opportunities for engagement and dialogue. Digital isolation, amplified by the spread of misinformation on social media, also hinders the development of trust. Participants raised concerns about entrenched attitudes and gatekeeping within communities, which can restrict participation and stifle new initiatives. Despite these challenges, the focus groups identified pathways to address these barriers, including advancing dialogue, promoting inclusive events, and empowering community leadership. Addressing these barriers requires a collaborative effort to challenge prejudices, improve accessibility to shared spaces, and build trust among diverse groups.



Key Themes from Focus Groups

The following themes emerged as the most significant points of discussion during the focus groups:

- Entrenched divisions and mistrust.
- The role of cultural expression in community relations.
- Safety concerns and the impact of anti-social behaviour.
- The importance of engaging children and young people.
- Opportunities for creating shared spaces and fostering integration.
- The impact of socio-economic disparities on community cohesion.

Our Children and Young People

Children and young people are at the heart of good relations efforts, as they represent the future of the Borough. The focus groups revealed several challenges, including the lack of integrated education and shared extracurricular activities. This perpetuates divisions, which are further exacerbated by the influence of social media. Social media platforms often serve as amplifiers for misinformation, contributing to stereotypes and misunderstandings. Successful past programmes, such as sports and arts-based initiatives, have demonstrated the potential to foster unity and understanding among youth. Engaging young people requires tailored interventions that address their specific needs while promoting inclusivity and understanding. This includes revisiting successful models like the 'Game of Three Halves' and introducing new programmes that utilise technology and other mediums that children and young people are interested in. Collaboration between schools, community groups, and local authorities is essential to ensure resources and opportunities reach those who need them most.

Priorities

- Enhance youth-focused sports, creative arts and drama-based programmes to foster engagement.
- Utilise technology and social media to connect with children and young people.
- Create opportunities for children and young people to develop essential skills that will empower and support them throughout their lives.



Our Shared Community

Building a shared community involves dismantling both physical and symbolic barriers. Participants emphasised the importance of neutral spaces where individuals from diverse backgrounds can come together. While existing shared spaces have shown promise, their accessibility remains a challenge. Transport issues and a lack of funding often limit their usage, particularly for marginalised groups. Participants identified intergenerational activities, community gardens, and repair cafes as effective tools for fostering unity. These initiatives provide platforms for collaboration, dialogue, and

shared learning. Additionally, cultural events and recreational activities can serve as common ground for diverse groups, promoting mutual understanding and reducing tensions. To advance the vision of a shared community, it is critical to invest in sustainable infrastructure, foster community leadership, and promote programs that align with shared interests and values.

Priorities

- Host activities in accessible and neutral shared spaces across the Borough.
- Facilitate inter-community dialogues to address entrenched divisions.
- Promote collaborative cultural and recreational events for all ages.
- Support community leadership programmes to empower local initiatives.



Our Safe Community

Safety is a cornerstone of fostering strong community relations. The focus groups highlighted recurring concerns, including anti-social behaviour, paramilitary influence, and domestic violence. To address these issues, participants emphasised the importance of proactive measures, such as targeted funding for youth diversionary programmes and educational campaigns centred on community safety and empathy.

Promoting intergenerational programmes and raising awareness of local leaders, such as Councillors, are essential steps to bridge gaps within the community. Successful initiatives, like graffiti projects, sports programmes, and empathy-building workshops, have demonstrated their potential to redirect at-risk youth toward positive pathways.

Bespoke educational programmes on sensitive issues such as the Holocaust and other genocides, and are key to addressing the root causes of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Priorities

- Increase public awareness of Councillors to ensure residents better understand their roles and contributions to the community.
- Facilitate initiatives that encourage meaningful engagement between different generations, fostering mutual understanding and shared learning.
- Develop and implement comprehensive educational programmes that focus on historical genocides, promoting awareness and empathy.
- Design and roll out educational campaigns aimed at improving community safety, fostering empathy, and reducing conflict.
- Allocate specific funding to youth diversionary programmes that engage young people in positive, constructive activities, reducing risks of antisocial behaviour.



Our Cultural Expression

Cultural expression is both a source of identity and a potential point of contention within communities. Participants noted that events like bonfires and flag displays often carry dual significance, serving as both cultural markers and sources of division. Misuse of these symbols can lead to tensions and intimidation. However, there is significant potential to harness cultural expression as a tool for unity. Positive initiatives, such as shared history education and inclusive cultural events, provide a roadmap for fostering mutual respect and understanding. By promoting dialogue, myth-busting activities, and cultural exchange programs, communities can celebrate diversity while mitigating potential conflicts. Sustainable resources and collaborative efforts are essential to ensure cultural expressions contribute positively to good relations.

Priorities

- Encourage positive and inclusive cultural events to celebrate diversity.
- Provide education on shared history to foster mutual respect.

- Engage minority and newcomer communities in cultural exchange programmes.



The focus group findings underline the importance of addressing entrenched challenges while leveraging successful initiatives to foster good relations across the Borough. Key priorities include engaging children and young people, creating shared spaces, ensuring safety, and promoting positive cultural expression. Collaboration among community leaders, policymakers, and residents is essential to achieving these goals. These findings provide a foundation for developing targeted strategy action that reflects the needs and aspirations of diverse communities, contributing to the broader objectives of the T:BUC.

Summary of Public Consultation – Survey

In order to determine the views of Citizens of the Ards and North Down Borough Council area, a public consultation exercise was held between 18th October to 15th November whereby residents could provide their thoughts and opinions in relation to Good Relations and aspects of Public Safety and Policing in the Council area.

The themes which were consulted upon are listed as follows:

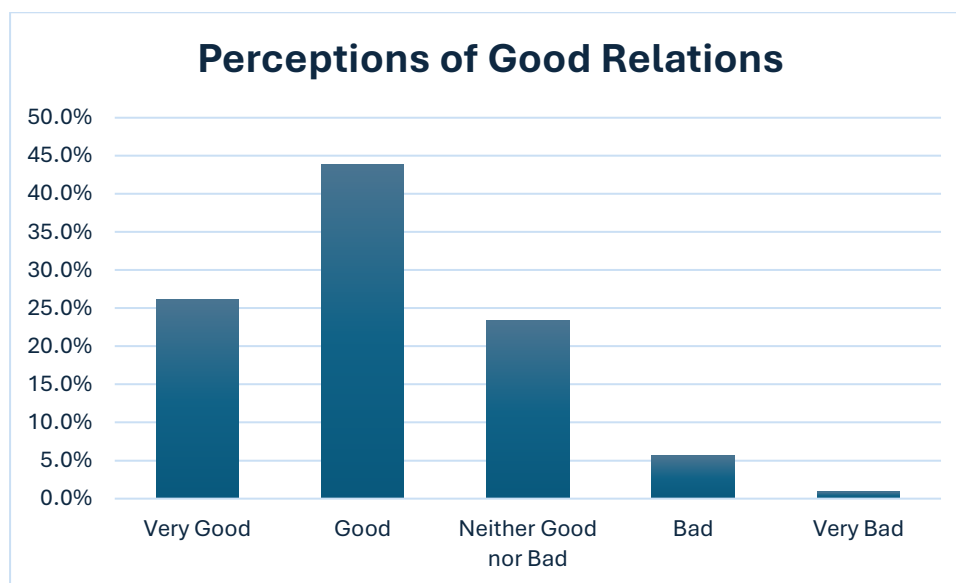
- Perceptions of Good Relations in the ANDBC Area;
- Barriers to Good Relations in the ANDBC Area;
- Suggestions to improve Good Relations in the ANDBC Area;
- Social challenges facing those living the ANDBC Area;

The survey was open from 18th October 2024 to 15th November 2024, during which time 80 responses were received.

This survey was supplemented by additional online consultations, which gathered additional thoughts in relation to Good Relations and Community Safety. Each survey received 27 and 24 responses respectively.

Perceptions of Good Relations in the ANDBC Area

Respondents were first of all asked to rate their perceptions of Good Relations in the ANDBC Area.



The overall sentiments expressed in relation to Good Relations in the ANDBC area were majorly positive. 70.1% of respondents believed that Good Relations were either “Very Good” or “Good”. Although a further 23.4% believed that Good Relations were “Neither Good nor Bad”, just 6.5% believed them to be “Bad” or “Very Bad”.

Respondents were afforded the opportunity to provide further details in relation to their answer. A summary of these additional details is provided as follows:

Respondents who believed that Good Relations were “Very Good”

- I live in a community where people are friendly and caring.
- No known incidents of racial / religious arrests
- Good neighbours so I think we look out for each other

Respondents who believed that Good Relations were “Good”

- Different religious and racial background families living in harmony.
- I'm not aware of any friction in my neighbourhood.
- I'm unaware of any major issues
- No issues ever experienced
- Relations are good in Newtownards
- I feel safe in my community. There are isolated instances where there is trouble but they are isolated I believe.

Respondents who believed that Good Relations were “Neither Good nor Bad”

- Quiet area. Good neighbours. No issues.

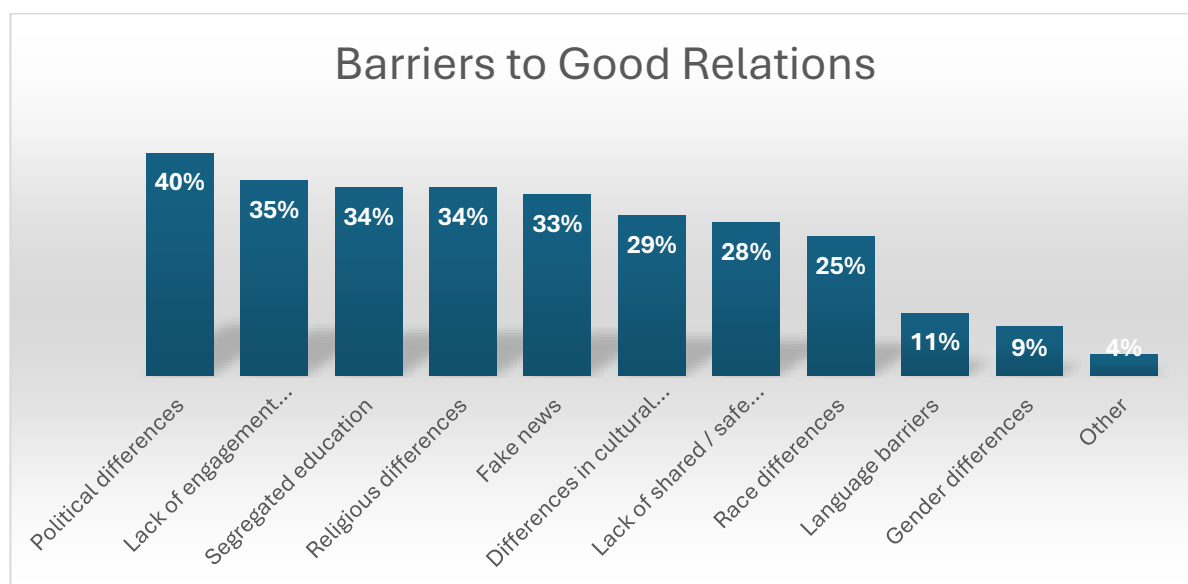
- Very one sided community which becomes evident in flag season
- Some groups try to outdo/ignore others instead of working together
- Newtownards is plagued by flags
- I'm not aware of any specific things. Everyone around us gets on well with each other.
- At times I don't see communities coming together within the borough. I don't see any opportunities on social media for this and at times only see the negatives.

Respondents who believed that Good Relations were “Bad”

- People keep protesting at the hotels in Bangor that host refugees and the massive racist protest in August here was very upsetting. I've also seen racist stickers (though not for a while) and graffiti (like 'Locals Only') in my neighbourhood. Certainly things could be worse but I think we should be doing far better in 2024. I think we can do better!
- Loyalist paramilitary flags and emblems are not conducive to good relations as defined.
- There are still so many issues with flags and nothing is done about them. Even when they are reported, they aren't taken down. And there is still a lot of racism with demonstrations outside hotels where refugees are staying.
- Not enough provision for young people.

Barriers to Good Relations in the Council Area

Survey respondents were asked to provide insights into what they believed to be the most significant barriers to better relations in the ANDBC area, with each respondent asked to choose up to three challenges.



The most commonly selected response was 'Political Differences,' which was selected by 40% of respondents. 'Lack of engagement opportunities for children and young people' (35% of responses) 'Segregated Education,' and 'Religious Differences' (33.8% of responses each) also emerged as prominent areas of concern – highlighting a keen focus on promoting good relations amongst young people.

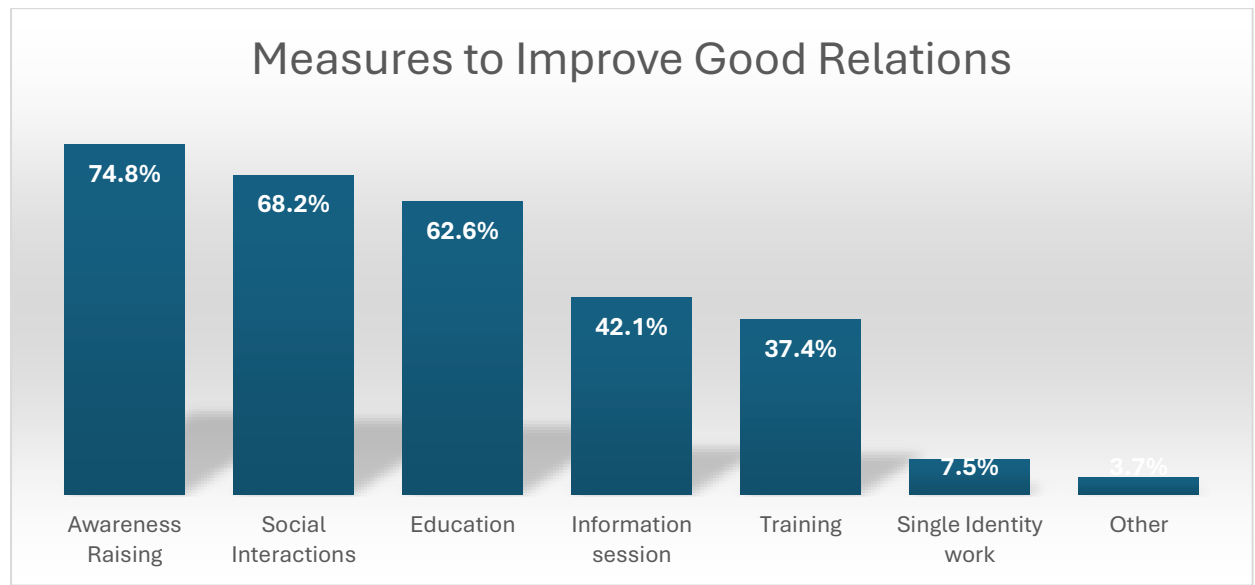
'Language Barriers' and 'Gender Differences' were not considered to be significant barriers to Good Relations in the ANDBC area.

Qualitative responses to this question also highlighted a number of key themes in relation to identified barriers to promoting good relations. These included:

- Communities in the ANDBC tend to be single identity, and there are very few 'mixed' areas.
- Communication, and access to information regarding Good Relations Programmes and initiatives.
- Service provision in rural areas, compared to opportunities in the main population centres.
- Lack of Programmes and Opportunities for Young People, including limited funding opportunities

Improving Good Relations

Survey respondents were subsequently asked to provide their insights into what actions they believed could be taken in order to improve Good Relations in the ANDBC area. Respondents were again given the option of choosing multiple responses, limited to a maximum of three.



The most commonly selected responses were 'Awareness Raising' (74.8% of responses), 'Social Interactions' (68.2% of responses) and 'Education' (62.6% of responses).

responses), highlighting a need for resources to be prioritised towards programmes and initiatives of this nature.

'Single Identity Work' was not considered a priority whatsoever, gleaning just 7.5% of responses across the two surveys.

Conclusions

Following analysis of the responses provided to this survey, a range of key conclusions can be drawn:

Good Relations - Overall, survey respondents believed that positive relations exist between and within communities residing in the ANDBC area. However, it was highlighted that more could be done to promote Good Relations and positive engagement amongst young people across the ANDBC area.

Social Challenges – Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour, Paramilitarism and Drugs / Alcohol Related Issues were viewed as the most urgent social challenges facing communities in the ANDBC area in need of addressing.

Good Relations Priorities for ANDBC

This section will outline the key findings and themes emerging from the consultations conducted across the Borough. The insights gathered have informed the strategy's development, providing a clear understanding of the opportunities and challenges in furthering good relations across the Borough. The findings are linked to the core themes of the "Together: Building a United Community" (T:BUC) strategy.

Our Shared Community

The one-to-one meetings, focus groups, and survey responses highlighted the importance of shared community spaces in developing cross-community interaction. Shared spaces were seen as key to promoting positive engagement between different community groups. However, accessibility to these spaces remains a concern, particularly for individuals in rural areas. Focus group participants identified transport issues, funding gaps, and limited infrastructure as barriers that restrict participation. Survey respondents also noted that certain areas within the Borough remain single-identity communities with little opportunity for cross-community interaction. Despite these challenges, examples of successful shared community initiatives, such as inter-community cultural events and neutral recreational areas, were highlighted as evidence of progress.

Opportunities exist to promote greater use of shared spaces, ensuring they are neutral, safe, and accessible to all. This can be achieved by investing in community infrastructure, improving transport links, and supporting programmes that increase the use of shared facilities. Expanding access to shared spaces in rural areas was viewed as a vital step towards fostering greater cross-community interaction. Encouraging more intergenerational activities and cross-community events will further enhance the sense of a shared community.

Key Statistics and Comments

-70.1% of survey respondents believed that Good Relations were "Very Good" or "Good".

-Respondents noted, "I live in a community where people are friendly and caring" and "Good neighbours so I think we look out for each other".

-Focus group participants raised concerns about accessibility of shared spaces, noting that transport issues prevent many from engaging fully in shared activities.

Opportunities for Action

-Promote the use of shared spaces for activities.

-Develop accessible community spaces in rural areas.

-Support programmes that develop cross-community collaboration and shared community events.

Our Safe Community

Safety was a key theme raised during the engagement activities. Concerns about anti-social behaviour and paramilitary influence were consistently highlighted as key issues affecting community trust and cohesion. Participants identified paramilitary flags, emblems, and graffiti as symbolic barriers that reinforce divisions. Focus group discussions emphasised the need for programmes that promote inclusivity, and ensure shared spaces remain safe and welcoming for all. Survey respondents similarly expressed the need to reduce the influence of paramilitary groups, with many recommending targeted interventions to increase community safety.

Opportunities to address safety concerns include targeted educational campaigns focused on empathy, crime prevention, and community safety. Providing increased support for youth diversionary programmes was highlighted as a means to reduce anti-social behaviour. This could include sports, arts, and educational programmes designed to engage young people. Increasing public awareness of the role of councillors and local leaders was also seen as a step towards fostering community trust and addressing local safety issues.

Key Statistics and Comments

-35% of survey respondents identified the "lack of engagement opportunities for children and young people" as a barrier to good relations.

-Respondents commented on the negative impact of paramilitary flags, noting that "loyalist paramilitary flags and emblems are not conducive to good relations."

-Focus group participants stressed the importance of increased visibility and responsiveness from local councillors to foster a sense of trust in the community.

Opportunities for Action

-Allocate funding for youth diversionary programmes and activities.

-Design educational campaigns aimed at community safety and empathy.

-Increase public awareness of the role of councillors to foster community trust and engagement.

Our Children and Young People

Children and young people were seen as key to the development of good relations for future generations. Both focus groups and survey respondents emphasised the importance of providing shared educational opportunities and access to youth activities that promote cross-community engagement. Participants reported that children have limited opportunities to engage with peers from different community backgrounds. Additionally, social media was seen as both a challenge and an opportunity. Focus groups highlighted the negative impact of online misinformation, while also suggesting that social media could be used as a positive tool for youth engagement.

One of the strongest findings was that 35% of respondents identified a "lack of engagement opportunities for children and young people" as a key barrier to good relations. To address these issues, stakeholders recommended the expansion of sports and creative arts programmes. Schools, youth clubs, and community groups could collaborate to create inclusive, shared extracurricular activities.

Key Statistics and Comments

-35% of respondents identified "lack of engagement opportunities for children and young people" as a barrier to good relations. This was one of the most commonly selected items.

-Successful programmes like sports and arts-based programmes were highlighted as examples of best practice.

-Respondents noted, "Not enough provision for young people" as a key issue.

Opportunities for Action

-Expand youth-focused sports and creative arts programmes.

-Support shared education initiatives and cross-community activities.

-Educate young people on the role of the Council and Councillors.

Our Cultural Expression

Cultural expression emerged as both a strength and a challenge within the Borough. The focus groups and survey results revealed that cultural events, shared history education, and celebrations offer opportunities to foster good relations. However, divisive cultural symbols, such as paramilitary flags, emblems, and symbols were seen as sources of tension. Participants supported the use of shared historical education to challenge stereotypes and increase understanding of different cultural identities.

Cultural expression was also linked to community identity, with focus group participants highlighting the pride associated with events like shared events and festivals. While these events celebrate cultural identity, they can sometimes create division if not managed inclusively. Efforts to develop more inclusive cultural events were seen as very important. Survey respondents supported calls for increased funding to support cross-community events and educational programmes.

Key Statistics and Comments

-40% of survey respondents highlighted "political differences" as a barrier to good relations.

-Participants expressed the need to "encourage positive and inclusive cultural events to celebrate diversity."

-Respondents called for education on shared history to "foster mutual respect."

-Focus group participants cited examples of successful cross-community events, such as cultural exchange festivals, which had a positive impact on developing understanding.

Opportunities for Action

-Promote inclusive cultural events that celebrate diversity and shared heritage.

-Provide shared history education that fosters mutual respect and understanding.

-Engage minority and newcomer communities in cultural programmes.

-Opportunities to explore what people from different backgrounds have in common (i.e. cooking, gardening etc.)

The findings from the focus groups, one to one meetings and survey present an inclusive understanding of the challenges and opportunities for developing good relations across the Borough. Participants highlighted the need to address entrenched divisions, and symbolic barriers while promoting positive cultural expression and improving community safety. The role of children and young people was emphasised as crucial to driving future change, with calls for greater engagement through education, youth activities, and other programmes.

Clear opportunities for action have been identified, including the development of increased support for cultural exchange, and programmes that develop inclusivity and empathy. Addressing the influence of paramilitary groups and symbolic markers will be essential to creating safer and more welcoming communities. The findings also highlighted the importance of collaboration between schools, community groups, and local authorities to ensure equitable access to services and shared spaces for rural and urban communities alike.

Action Plan Programmes Overview

Children and Young People	
Shared Education	AND01
Shared Voices	AND02
Youth Empowerment Programme	AND03
Community Relations Through Sport	AND04
Our Shared Community	
Living History	AND05
Our Safe Community	
Holocaust and Other Genocides	AND06
Getting to Know Your Councillors/ Intergenerational	AND07
No Hate Here	AND08
Cultural Expression	
Cultural Expression Programme	AND09
History Talks	AND10

Action Plan

Theme	Programme	Description
Children and Young People	Shared Education	<p>Budget cuts and cost of living increases has ended the programme as a journey to the Battlefields however as a substitute GR intend to deliver a similar programme at home. Schools will be approached to learn about WWI through interactive displays, visits and learning about the past. Visits will include but not limited to Clandeboye Estate and the Somme Centre. The programme will continue to be delivered on a cross-community basis, demonstrating the joined effort of all community backgrounds who took part during WWI. The young people will learn about the local people who fought and died during this period, and it will encourage the participants to build friendships with someone from a different background and bring history alive for the participants.</p> <p>The aim of undertaking the programme is to develop increased knowledge and understanding of key anniversaries and develop an appreciation of their social, political and cultural significance for NI and the UK and Ireland then and now. This incorporates knowledge and awareness of the national and European context of this period can help to change participants perspectives of our shared history.</p> <p>Different primary schools from a controlled/ integrated and maintained background will be targeted each year to ensure the project covers different areas around the borough and is cross community focused. These young people will form friendships over the entirety of the programme that they will take with them into post primary and adulthood.</p> <p>The numbers and background of participants will be reflected by the schools chosen.</p> <p>Experience has shown the benefits with schools joining together for Shared Education benefitting the rest of the school and pupils.</p> <p>This programme will build on the experience of previous educational programmes.</p>

The programme will be evaluated by pre and post questions and observation

Children and Young People

Shared Voices

This programme, co-designed with GR staff and volunteers from diverse ethnic backgrounds, raises racism awareness in primary schools and groups. Adapted to suit the needs and capacities of each school or group, the programme includes flexible delivery options: three workshops over three weeks, a condensed four-hour session, or a single, informal one-hour session.

Initially created for post-primary schools, the programme now includes P4 and upwards, aligning with their celebration of world cultures curriculum. Facilitators and volunteers from ethnic and European backgrounds educate children about their cultures and traditions, fostering understanding and respect.

Delivery to post-primary schools includes sessions with the PSNI addressing hate crime and hate incidents.

Reflecting local demographics, including asylum-seekers, this enhanced programme builds on past experiences to improve outcomes. Impact will be measured using pre- and post-programme questions and observations.

Children and Young People

Youth Empowerment Programme

The Youth Empowerment Programme is a holistic programme designed to support young people in building resilience, developing positive relationships, and developing essential life skills. The programme aims to divert youth from negative influences, such as involvement with paramilitary groups, by offering structured, engaging, and transformative activities in a safe and inclusive environment.

The main objectives of the programme are to equip young people with the skills and tools to manage stress, adversity, and change in a healthy and constructive way, foster personal development through the enhancement of communication, problem-solving, decision-making, and leadership skills, encourage youth to become active, positive contributors to

their communities, and support mental, emotional, and physical well-being, promoting a sense of purpose and self-worth.

The programme will include workshops, and mentorship opportunities. It will include life skills workshops that deliver sessions on decision-making, communication, goal setting, emotional intelligence, and conflict resolution. Mentorship and role model support will offer access to positive role models, community mentors, and peer support networks to inspire and guide youth. The programme will be delivered in collaboration with community organisations, youth clubs, schools, and sports clubs.

A drama to help them understand the consequences of paramilitary activity will be delivered to a number of schools if funding is successful from other sources.

Children and Young People
Community Relations Through Sport

This programme will work with pre and post primary schools in the borough. The Community Relations Through Sport Programme is designed to introduce young people to sport with which they may not normally associate. The programme will run across the borough in both urban and rural areas. Similar to the Game of 3 Halves the programme includes a ‘fourth half’ on community relations.

Over the 5 weeks the ‘fourth half’ addresses issues on sectarianism and racism while the sporting element introduces the young people to new sports often associated with a particular community background.

Building on the work from previous years, this cross-community programme of activity with schools across ANDBC continues to build links between rural and urban communities and maintained and controlled schools in the AND area. The numbers and background of participants will be reflected by the demographics of the area and schools/ clubs engaged. If required, the programme can include transport enabling rural schools/clubs to engage.

The programme will also work closely with local sporting clubs to deliver a one-day Game of 3 Halves event. The event encourages coaches and participants to take part in new sports.

Programme will be evaluated by pre and post questions and observation.

Our Shared Community

Living History

The Living History Programme is a 5-week programme for participants which includes a series of educational and historical based Rural and Urban visits to places of interest within the local areas and beyond that helps people understand their shared history, breaks down barriers and challenges people to venture elsewhere to learn about their shared past. A calendar of visits will be developed aimed at breaking down barriers and offer opportunities for participants to build an understanding of our shared history. Some of the trips may include visits to places like, Crumlin Road Gaol, Grange Gorman, Dublin Library, Glasnevin.

Participants will be introduced to places in Northern Ireland and Ireland that have had an impact on our lives today. Each visit is followed by post discussion to explore the shared history of the visit. It will also focus on visiting places within AND as a way of breaking down some barriers and addressing silent sectarianism.

AND is an area with a wealth of diversity with a range of different places where communities of different community backgrounds meet and engage, in many cases with people from their own community background. Creating everyday opportunities for people to meet and engage with people from other community backgrounds is the focus of this programme. It aims to create opportunities for people to learn more about the people, places and communities that make Northern Ireland the diverse and multi-cultural place that it is.

The programme will be open to all community backgrounds and faiths and will be publicly advertised. This will ensure a good mix of participants and community background. The programme is much more than a tourist tour because the places visited all have an influence

on society today eg Visit to Crumlin Road Gaol followed by discussion with ex combatants – links closely to the Good Friday agreement and the release of prisoners.

By advertising it will engage with the different ‘class’ elements often identified in ANDBC. All visits are followed by in depth discussion on issues that have engulfed Northern Ireland and Ireland over the centuries. This programme is designed to encourage dialogue and address these issues from an up-to-date viewpoint and in a safe environment. The numbers and background of participants will be reflected by the demographics of the area and transport availability.

This programme encourages returning participants that has enabled open discussion and a better understanding of the effect the ‘troubles’ has had on so many.

Programme will be evaluated by pre and post questions and observation.

Our Safe Community

Holocaust and Other Genocides

This programme delivers a series of annual events leading to the commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day, educating schools and community groups on the consequences of hate and genocide. While the Holocaust remains central to the programme, additional genocides from Europe and worldwide will be included, chosen in consultation with participating groups to ensure relevance and engagement. Examples include the genocides in Rwanda, Darfur, Cambodia, and the treatment of Indigenous peoples in various regions.

Holocaust Event- An annual event featuring a Holocaust survivor or second-generation speaker. The focus will be on personal stories of survival and resilience, complemented by contributions from local primary schools and guest speakers.

Exhibition- A two-week exhibition at Bangor Carnegie Library showcasing creative works such as artwork, poems, and writings from local schools and community groups. All post-primary schools and registered groups within the ANDBC area are invited to contribute. Online materials and recordings from previous projects will highlight genocides’ effects on survivors from diverse cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds.

Genocide Talks- Online talks addressing genocides worldwide, including European examples, as well as global genocides in Rwanda, Darfur, and Cambodia. Each session will conclude with a facilitated Q&A to promote reflection and understanding.

Schools talk with Holocaust survivor or second-generation speaker depending on available budget.

Work in partnership with BCC and HMDT to produce the Belfast event. The numbers and background of participants will be reflected by the demographics of the area and based on previous programmes. Programme will be evaluated by pre and post evaluations and observation.

Our Safe Community

Getting to Know Your Councillors/ Intergenerational

This programme is open to people of all ages, including schools, community groups, and individuals, to develop a better understanding of the role of Good Relations within local councils, the role of regional and local government in Northern Ireland, and the importance of active participation in the democratic process.

Participants of all ages will gain insights into how local and regional government operates, including the roles and responsibilities of councillors, council structures, and decision-making processes. The programme will also educate participants on the voting system in Northern Ireland, the electoral process, and the importance of voting in shaping their communities and influencing change.

The programme will include interactive sessions where participants can meet and question their local councillors. This dialogue will not only educate participants but also allow elected members to hear firsthand the concerns of their constituents, fostering transparency and accountability.

All political parties and independent councillors will be invited to participate. Groups registered on the community database, as well as all schools, community organisations,

and interested individuals, will be invited to take part. The programme will be adapted to suit all age groups, from school-age children to adults, using age-appropriate workshops and materials.

The programme will be evaluated through pre- and post-programme surveys, observation, and feedback from participants and councillors. The numbers and backgrounds of participants will reflect the demographics of the area.

Our Safe Community

No Hate Here

The “*No Hate Here*” programme delivers a range of diversity and inclusion programmes aimed at building community cohesion, tackling hate crime, and raising awareness of racism and sectarianism across the Borough. It aims to help participants better understand themselves and others, the programme combines creative arts, cultural events, and learning to help foster acceptance, respect, and inclusivity.

The programme features a variety of events and activities developed in partnership with statutory agencies, voluntary organisations, and community groups, including PSNI, NIHE, YMCA, and the Intercultural Forum’s *No Hate Here* subgroup. It will use innovative approaches to engage participants, including arts-based projects, cultural celebrations, and newly introduced dance and drama workshops. These sessions will provide participants with a safe space to explore themes of identity, diversity, and equality, encouraging open dialogue and positive expression.

A series of awareness-raising seminars and talks will also be delivered, featuring guest speakers, survivors of hate incidents, and experts who share insights into addressing racism and sectarianism. Schools and local communities will benefit from tailored workshops through the *Shared Voices* and diversity programmes, promoting cultural understanding and challenging stereotypes.

The programme will also support asylum seekers and refugees arriving in the Borough. Working in partnership with YMCA and local networks, newcomers will receive practical support, including access to local information, ESOL (English for Speakers of Other

Languages) classes, and advice to help them integrate and thrive within their new communities.

Targeting a wide range of participants, including local communities, schools, and individuals seeking asylum, the programme will engage with all age groups. Creative workshops, cultural activities, and awareness campaigns will empower participants to challenge hate and build better relationships with others, promoting inclusion across the Borough.

The outcomes of the programme will include increased understanding of diversity and cultural traditions, reduced incidences of hate crime, and strengthened relationships between communities and statutory organisations.

To measure success, the programme will be evaluated through pre- and post-surveys, observations, and feedback from participants. Participation numbers and the background of attendees will reflect the demographics of the area, ensuring inclusivity and representation.

<p>Cultural Expression</p>	<p>Cultural Expression Programme</p>	<p>The Cultural Expression programme has been developed and builds on previous programmes with hard-to-reach groups and key influencers from perceived ex paramilitary backgrounds. The programme supports cultural expression festivals to encourage the positive promotion of PUL and CNR culture to the wider society. Festivals and bonfires will be regularly monitored, and any negative issues addressed before they become more challenging.</p> <p>The cross-community Cultural Expression programme gives the PUL community a sense of belonging that they feel is being eroded and the CNR community a sense of inclusion. While bonfires are always going to be contentious if Good Relations can work with the groups to minimise the negativity seen around bonfires it will develop greater respect among communities and cultures in the local areas; the aims are that by reducing the negativity this may also influence wider society and those who would not normally be associated with cultural festivals.</p>
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The programme maintains and builds relationships between the Council and retains engagement. This will also enable and encourage engagement around other hard issues (e.g., paramilitarism, flags, murals), and find alternatives means for dialogue, training and capacity building.

The programme will also help engage hard to reach groups positively when external negative influences effect certain communities (e.g., Brexit, NI Protocol and Irish Sea Border). The programme and its activities are designed to include the wider community and create a sense of belonging, reducing the fear of intimidation often associated with bonfires.

The programme aims to offer young people more opportunities locally, addressing the sense of hope that some feel and the lack of educational attainment faced by many young protestant boys. While the delivery of programme will not directly address this, it acts as important link and engagement mechanism for council and other agencies to progress their interagency activities in these areas with a focus on the community planning.

Cultural festivals supported through the programme continue to be well attended by many members of the community.

All statutory agencies agreed that although there are still some concerns especially with the size and location of a few traditional bonfires, community engagement in association with the CE Agreement and the CE programme has significantly reduced negative incidents that previously occurred during bonfire season.

The numbers and background of participants will be reflected by the demographics of the area and groups that can engage through the programme.

The programme will be evaluated by pre and post questions and observation, monitoring and reports.

The Council's Good Relations team will actively seek guidance from Stormont and the recommendations outlined in the FICT (Flags, Identity, Culture, and Tradition) report to address issues related to flags.

Cultural Expression

History Talks – Understanding ourselves and others

Ards and North Down Borough Council will deliver a series of History Talks throughout the year, focusing on shared history, remembrance, gender equality, and peace and reconciliation. These talks will align with significant historical and cultural dates, offering opportunities for learning, dialogue, and reflection across the Borough.

The programme will include talks and workshops around key events such as St Patrick's Day, Ulster Scots Week, Good Relations Week, and International Women's Day, as well as ongoing discussions addressing Peace and Reconciliation.

Each talk will aim to provide participants with a deeper understanding of our shared history, encouraging open, unbiased conversations about the complexities of Northern Ireland and Ireland's past. Previous talks have included the Decade of Centenaries, Partition, Brexit, and the NI Protocol.

The programme will also include talks on remembrance and diversity, focusing on how historical events shape identities and community relations today. Participants will be introduced to multiple perspectives, helping individuals better understand "the other side" and encouraging mutual respect and shared understanding. These sessions will explore how history has impacted gender, cultural traditions, and community development, fostering conversations that celebrate diversity while acknowledging challenges.

Participants will be invited through the Council's Good Relations database, social media platforms, and website to ensure representation reflective of the Borough's demographics. Each event will aim to engage a wide range of individuals, creating opportunities for communities to come together and reflect on their shared history while respecting differing identities.

The programme will be monitored through pre- and post-event evaluations, measuring participants' understanding, attitudes, and perceptions.

Monitoring and Evaluation

All Programmes within the Ards and North Down Good Relations Strategy will be subject to regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure that the intended targets and outcomes are being met, and to provide insights as to their overall effectiveness.

Responsibility for monitoring sits with the ANDBC Good Relations Team, at least one of which is in regular attendance to observe delivery and to advise on amendments, if necessary. Aspects of programme delivery to be monitored and disseminated to inform future decision making include:

- Numbers of Participants;
- Demographic / Racial / Cultural / Religious background of Participants;
- Quality of Venues utilised;
- Accessibility of Venues utilised;
- Quality of Facilitators appointed.

Evaluation activities will be one-off events and pre and post evaluation which will take place following the completion of all activities within the Strategy and Action Plan and will aggregate demographic participation statistics in terms of demographic, race, culture and religious background, thereby enabling key trends to be identified.

Evaluations will also take into consideration the overall effectiveness of programmes delivered, as well as considering key learnings in terms of the management and delivery of future Good Relations initiatives to be delivered in the Ards and North Down area.

Evaluations will seek the views and input of a wider range of stakeholders, including:

- ANDBC Staff
- Participants
- Facilitators
- Other Stakeholders, such as umbrella organisations or charities, who also work closely with communities in the ANDBC area.

All monitoring and evaluation activities will be compiled and analysed on a quarterly basis and disseminated to the relevant Council Senior Management and TEO Staff accordingly.

District Council Good Relations Programme Guidance Notes 2025/26

Please read the guidance notes below before completing the action plan.

Guidance on completing the action plan

This section provides detailed guidance on how to complete the Action Plan template for 2025/26.

Cover page

Complete the name of your District Council and the name of the Council's Chief Executive.

Section 1 – Programme and Financial Information

1.1 Programme information

Provide the total number of programmes and list the name, role and contact information, including telephone number/ext. and email, for each staff member involved in programme delivery.

It is very important that you have the appropriate staff and governance structures in place to manage and deliver the programmes detailed in the Action Plan and ensure that all required reporting and claims processes are able to be completed and submitted on time.

1.2 Financial information

This section asks you to provide the information on the financial aspects of the council's overall programme.

The first box asks you to list the name, role and contact information, including telephone number/ext. and email, for each staff member involved in financial management of the programme.

The second box asks you to complete the overall programme's financial information, broken down by 100% (includes match funding of 25% from your council) and 75% (TEO's allocation only) for the following:

- Total cost (overall programme, other expenses & staff costs)
- Total programme costs
- Programme costs broken down by theme
- Total staff and other expenses costs

- Staff cost breakdown including job title and % of role focussing on GR
- Other expenses breakdown e.g. travel, stationery, phones etc

1.3 Claim deadlines

This section outlines the council’s responsibility to ensure all claims for expenditure are made promptly. It also includes a list of deadlines for claims by quarter.

Section 2 – Programme action plan

Completing the action plan template.

2.01 Programme name

Enter the programme name.

2.02/2.03 Programme code and Key words

Each programme is denoted by the three digit code unique to each District Council, followed by a number to separate individual council programmes.

For example: ABC2 is the second programme in Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon District Council’s Action Plan. MUC14 is the fourteenth programme in Mid Ulster District Council’s Action Plan.

The programme codes are listed in the table below.

ANA Antrim & Newtownabbey	FAO – Fermanagh & Omagh
ABC – Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	LCC – Lisburn & Castlereagh
AND – Ards & North Down	MEA – Mid & East Antrim
BCC – Belfast	MUC – Mid Ulster
CCG – Causeway, Coast & Glens	NMD – Newry, Mourne & Down
DCS – Derry City & Strabane	

Include **key words** that relate to the project. This can be as many as you deem relevant from the list below. If you feel a particular key word would help summarise what your programme involves then please add it and let us know, this list will evolve over time and become more useful to stakeholders as more accurate keywords are added to the list.

Keyword	Suitable for programmes that:
SPORT	Contain a sporting element
DIVERSE	Explore diversity, in terms of participants and/or project content
RURAL	Take place in, or consider, the rural context of good relations delivery
URBAN	Take place in, or consider, the urban context of good relations delivery
SIN-ID	Are single identity in nature
SHARED	That involve both traditions here
YOUTH	Concentrate on younger participants/issues (0-18)
ADULT	Concentrate on adult participants/issues (19-64)
SENIOR	Concentrate on senior participants/issues (65+)
WALLS	Considers physical barriers
SUMMER	Takes place primarily in the summer
WINTER	Takes place primarily in the winter
FAC	Involves facilitation
RES	Involves a residential
NATURE	Takes place/involves nature or the natural environment
EMPLOY	Involves links to employment / improving employability skills
SKILLS	Involves improving / developing skills
ACCRED	Involves participants working toward an accredited qualification
TRIP	Involves a trip or trips away for the participants
ART	Involves the use of art and/or creative activity
TREES	Involves opportunities for people from all backgrounds to learn more about the environment in a shared good relations context.

2.04 Programme Summary

Provide a brief programme synopsis – what the project involves, what demographic it seeks to target, what outcome it is designed to achieve, and what activity is involved.

2.05 Contact details for programme staff

Provide the details of the Good Relations Officer involved in the delivery of the programme. This should include a contact telephone number and an email address.

2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)

Provide the total (100%) budgeted cost of the programme.

2.07 Total TEO Contribution

Provide the total (75%) contribution from TEO.

2.08 Total targeted no. of participants

Provide the total targeted number of direct and indirect participants of the programme.

A direct participant is one who attends the programme or is otherwise directly engaged in programme activity. For example, if a programme involves putting on a performance to demonstrate an aspect of shared history, all those involved in the planning, design and delivery of the performance would be direct participants.

An indirect participant is one who may receive some benefit from, or be impacted in some indirect way, by programme delivery. In the previous example of the performance on shared history, people in the audience or children in a school who had viewed a DVD of the performance, would be indirect participants of the programme.

2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme

Divide the total cost of the programme by the total number of direct participants to get the unit cost.

2.10 Targeted participant background analysis

Provide the approximate community/gender/ethnicity/socio-economic breakdown that you plan to achieve.

2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ

Provide the name and post code of the location where the Programme HQ is based.

2.12 Post codes of main delivery points

Provide the names and post codes of the geographic location(s) where the project **will have the greatest impact.**

You should include the locations of areas where the programme is delivering the greatest impact to the community or benefit to participants.

For example if participants on a programme are primarily from three estates in a town (and therefore those estates should experience the most positive impact from delivery), then this section would include the names and post code information for those three estates – where estates or other geographic areas traverse more than one

post code area, use a post code that gives the best impression of the central point of such an area.

2.13 Key Aim

Select one Key Aim for the Programme from the four key T:BUC aims and note in here.

2.14 Link to good relations audit

This section asks you to provide information about the programme's direct link to the need identified in your council's GR Audit.

2.15 Complementarity

This section asks you to list the areas of complementarity (PCSP, Peace Plus, community planning, MEDF, etc.) within the programme. You should include evidence of complementarity in programme design, structure and outcome.

2.16 Impacted Communities

Indicate whether the programme impacts on Rural, Urban or both communities.

Section 3 - Action Plan Programme Outcome Summary Table 2025/26

This section asks you to provide a summary of the provision across the programme in one table. The summary should be completed for submission of the Action Plan and updated during the funding cycle as you submit your quarter progress.

Section 4 - T:BUC Strategic Outcome

This section asks you to provide a summary of all individual programmes based on the link to a key T:BUC aim identified for the programme. You must provide the following:

- Total no. of programmes
- Total no. of participants
- Unit cost of programme activity
- Total cost of programmes

The four T:BUC key aims are Children and Young People (abbreviated here as C&YP), Shared community, Safe community and Cultural Expression.

For example under C&YP, the table below indicates that the council had eight programmes where C&YP was the primary linked strategic outcome.

The eight programmes had a total of 425 participants and, in total, cost £50,000 to deliver.

The unit cost of programme activity per person is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Total programme cost} \div \text{Total no of participants} = \text{unit cost per person}$$

To get the unit cost of programme activity per person for this example you would work

	C&YP	Shared community	Safe community	Cultural Expression	Council Total	TEO Total
Total no. of programmes (linked to the strategic aim)	8	10	6	12	36	e.g if TEO only funding 34
Total no. of participants (sum of participants from all programmes linked to the strategic aim)	425	320	125	200	1,070	As above include number of participants for the number of programmes funded by TEO
Unit cost of programme activity per person (Total programme cost ÷ Total no of participants = unit cost per person)	£50,000 ÷ 425 participants = £118 per person	=40,000/320 = £125 per person	=50,000/320 = £156 per person	=40,000/200 = £200 per person	=180,000 /1,070= £168 per person	As above
Total cost of programmes (sum of delivery costs for all programmes linked to the strategic aim)	£50,000	£40,000	£50,000	£40,000	180,000	
Total Contribution from TEO (75%)	£37,500	£30,000	£37,500	£30,000	£135,000	

out as follows:

$$£50,000 \div 425 \text{ participants} = £118 \text{ per person}$$

NB: Guidance on the Outcome Process will follow separately

Further guidance

If you have any further questions please contact Julie McCormack on julie.mccormack@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk (028 9037 8720) or Paul Douglas on paul.douglas@executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk (028 9052 9694) to discuss before you return your application.

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DCGRP Social Dynamics and Policy Model



The above is a conceptual model of societal structures and dynamics, illustrating the complex interplay of various factors in our local region. At the core is the **DCGRP**, with the surrounding concentric circles exploring layered influences as programme impact travels out through Local, Wider, Societal, and Historical contexts. Conversely, these contexts are also continually transforming local needs, and therefore playing a significant role in shaping optimal programme design.

This visual is designed to help understand the relationships between different societal factors and how they contribute to larger social and political outcomes. The model could serve as a foundational framework in a needs-driven, evidence-led design of programme delivery, where each layer of the model informs the identification of community need and the structuring of programme response.

Appendix 1



DISTRICT COUNCIL GOOD RELATIONS PROGRAMME

2025/26 ACTION PLAN

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District Council: Ards and North Down Borough Council

Chief Executive Officer: Susie McCullough

Section 1

1.1 Programme information

Number of programmes	10
Name/role/contact details of all staff responsible for programme management	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk Nicola Dorrian 07917 544143 Nicola.dorrian@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

1.2 Financial information

Name/contact details for staff responsible for financial management of programme	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk
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	100%	75%
Total cost	£226,738	£170,053.50
Total programme costs	£107,738	£80,803.50
Programme costs breakdown		
Children and Young People	£26,738	£20,053.50
Shared Community	£10,000	£7,500
Safe Community	£6,000	£4,500
Cultural Expression	£65,000	£48,750
Total staff and other expenses costs		
Staff cost breakdown	£119,000	£89,250
Job title and % of role focussing on GR (Job Descriptions to be forwarded to TEO along with completed Action Plan)	GRO-28.75hours-£45,100 GRA-£43,600 GR admin-20 hour- £19,300	GRO-28.75hours-£34875 GRA-£34125 GR admin-20 hour-£15,450
Other expenses breakdown e.g. travel, stationery, phones etc please give details	Overtime £2,500 First Aiders allowance-£100 Benefit in Kind-£100 Mileage-£3,500 Car Parking-£100 Subsistence-£100 Total- £6,400	Overtime £1875 First Aiders allowance-£75 Benefit in Kind-£75 Mileage-£2625 Car Parking-£75 Subsistence-£75 Total- £4,800

1.3 Claim deadlines

It is extremely important that all claims for expenditure are made promptly and that full expenditure is claimed for within six weeks of the end of the financial year. The claim deadlines for 25/26 are as follows:

- Quarter 1 to be with TEO no later than end of July 2025
- Quarter 2 to be with TEO no later than end of October 2025
- Quarter 3 to be with TEO no later than the end of January 2026
- Quarter 4 to be with TEO no later than 11th June 2026

Section 2

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME	2.02 CODE
Shared Education	AND01
2.03 KEY WORDS	Youth, Educational, Historic Shared, Trip
2.04 Programme Summary	Budget cuts and cost of living increases has ended the programme as a journey to the Battlefields however as a substitute GR intend to deliver a similar programme at home. Schools will be approached to learn about WWI through interactive

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	<p>displays, visits and learning about the past. Visits will include but not limited to Clondeboye Estate and the Somme Centre. The programme will continue to be delivered on a cross-community basis, demonstrating the joined effort of all community backgrounds who took part during WWI. The young people will learn about the local people who fought and died during this period, and it will encourage the participants to build friendships with someone from a different background and bring history alive for the participants.</p> <p>The aim of undertaking the programme is to develop increased knowledge and understanding of key anniversaries and develop an appreciation of their social, political and cultural significance for NI and the UK and Ireland then and now. This incorporates knowledge and awareness of the national and European context of this period can help to change participants perspectives of our shared history.</p> <p>Different primary schools from a controlled/ integrated and maintained background will be targeted each year to ensure the project covers different areas around the borough and is cross community focused. These young people will form friendships over the entirety of the programme that they will take with them into post primary and adulthood.</p> <p>The numbers and background of participants will be reflected by the schools chosen.</p> <p>Experience has shown the benefits with schools joining together for Shared Education benefitting the rest of the school and pupils.</p> <p>This programme will build on the experience of previous educational programmes.</p> <p>The programme will be evaluated by pre and post questions and observation</p>
<p>2.05 Contact details for programme staff</p>	<p>Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk</p>
<p>2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)</p>	<p>£10,738</p>

2.07 Total TEO contribution	£8,053.50			
2.08 Total target no. of participants	Direct	180	Indirect	400
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£59.65			
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	50% PUL 50% CNR			
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	Location	Ards and North Down Borough Council	Postcode	BT19, BT20, BT21, BT22, BT23
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	Location	Schools to be selected	Postcode	
	Location		Postcode	
	Location		Postcode	
	Location		Postcode	
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Children and Young People			
2.14 Link to good relations audit	<p>The Shared Education Programme addresses the persistent educational segregation identified as a significant barrier to good relations in the Ards & North Down Borough. Census data highlights that 68% of the population identify as Protestant and 32% as Catholic, other and non, showing the need for programmes that bring communities together.</p> <p>The use of exhibitions and school assemblies ensures parental and community involvement, meaning that the programme has a wider reach.</p> <p>62.6% of survey respondents prioritised education in improving good relations.</p>			
2.15 Complementarity-include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc	<p>The Shared Education Programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities. By engaging young people and promoting increased understanding of shared history at a young age, increased mutual respect and tolerance will be fostered and carried forward into adulthood.</p> <p>Multiple other strategies also highlight the importance of promoting good relations and understanding from a young age. These include:</p>			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Education Authority’s Local Assessment of Need; • Draft Programme for Government; • Together Building a United Community; • Children and Young People’s Strategy; • Racial Equality Strategy; • Refugee Integration Strategy; and • PEACEPLUS <p>Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey Data for 2021-2023 also highlights decreasing sense of belonging within the ANDBC population to their respective neighbourhoods, dropping 3.5 percentage points during the 2019-2021 to 2021-2023 reporting periods.</p>
<p>2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both</p>	<p>Both</p>

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2.01 PROGRAMME NAME		2.02 CODE	
Shared Voices		AND02	
2.03 KEY WORDS	Youth Community Diversity Education Rural Urban		
2.04 Programme Summary	<p>This programme, co-designed with GR staff and volunteers from diverse ethnic backgrounds, raises racism awareness in primary schools and groups. Adapted to suit the needs and capacities of each school or group, the programme includes flexible delivery options: three workshops over three weeks, a condensed four-hour session, or a single, informal one-hour session.</p> <p>Initially created for post-primary schools, the programme now includes P4 and upwards, aligning with their celebration of world cultures curriculum. Facilitators and volunteers from ethnic and European backgrounds educate children about their cultures and traditions, fostering understanding and respect.</p> <p>Delivery to post-primary schools includes sessions with the PSNI addressing hate crime and hate incidents.</p> <p>Reflecting local demographics, including asylum-seekers, this enhanced programme builds on past experiences to improve outcomes. Impact will be measured using pre- and post-programme questions and observations.</p>		
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk		
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£1000		
2.07 Total TEO contribution	£750		
2.08 Total target no. of participants	Direct	200	Indirect 100
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£5pp		
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	75% PUL 25% CNR		
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	Location	Hollywood Ards Ballyhalbert	Postcode BT18 9ER BT23 8EY

				BT22 1DQ
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	Location	Redburn, Palace Barracks,	Postcode	BT18 9EZ BT18 9RA
	Location	Scrabo, West Winds, East End	Postcode	BT23 4NR BT23 4QT BT23 8LF
	Location	Donaghadee Millisle Ballywalter Portavogie	Postcode	BT21 0AY BT22 2DR BT22 2PJ BT22 1EB
	Location		Postcode	
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Children and Young People			
2.14 Link to good relations audit	<p>This programme aims to address the issues of racism and cultural understanding across the Borough. With 143 racist crimes recorded from 2019 to 2024, the programme’s focus on raising awareness in schools is essential. The demographic makeup of the Borough’s population shows 5% of residents born outside of Northern Ireland, further emphasising the need for cultural education.</p> <p>In the focus group sessions, participants noted "entrenched divisions" and "stereotypes" as barriers to good relations. Programmes such as this will provide young people with the opportunity to learn more about people from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>Shared Voices provides support to schools and communities. Sessions with PSNI will enhance understanding of hate crimes, addressing the community’s need for safety and inclusion. The programme’s capacity to engage children from P4 onwards ensures early intervention, supporting the 68.2% of survey respondents who wanted more "social interactions" to improve good relations across the Borough.</p>			
2.15 Complementarity-include links with other Strategy’s e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc	<p>The Shared Voices complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities. By engaging young people and promoting increased understanding of shared history at a young age, increased mutual respect</p>			

	<p>and tolerance will be fostered and carried forward into adulthood.</p> <p>Multiple other strategies also highlight the importance of promoting good relations and understanding from a young age. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Education Authority’s Local Assessment of Need; • Draft Programme for Government; • Together Building a United Community; • Children and Young People’s Strategy; • Racial Equality Strategy; • Refugee Integration Strategy; and • PEACEPLUS <p>In addition, there were a combined total of 253 hate incidents recorded in the ANDBC area between 2019 and 2023, of which 143 were incidents of a racist nature and 110 incidents of a sectarian nature. There is an overall trend with each of these categories that of recorded crime that show that incidents are lower in 2023/24 when compared to 2022/23, but are higher than 2019/20 levels – evidence of a need to continue to promote better racial and cultural awareness.</p>
<p>2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both</p>	<p>Both</p>

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME	2.02 CODE
Youth Empowerment Programme	AND03
2.03 KEY WORDS	Young, Skills, Shared
2.04 Programme Summary	<p>The Youth Empowerment Programme is a holistic programme designed to support young people in building resilience, developing positive relationships, and developing essential life skills. The programme aims to divert youth from negative influences, such as involvement with paramilitary groups, by offering structured, engaging, and transformative activities in a safe and inclusive environment.</p> <p>The main objectives of the programme are to equip young people with the skills and tools to manage stress, adversity, and change in a healthy and constructive way, foster personal development through the enhancement of communication, problem-solving, decision-making, and leadership skills, encourage youth to become active, positive contributors to their communities, and support mental, emotional, and physical well-being, promoting a sense of purpose and self-worth.</p> <p>The programme will include workshops, and mentorship opportunities. It will include life skills workshops that deliver sessions on decision-making, communication, goal setting, emotional intelligence, and conflict resolution. Mentorship and role model support will offer access to positive role models, community mentors, and peer support networks to inspire and guide youth. The programme will be delivered in collaboration with community organisations, youth clubs, schools, and sports clubs.</p> <p>A drama to help them understand the consequences of paramilitary activity will be delivered to a number of schools if funding is successful from other sources</p>
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£7,000
2.07 Total TEO contribution	£5,250

2.08 Total target no. of participants	Direct	200	Indirect	20
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£35pp			
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	75% PUL 25% CNR			
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	Location	Bangor	Postcode	BT20 4TD
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	Location	Portaferry	Postcode	BT22 1DQ
	Location	Newtownards	Postcode	BT23 7HA
	Location	Glastry	Postcode	BT22 1RB
	Location		Postcode	
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Children and Young People			
2.14 Link to good relations audit	<p>This programme aims to tackle anti-social behaviour and paramilitary influence among young people, which was highlighted as a key concern across all of the focus groups.</p> <p>Anti-social behaviour and lack of activities for young people were noted as challenges in survey findings, with 35% identifying "lack of engagement opportunities for children and young people" as a barrier to good relations.</p> <p>This programme's holistic approach to skill-building, mentorship, and developing resilience will help support the development of young people.</p> <p>Education and skills deprivation is a concern in 12 of the Council area's 86 statistical districts, all of which fall within NI's 25% most deprived areas in relation to this measure.</p>			
2.15 Complementarity-include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc	<p>This programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities. By engaging young people and promoting increased understanding of shared history at a young age, increased mutual respect and tolerance will be fostered and carried forward into adulthood.</p>			

	<p>Multiple other strategies also highlight the importance of promoting good relations and understanding from a young age. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Education Authority’s Local Assessment of Need; • Draft Programme for Government; • Together Building a United Community; • Children and Young People’s Strategy; • Racial Equality Strategy; • Refugee Integration Strategy; and • PEACEPLUS
<p>2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both</p>	<p>Both</p>

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME	2.02 CODE
Community Relations Through Sport	AND04
2.03 KEY WORDS	Youth Schools Sport Rural Urban facilities
2.04 Programme Summary	<p>This programme will work with pre and post primary schools in the borough. The Community Relations Through Sport Programme is designed to introduce young people to sport with which they may not normally associate. The programme will run across the borough in both urban and rural areas. Similar to the Game of 3 Halves the programme includes a ‘fourth half’ on community relations. Over the 5 weeks the ‘fourth half’ addresses issues on sectarianism and racism while the sporting element introduces the young people to new sports often associated with a particular community background.</p> <p>Building on the work from previous years, this cross-community programme of activity with schools across ANDBC continues to build links between rural and urban communities and maintained and controlled schools in the AND area. The numbers and background of participants will be reflected by the demographics of the area and schools/ clubs engaged.</p> <p>If required, the programme can include transport enabling rural schools/clubs to engage.</p>

	<p>The programme will also work closely with local sporting clubs to deliver a one day Game of 3 Halves event. The event encourages coaches and participants to take part in new sports.</p> <p>Programme will be evaluated by pre and post questions and observation</p>			
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk			
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£8,000			
2.07 Total TEO contribution	£6,000			
2.08 Total target no. of participants	Direct	300	Indirect	40
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£26.66			
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	75% PUL 25% CNR			
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	Location	Portaferry	Postcode	BT22 1RB
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	Location	Strangford	Postcode	BT22 2GB
	Location	Ballyhalbert	Postcode	BT22 1DQ
	Location	Bangor	Postcode	BT20 3DS
	Location	Holywood	Postcode	BT18 9EW
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Children and Young People			
2.14 Link to good relations audit	<p>The focus groups highlighted the importance of engaging children and young people, with 35% of survey respondents identifying 'Lack of engagement opportunities for young people' as a significant barrier to good relations.</p> <p>62.6% highlighted 'Education' as another area which was key to developing good relations in the area.</p> <p>68% of respondents also highlighted the need for more social interactions between people in the Borough to develop good relations.</p> <p>Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour, Paramilitarism and Drugs / Alcohol Related Issues were viewed as the most urgent social challenges facing communities in the ANDBC area in need of addressing.</p>			
2.15 Complementarity-include links with other	This programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC			

<p>Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc</p>	<p>Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities. By engaging young people and promoting increased understanding of shared history at a young age, increased mutual respect and tolerance will be fostered and carried forward into adulthood.</p> <p>Multiple other strategies also highlight the importance of promoting good relations and understanding from a young age. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Education Authority's Local Assessment of Need; • Draft Programme for Government; • Together Building a United Community; • Children and Young People's Strategy; • Racial Equality Strategy; and • Refugee Integration
<p>2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both</p>	<p>Both.</p>

<p>2.01 PROGRAMME NAME</p>	<p>2.02 CODE</p>
<p>Living History</p>	<p>AND05</p>
<p>2.03 KEY WORDS</p>	<p>Education, Rural, Urban, Trip, Fac, Shared, Summer</p>
<p>2.04 Programme Summary</p>	<p>The Living History Programme is a 5 week programme for participants which includes a series of educational and historical based Rural and Urban visits to places of interest within the local areas and beyond that helps people understand their shared history, breaks down barriers and challenges people to venture elsewhere to learn about their shared past. A calendar of visits will be developed aimed at breaking down barriers and offer opportunities for participants to build an understanding of our shared history.</p> <p>Some of the trips may include visits to places like, Crumlin Road Gaol, Grange Gorman, Dublin Library, Glasnevin.</p> <p>Participants will be introduced to places in Northern Ireland and Ireland that have had an impact on our lives today. Each visit is followed by post discussion to explore the shared history of the visit. It will also focus on visiting places within AND as a</p>

	<p>way of breaking down some barriers and addressing silent sectarianism.</p> <p>AND is an area with a wealth of diversity with a range of different places where communities of different community backgrounds meet and engage, in many cases with people from their own community background. Creating everyday opportunities for people to meet and engage with people from other community backgrounds is the focus of this programme. It aims to create opportunities for people to learn more about the people, places and communities that make Northern Ireland the diverse and multi-cultural place that it is.</p> <p>The programme will be open to all community backgrounds and faiths and will be publicly advertised. This will ensure a good mix of participants and community background. The programme is much more than a tourist tour because the places visited all have an influence on society today eg Visit to Crumlin Road Gaol followed by discussion with ex combatants – links closely to the Good Friday agreement and the release of prisoners.</p> <p>By advertising it will engage with the different ‘class’ elements often identified in ANDBC. All visits are followed by in depth discussion on issues that have engulfed Northern Ireland and Ireland over the centuries. This programme is designed to encourage dialogue and address these issues from an up-to-date viewpoint and in a safe environment.</p> <p>The numbers and background of participants will be reflected by the demographics of the area and transport availability.</p> <p>This programme encourages returning participants that has enabled open discussion and a better understanding of the effect the ‘troubles’ has had on so many.</p> <p>Programme will be evaluated by pre and post questions and observation</p>
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	<p>Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk</p>
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	<p>£10,000</p>

2.07 Total TEO contribution	£7,500			
2.08 Total target no. of participants	Direct	46	Indirect	160
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£217.39pp			
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	75% PUL 25% CNR			
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	Location	Ards	Postcode	BT23 4AP
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	Location	Comber	Postcode	BT23 5DF
	Location	Conlig	Postcode	BT23 7PR
	Location	Portaferry	Postcode	BT22 1PE
	Location	Bangor	Postcode	BT19 1SH
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Our Shared Community			
2.14 Link to good relations audit	<p>The focus groups revealed that symbolic and physical divisions marked by flags, murals, and graffiti persist, reinforcing sectarian attitudes.</p> <p>40% of survey respondents identified 'Political Differences' as a key barrier to good relations, while 33.8% highlighted 'Religious Differences.'</p> <p>AND's population is 68% Protestant, 14% Catholic, and 17% non-religious, reflecting the need for programmes that bring the community together.. 62.6% of respondents called for 'Education' as a priority for improving good relations.</p>			
2.15 Complementarity-include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc	<p>The Living History programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities, which this programme will stand to achieve by bringing people from across the Borough together in order to learn and gain greater understanding of the historical perspectives of their neighbours.</p> <p>Promoting better relations and generating increased respect for different historical points of view with the aim of fostering shared, safe communities is considered a priority in multiple other strategies, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Programme for Government; • Together Building a United Community; • Children and Young People's Strategy; 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial Equality Strategy; • Refugee Integration Strategy; and • PEACEPLUS <p>The most recent Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey Data for the ANDBC area shows that a small but growing percentage of the population believe that community relations were worse than what they were 5 years ago. There was also a strong sentiment towards integration within the survey findings, both in terms of housing and education.</p>
2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both	Both.

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME	2.02 CODE
Holocaust and Other Genocides	AND06
2.03 KEY WORDS	Education, Shared, Rural, Urban, Fac
2.04 Programme Summary	<p>This programme delivers a series of annual events leading to the commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day, educating schools and community groups on the consequences of hate and genocide. While the Holocaust remains central to the programme, additional genocides from Europe and worldwide will be included, chosen in consultation with participating groups to ensure relevance and engagement. Examples include the genocides in Rwanda, Darfur, Cambodia, and the treatment of Indigenous peoples in various regions.</p> <p>Holocaust Event- An annual event featuring a Holocaust survivor or second-generation speaker. The focus will be on personal stories of survival and resilience, complemented by contributions from local primary schools and guest speakers.</p> <p>Exhibition- A two-week exhibition at Bangor Carnegie Library showcasing creative works such as artwork, poems, and writings from local schools and community groups. All post-primary schools and registered groups within the ANDBC area are invited to contribute. Online materials and recordings from previous projects will highlight genocides' effects on survivors from diverse cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds.</p>

	<p>Genocide Talks- Online talks addressing genocides worldwide, including European examples, as well as global genocides in Rwanda, Darfur, and Cambodia. Each session will conclude with a facilitated Q&A to promote reflection and understanding.</p> <p>Schools talk with Holocaust survivor or second-generation speaker depending on available budget. Work in partnership with BCC and HMDT to produce the Belfast event.</p> <p>The numbers and background of participants will be reflected by the demographics of the area and based on previous programmes. Programme will be evaluated by pre and post evaluations and observation.</p>			
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	<p>Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk</p>			
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£3000			
2.07 Total TEO contribution	£2250			
2.08 Total target no. of participants	Direct	400	Indirect	300
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£7.50pp			
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	75% PUL 25% CNR			
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	Location	Ards	Postcode	BT23 4JT
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	Location	Portaferry	Postcode	BT22 1LE
	Location	Bangor	Postcode	BT20 4BT
	Location	Holywood	Postcode	BT18 9HQ
	Location	Ballyhalbert	Postcode	BT22 IDQ
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Our Safe Community			
2.14 Link to good relations audit	<p>The survey results highlighted the need for more educational programmes to improve good relations across the borough and this programme will aim to build awareness and increase understanding of historical events.</p> <p>There were 253 sectarian and racist crimes recorded in the Borough from 2019 to 2024, this highlights the need for the programme.</p>			

	<p>Focus groups all highlighted the importance "shared history education" as a tool to promote good relations across the Borough.</p> <p>This programme aims to foster intergenerational understanding and contribute to a broader culture of acceptance and inclusion.</p> <p>The programme also addresses key barriers to Good Relations identified during consultation, namely lack of engagement and opportunities for awareness raising.</p>
<p>2.15 Complementarity- include links with other Strategy's e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc</p>	<p>Similar to other historical related initiatives contained within this Action Plan, The Holocaust Memorial and other Genocides Programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities, which this programme will stand to achieve by bringing people from across the Borough together in order to learn and gain greater understanding of the historical perspectives of their neighbours.</p> <p>Promoting better relations and generating increased respect for different historical points of view with the aim of fostering shared, safe communities is considered a priority in multiple other strategies, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Programme for Government; • Together Building a United Community; • Children and Young People's Strategy; • Racial Equality Strategy; • Refugee Integration Strategy; and • PEACEPLUS
<p>2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both</p>	<p>Both.</p>

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME	2.02 CODE
Getting to Know Your Councillors/ Intergenerational	AND07
2.03 KEY WORDS	Shared, Youth, Diverse
2.04 Programme Summary	<p>This programme is open to people of all ages, including schools, community groups, and individuals, to develop a better understanding of the role of Good Relations within local councils, the role of regional and local government in Northern Ireland, and the importance of active participation in the democratic process.</p> <p>Participants of all ages will gain insights into how local and regional government operates, including the roles and responsibilities of councillors, council structures, and decision-making processes. The programme will also educate participants on the voting system in Northern Ireland, the electoral process, and the importance of voting in shaping their communities and influencing change. The programme will include interactive sessions where participants can meet and question their local councillors. This dialogue will not only educate participants but also allow elected members to hear firsthand the concerns of their constituents, fostering transparency and accountability.</p> <p>All political parties and independent councillors will be invited to participate. Groups registered on the community database, as well as all schools, community organisations, and interested individuals, will be invited to take part. The programme will be adapted to suit all age groups, from school-age children to adults, using age-appropriate workshops and materials.</p> <p>The programme will be evaluated through pre- and post-programme surveys, observation, and feedback from participants and councillors. The numbers and backgrounds of participants will reflect the demographics of the area.</p>
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£2,000
2.07 Total TEO contribution	£1,500

2.08 Total target no. of participants	Direct	60	Indirect	
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£33.33pp			
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	75% PUL 25% CNR			
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	Location	Hollywood	Postcode	BT18 9ER
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	Location	Bangor	Postcode	BT20 4TH
	Location	Portaferry	Postcode	BT22 1RB
	Location		Postcode	
	Location		Postcode	
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Our Safe Community			
2.14 Link to good relations audit	<p>This programme aims to enhance public awareness of local government, addressing the focus group’s call for "community leadership programmes".</p> <p>In the NILT survey- 46.6% of survey respondents stated that relations between Protestants and Catholics had stayed "about the same" over five years, programmes like this that increase transparency, and dialogue will be key to improving relations going forward.</p> <p>The community survey also noted that "awareness raising" (74.8%) was important to improve relations and this programme aims to build connections between councillors and constituents.</p> <p>The programme also addresses key barriers to Good Relations identified during consultation, namely lack of engagement and opportunities for awareness raising.</p>			
2.15 Complementarity-include links with other Strategy’s e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc	<p>Contained within the ANDBC Corporate Plan, there is an emphasis on the Council being an ‘engaged Borough,’ with businesses and citizens having the opportunity to directly influence services, plans and investment.</p> <p>This initiative will bridge a gap between citizens and their elected representatives and increase awareness of the respective roles and responsibilities of Councillors, and what they have the power to change and influence.</p>			

<p>2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both</p>	<p>Both.</p>
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<p>2.01 PROGRAMME NAME</p>	<p>2.02 CODE</p>
<p>No Hate Here</p>	<p>AND08</p>
<p>2.03 KEY WORDS</p>	<p>Diverse, Shared, Rural. Urban, Fac, Youth</p>
<p>2.04 Programme Summary</p>	<p>The “<i>No Hate Here</i>” programme delivers a range of diversity and inclusion programmes aimed at building community cohesion, tackling hate crime, and raising awareness of racism and sectarianism across the Borough. It aims to help participants better understand themselves and others, the programme combines creative arts, cultural events, and learning to help foster acceptance, respect, and inclusivity.</p> <p>The programme features a variety of events and activities developed in partnership with statutory agencies, voluntary organisations, and community groups, including PSNI, NIHE, YMCA, and the Intercultural Forum’s <i>No Hate Here</i> subgroup.</p> <p>It will use innovative approaches to engage participants, including arts-based projects, cultural celebrations, and newly introduced dance and drama workshops. These sessions will provide participants with a safe space to explore themes of identity, diversity, and equality, encouraging open dialogue and positive expression.</p> <p>A series of awareness-raising seminars and talks will also be delivered, featuring guest speakers, survivors of hate incidents, and experts who share insights into addressing racism and sectarianism.</p> <p>Schools and local communities will benefit from tailored workshops through the <i>Shared Voices</i> and diversity programmes, promoting cultural understanding and challenging stereotypes.</p> <p>The programme will also support asylum seekers and refugees arriving in the Borough. Working in partnership with YMCA and local networks, newcomers will receive practical support, including access to local information, ESOL (English for</p>

	<p>Speakers of Other Languages) classes, and advice to help them integrate and thrive within their new communities.</p> <p>Targeting a wide range of participants, including local communities, schools, and individuals seeking asylum, the programme will engage with all age groups. Creative workshops, cultural activities, and awareness campaigns will empower participants to challenge hate and build better relationships with others, promoting inclusion across the Borough.</p> <p>The outcomes of the programme will include increased understanding of diversity and cultural traditions, reduced incidences of hate crime, and strengthened relationships between communities and statutory organisations.</p> <p>To measure success, the programme will be evaluated through pre- and post-surveys, observations, and feedback from participants. Participation numbers and the background of attendees will reflect the demographics of the area, ensuring inclusivity and representation.</p>			
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk			
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£1,000			
2.07 Total TEO contribution	£750			
2.08 Total target no. of participants	Direct	150	Indirect	300
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£6.66pp			
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	75% PUL 25% CNR			
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	Location	Ards	Postcode	BT23 4EN
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	Location	Bangor	Postcode	BT20 5AY
	Location	Portaferry	Postcode	BT22 1RB
	Location	Holywood	Postcode	BT18 9ER
	Location		Postcode	
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Our Safe Community			
2.14 Link to good relations audit	There were a combined total of 253 hate incidents recorded in the ANDBC area between 2019 and 2023, of which 143 were incidents of a racist nature			

	and 110 incidents of a sectarian nature. There is an overall trend with each of these categories that of recorded crime that show that incidents are lower in 2023/24 when compared to 2022/23, but are higher than 2019/20 levels – evidence of a need to continue to promote better racial and cultural awareness.
2.15 Complementarity- include links with other Strategy’s e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc	<p>The ‘No Hate Here’ programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities. By engaging young people and promoting increased understanding of shared history at a young age, increased mutual respect and tolerance will be fostered and carried forward into adulthood.</p> <p>Multiple other strategies also highlight the importance of promoting good relations and understanding from a young age. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Education Authority’s Local Assessment of Need; • Draft Programme for Government; • Together Building a United Community; • Children and Young People’s Strategy; • Racial Equality Strategy; • Refugee Integration Strategy; and • PEACEPLUS
2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both	Both.

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME	2.02 CODE
Cultural Expression Programme	AND09
2.03 KEY WORDS	Hard to reach, Urban, Rural, Shared
2.04 Programme Summary	The Cultural Expression programme has been developed and builds on previous programmes with hard-to-reach groups and key influencers from perceived ex paramilitary backgrounds. The programme supports cultural expression festivals to encourage the positive promotion of PUL and CNR culture to the wider society. Festivals and bonfires

	<p>will be regularly monitored, and any negative issues addressed before they become more challenging.</p> <p>The cross-community Cultural Expression programme gives the PUL community a sense of belonging that they feel is being eroded and the CNR community a sense of inclusion. While bonfires are always going to be contentious if Good Relations can work with the groups to minimise the negativity seen around bonfires it will develop greater respect among communities and cultures in the local areas; the aims are that by reducing the negativity this may also influence wider society and those who would not normally be associated with cultural festivals.</p> <p>The programme maintains and builds relationships between the Council and retains engagement. This will also enable and encourage engagement around other hard issues (e.g., paramilitarism, flags, murals), and find alternatives means for dialogue, training and capacity building.</p> <p>The programme will also help engage hard to reach groups positively when external negative influences effect certain communities (e.g., Brexit, NI Protocol and Irish Sea Border). The programme and its activities are designed to include the wider community and create a sense of belonging, reducing the fear of intimidation often associated with bonfires.</p> <p>The programme aims to offer young people more opportunities locally, addressing the sense of hope that some feel and the lack of educational attainment faced by many young protestant boys. While the delivery of programme will not directly address this, it acts as important link and engagement mechanism for council and other agencies to progress their interagency activities in these areas with a focus on the community planning.</p> <p>Cultural festivals supported through the programme continue to be well attended by many members of the community.</p> <p>All statutory agencies agreed that although there are still some concerns especially with the size and</p>
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	<p>location of a few traditional bonfires, community engagement in association with the CE Agreement and the CE programme has significantly reduced negative incidents that previously occurred during bonfire season.</p> <p>The numbers and background of participants will be reflected by the demographics of the area and groups that can engage through the programme.</p> <p>The programme will be evaluated by pre and post questions and observation, monitoring and reports.</p> <p>The Council's Good Relations team will actively seek guidance from Stormont and the recommendations outlined in the FICT (Flags, Identity, Culture, and Tradition) report to address issues related to flags.</p>			
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk			
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£60,000			
2.07 Total TEO contribution	£45,000			
2.08 Total target no. of participants	Direct	30 groups	Indirect	8000
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£2,000 per group			
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	75% PUL 25% CNR			
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	Location	Ards	Postcode	BT23 4YH
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	Location	Portaferry	Postcode	BT22 1PE
	Location	Comber	Postcode	BT23 5DF
	Location	Holywood	Postcode	BT18 9PB
	Location	Ballygowan	Postcode	BT23 6NA
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Our Cultural Expression			
2.14 Link to good relations audit	Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey Data highlight a strong willingness for further integration within the ANDBC population, however also highlights a high level of discomfort in relation to cultural symbols, highlighting a need for further work in this area in order to address areas of concern and to break down barriers and misconceptions.			

<p>2.15 Complementarity-include links with other Strategy’s e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc</p>	<p>There are a number of strategies and policies which promote increased confidence and respect for the various cultural traditions which exist in Ards and North Down, as well as Northern Ireland as a whole. In particular, Together Building a United Community includes a specific strand dedicated to acknowledging the richness of cultural heritage and celebrating cultural expression.</p> <p>Promoting a society where all citizens feel secure in celebrating their respective cultural identities is also a key theme within the ANDBC Corporate Plan, ANDBC Big Plan, the Draft Programme for Government and the Northern Ireland Racial Equality Strategy.</p>
<p>2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both</p>	<p>Both.</p>

2.01 PROGRAMME NAME	2.02 CODE
History Talks – Understanding ourselves and others	AND10
2.03 KEY WORDS	Fac Hard to reach Sin- Id Urban
2.04 Programme Summary	<p>Ards and North Down Borough Council will deliver a series of History Talks throughout the year, focusing on shared history, remembrance, gender equality, and peace and reconciliation. These talks will align with significant historical and cultural dates, offering opportunities for learning, dialogue, and reflection across the Borough.</p> <p>The programme will include talks and workshops around key events such as St Patrick’s Day, Ulster Scots Week, Good Relations Week, and International Women’s Day, as well as ongoing discussions addressing Peace and Reconciliation.</p> <p>Each talk will aim to provide participants with a deeper understanding of our shared history, encouraging open, unbiased conversations about the complexities of Northern Ireland and Ireland’s past. Previous talks have included the Decade of Centenaries, Partition, Brexit, and the NI Protocol.</p>

	<p>The programme will also include talks on remembrance and diversity, focusing on how historical events shape identities and community relations today. Participants will be introduced to multiple perspectives, helping individuals better understand “the other side” and encouraging mutual respect and shared understanding. These sessions will explore how history has impacted gender, cultural traditions, and community development, fostering conversations that celebrate diversity while acknowledging challenges.</p> <p>Participants will be invited through the Council’s Good Relations database, social media platforms, and website to ensure representation reflective of the Borough’s demographics. Each event will aim to engage a wide range of individuals, creating opportunities for communities to come together and reflect on their shared history while respecting differing identities.</p> <p>The programme will be monitored through pre- and post-event evaluations, measuring participants’ understanding, attitudes, and perceptions.</p>			
2.05 Contact details for programme staff	Donna Mackey 07970847772 donna.mackey@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk			
2.06 Total budgeted cost of programme (100%)	£5,000			
2.07 Total TEO contribution	£3,750			
2.08 Total target no. of participants	Direct	200	Indirect	200
2.09 Budgeted unit cost of programme	£25pp			
2.10 Targeted participant background analysis	75% PUL 25% CNR			
2.11 Name and post code of Programme HQ	Location	Ards	Postcode	BT23 4DQ
2.12 Names and post codes for main areas of programme impact	Location	Portaferry	Postcode	BT22 1PE
	Location	Comber	Postcode	BT23 5DF
	Location	Holywood	Postcode	BT18 9PB
	Location	Ballygowan	Postcode	BT23 6NA
2.13 T:BUC Key Aim	Cultural Expression			
2.14 Link to good relations audit	This programme is key for tackling racism and sectarianism, given the increase in racist and			

	<p>sectarian incidents in the Borough. With 143 racist and 110 sectarian incidents recorded between 2019-2024, there is a clear need for workshops and awareness-raising programmes.</p> <p>The programme’s focus on cultural events, arts-based projects, and ESOL support for asylum seekers addresses the socio-economic and cultural diversity in the area, where 5% of the population was born outside the UK or Ireland.</p> <p>Focus group participants identified "cultural expression" as a key issue, and this programme’s partnership with PSNI, YMCA, and others provides a coordinated response.</p>
<p>2.15 Complementarity-include links with other Strategy’s e.g. Peace Plus, Urban Villages, MEDF etc</p>	<p>Similar to other historical related initiatives contained within this Action Plan, The Holocaust Memorial and other Genocides Programme complements the aims and objectives of multiple other strategies. The ANDBC Corporate Plan and ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) both contain outcomes in relation to flourishing and safe communities, which this programme will stand to achieve by bringing people from across the Borough together in order to learn and gain greater understanding of the historical perspectives of their neighbours.</p> <p>Promoting better relations and generating increased respect for different historical points of view with the aim of fostering shared, safe communities is considered a priority in multiple other strategies, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Programme for Government; • Together Building a United Community; • Children and Young People’s Strategy; • Racial Equality Strategy; • Refugee Integration Strategy; and • PEACEPLUS
<p>2.16 Impacted Communities – Urban, Rural or both</p>	<p>Both.</p>

Section 3

Action Plan Programme Outcome Summary Table 2024/25

Programme name (2.01)	Code (2.02)	Key Aim (2.13)	No. direct participants (2.08)	Total Cost (2.06)	Total TEO Contribution (2.07)	Post Codes (2.11)
Shared Education	AND 01	Children and Young People	180	£10738	£8053.50	BT19, BT20, BT21, BT22, BT23
Shared Voices	AND 02	Children and Young People	200	£1000	£750	BT18 9ER BT23 8EY BT22 1DQ BT18 9EZ BT18 9RA BT23 4NR BT23 4QT BT23 8LF BT21 0AY BT22 2DR BT22 2PJ BT22 1EB
Youth Empowerment Programme	AND 03	Children and Young People	200	£7000	£5250	BT20 4TD BT22 1DQ BT23 7HA BT22 1RB
Community Relations Through Sport	AND 04	Children and Young People	300	£8000	£6000	BT22 1RB BT22 2GB BT22 1DQ BT20 3DS BT18 9EW
Living History	AND 05	Our Shared Community	46	£10000	£7500	BT23 4AP BT23 5DF BT23 7PR BT22 1PE BT19 1SH
Holocaust and Other Genocides	AND 06	Our Safe Community	400	£3000	£2250	BT23 4JT BT22 1LE BT20 4BT BT18 9HQ

						BT22 1DQ
Getting to Know Your Councillors/ Intergenerational	AND 07	Our Safe Community	60	£2000	£1500	BT18 9ER BT20 4TH BT22 1RB
No Hate Here	AND 08	Our Safe Community	150	£1000	£750	BT23 4EN BT20 5AY BT22 1RB BT18 9ER
Cultural Expression Programme	AND 09	Cultural Expression	30 groups	£60,000	£45,000	BT23 4YH BT22 1PE BT23 5DF BT18 9PB BT23 6NA
History Talks	AND 10	Cultural Expression	200	£5000	£3750	BT23 4DQ BT22 1PE BT23 5DF BT18 9PB BT23 6NA

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Section 4

T:BUC Strategic Outcome

	C&YP	Shared community	Safe community	Cultural Expression	Council Total	TEO Total
Total no. of programmes	4	1	3	2	10	10
Total no. of direct participants	880	46	610	230	1766	1766
Unit cost of programme activity	£30.38	£217.39	£9.83	£282.61	£135.05	£540.21
Total Council cost of programmes	£6684.50	£2500	£1,500	£16250	£26934.50	
Total TEO cost of Programmes	£20,053.50	£7,500	£4,500	£48,750		£80,803.50

Annex A to be completed to cover the Section 75 categories for each programme.

ANNEX A

Section 75 Categories												
Programme Name	Programme Number	Persons of Different Genders	Persons of Different Religious Beliefs	Persons of Different Political Opinion	Different Racial Groups	Different Age Groups	Persons of Different Marital Status	Persons of Different Sexual Orientations	Dependants		Disabilities	
									Persons With	Persons Without	Persons with	Persons without
Shared Education	AND01	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Shared Voices	AND02	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Youth Empowerment Programme	AND03	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Community Relations Through Sport	AND04	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Living History	AND05	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Holocaust and Other Genocides	AND06	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Getting to Know Your Councillors/ Intergenerational	AND07	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
No Hate Here	AND08	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Cultural Expression Programme	AND09	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
History Talks – Understanding ourselves and others	AND10	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X

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	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	28 January 2025
File Reference	PCSP/DOJ
Legislation	Northern Ireland Justice Act (2011)
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Policing and Community Safety Strategy (2025-2028) and Action Plan (2025-2026)
Attachments	Appendix 1 Ards and North Down Borough Councils Policing and Community Safety Strategy (2025-2028) and Action Plan (2025-2026)

The Council's current Policing and Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan will end on 31 March 2025. In order to access funding from the Joint Committee (Department of Justice and Northern Ireland Policing Board) a new three-year Strategy 2025-2028 and Annual Action Plan 2025-2026 needed to be submitted by 18 February 2025.

Third Sector Connect were appointed in October 2024 to carry out the necessary consultation to inform the development of the Strategy and Action Plan. A comprehensive consultation process has been undertaken to inform the key strategic priorities which are:

Not Applicable

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Strategic Priority 1:	To ensure effective delivery in response to local need, and improve the visibility and recognition of the work of the PCSP through effective consultation, communication and engagement
Strategic Priority 2:	To improve community safety by prioritising and addressing local community safety issues, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour
Strategic Priority 3:	To support confidence in policing, including through collaborative problem-solving with communities

Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation

Engagement with stakeholders was completed to ensure the strategy was rooted in the needs and priorities of the community. This began with a series of face-to-face consultations held across the Borough, with at least one event in each District Electoral Area (DEA). These consultations provided residents, council staff, and local stakeholders with a platform to discuss their specific community safety concerns and suggest improvements. By hosting at least one event in each DEA, it ensured representation across the Borough, allowing PCSP to capture diverse local insights and priorities.

DATE	VENUE
4/11/24	Hamilton Hub Community Centre
4/11/24	Donaghadee Community Centre
5/11/24	Redburn Community Centre
6/11/24	Portavogie Community Centre
7/11/24	Comber Community Centre
8/11/24	Ballygowan Village Hall
11/11/24	Ards Arena
12/11/24	Kilcooley Women's Centre, Bangor
12/11/24	St Patrick's Community Centre, Portaferry

Alongside the face-to-face sessions, a survey was designed and distributed to widen the reach of the consultation process. This survey was designed to gather perspectives from a broad audience, including the public, council staff, elected members, PCSP members, and other stakeholders. It was distributed via social media and to those on the community database. The survey data helped identify recurring themes and unique community safety challenges, while also providing a quantitative measure of community feeling. Several 1-to-1 meetings were held via Microsoft Teams with key stakeholders. These individual sessions provided an opportunity for detailed discussions on specific topics and allowed stakeholders to share perspectives in a confidential setting.

“Turning the Curve” Exercise with PCSP Members

A "Turning the Curve" exercise was conducted with PCSP members on 25 November 2024 to refine the strategic direction going forward. This workshop-based exercise facilitated a focused discussion on key indicators of community safety, with

Not Applicable

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participants brainstorming ways to shift negative trends and improve outcomes. The "Turning the Curve" approach enabled PCSP members to prioritise strategic actions and set achievable goals, ensuring that the strategy was both ambitious and feasible.

The Policing and Community Safety Strategy (2025-2028) and annual Action Plan (2025-2026) was approved by the Policing and Community Safety Partnership on 27th January 2025 and was submitted in draft to the Joint Committee for consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the PCSP Strategy 2025-2028 and Action Plan 2025-2026.



STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2028

&

ACTION PLAN 2025-2026

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Executive Summary

The Ards and North Down Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) Strategy for 2025-2028 aims to improve community safety, build awareness of the PCSP and its activities and engage with local communities in meaningful ways. This strategy has been developed with input from extensive consultations, surveys, crime data, socio economic data, and a “Turning the Curve” exercise, which involved PCSP members. The strategy defines clear strategic priorities to ensure that the partnership’s work effectively addresses the needs of the community while responding to emerging issues.



Figure 1: PCSP Winter Running for Women

Strategic Priority 1: To ensure effective delivery in response to local need, and improve the visibility and recognition of the work of the PCSP through effective consultation, communication and engagement

The first strategic priority emphasises the importance of effective delivery in response to local needs and increasing the visibility of the PCSP. Community engagement, consultation, and communication are key components to ensure the partnership is working in collaboration with local statutory partners, agencies, businesses, and the community sector. The strategy outlines several initiatives to ensure ongoing two-way engagement, with a focus on problem-solving to address local issues as they emerge. By utilising multiple platforms including social media, traditional press and promotional events, the PCSP aims to raise awareness of its work and ensure that its activities are clearly communicated to the public. These efforts are designed to develop trust and

visibility for the partnership, ensuring that stakeholders are informed about the PCSP's role in enhancing local safety.

Strategic Priority 2: To improve community safety by prioritising and addressing local community safety issues, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour

The second priority focuses on improving community safety by addressing local crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB). The strategy outlines a collaborative approach to tackling these issues, relying on partnerships with statutory bodies, elected officials, and the community. The PCSP will prioritise interventions to address the most pressing crimes and behaviours affecting local communities. This approach involves delivering targeted programmes that are evidence-based and measurable, ensuring that the impacts of these interventions are assessed and adjusted as needed.

The strategy places a strong emphasis on early intervention and collaborative problem-solving to address the root causes of ASB and crime. By engaging with community members and organisations, the PCSP will help create safer spaces, especially for vulnerable individuals. Also, the strategy highlights the importance of horizon scanning, allowing the PCSP to respond to emerging community safety issues effectively, as highlighted by the new and innovative small grants programme.

Strategic Priority 3: To support confidence in policing, including through collaborative problem solving with communities

The third priority focuses on strengthening public trust and confidence in policing, ensuring that local communities feel heard and empowered. Key actions in this priority include providing opportunities for local accountability, particularly through hosting public meetings including consultations for future plans and developments. These initiatives aim to make policing more transparent and accessible, fostering positive relationships between young people and the police. The strategy also incorporates efforts to address the harm caused by paramilitarism, criminality, and organised crime, reinforcing the commitment to improving public safety and building stronger, safer communities.

The Ards and North Down PCSP Strategy for 2025-2028 sets out a clear roadmap for enhancing community safety and trust in policing. By prioritising effective delivery, improving community safety, and building confidence in policing, the strategy aims to create safer, more cohesive communities in the Borough. The focus on collaboration, consultation, and communication ensures that the PCSP will be responsive to community needs, while ongoing monitoring and feedback will guide the PCSP in adapting to emerging challenges. The strategy lays the groundwork for a safer, more connected community for all residents.

Introduction and Background

Introduction

Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) play a vital role in fostering safe and resilient communities across Northern Ireland. Established to bridge the gap between communities, local councils, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), and other statutory partners, PCSPs bring together representatives from various sectors to address local safety and policing concerns. By developing collaborative approaches and supporting community-led initiatives, PCSPs enhance public safety, promote community cohesion, and work proactively to address issues such as anti-social behaviour, substance abuse, hate crime, and domestic violence. PCSPs also aim to improve community confidence in the policing system by providing opportunities for local engagement, feedback, and accountability, thereby ensuring that policing reflects the needs and priorities of each unique community.

PCSPs are unique in that they are locally driven partnerships that operate at the council level, giving them a clear mandate to address the specific needs of the communities they serve. By coordinating between local authorities, statutory organisations, the PSNI, and community and voluntary organisations, PCSPs can design their initiatives to target the most pressing issues in each area. They work to ensure that communities feel both engaged in and accountable for the policing strategies impacting their neighbourhoods. This collaborative approach allows for a more responsive, inclusive, and flexible system of public safety that empowers communities to take an active role in their well-being.

Background to PCSPs in Northern Ireland

PCSPs were established in Northern Ireland as part of the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, which brought together two previous structures—the District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs)—under a single entity. The aim was to streamline efforts, reduce duplication, and create a more cohesive approach to community safety and policing.

The Joint Committee (Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and the Department of Justice) oversees PCSPs, while local councils are responsible for their administration and day-to-day operations. The Joint Committee provides guidance, funding, and support to ensure that PCSPs meet their statutory obligations, while local councils ensure the PCSPs are effectively resourced and aligned with local priorities. This governance structure helps maintain accountability while allowing PCSPs the flexibility to design interventions that address community-specific issues, from rural crime to urban anti-social behaviour.

PCSPs are made up of a combination of elected councillors, independent community members, and statutory representatives, including the PSNI and other agencies. This mix ensures that PCSPs benefit from diverse perspectives and expertise, fostering a more comprehensive approach to community safety. Through this multi-sectoral

membership, PCSPs can draw on insights from different community groups and professionals, facilitating a holistic approach to identifying and addressing local safety challenges. This collaborative model has allowed PCSPs to deliver a wide range of projects and initiatives aimed at reducing crime, promoting social inclusion, and building safer, more supportive communities across Northern Ireland.

Ards and North Down Council and PCSP

Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC)

Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC) serves a vibrant and diverse Borough. This council area combines busy town centres, rural communities, and scenic coastal regions, offering unique challenges and opportunities for community safety, cohesion, and wellbeing.

The council is committed to delivering high-quality services that meet the needs of its residents while fostering a safe, healthy, and welcoming environment. Key areas of focus for ANDBC include community development, economic growth, environmental sustainability, and public safety—all of which align with the objectives of the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP).

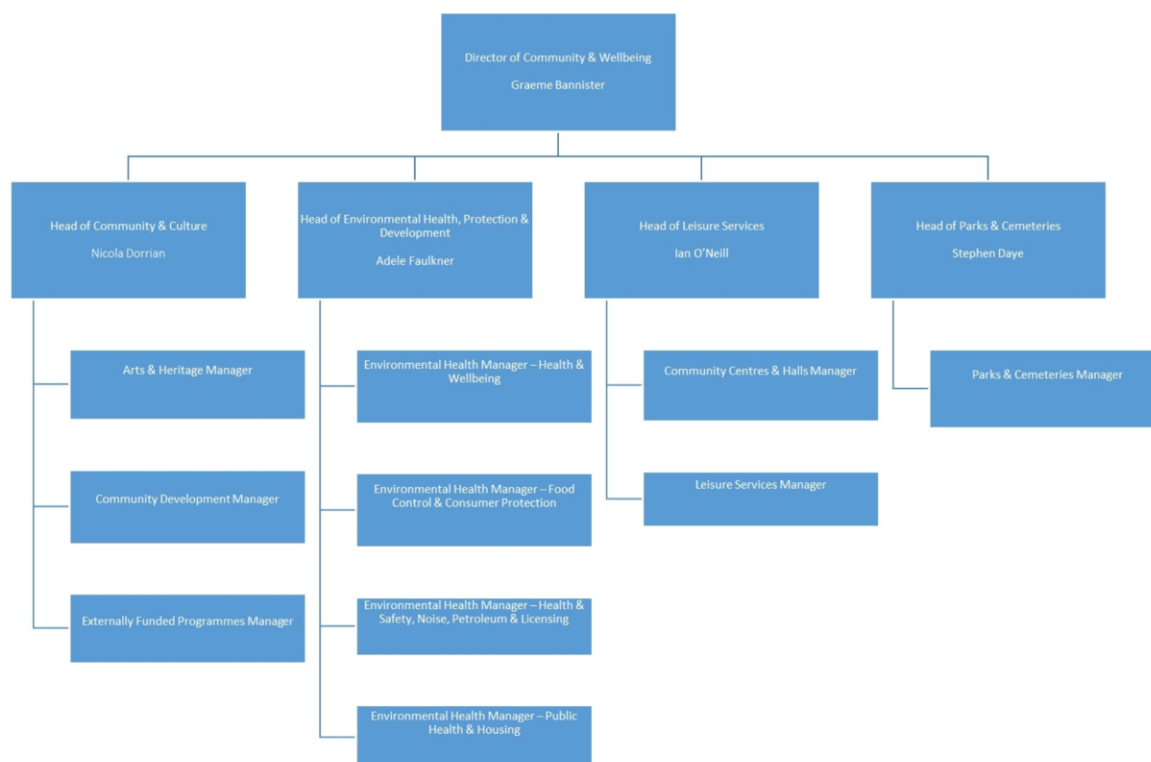


Figure 2: Ards and North Down Borough Council Structure

Within the Council structure, the PCSP operates under the Community and Wellbeing Department. Oversight of the PCSP falls under the responsibility of the Externally Funded Programmes Manager, who ensures alignment with Council’s community-focused objectives and strategic priorities. Day-to-day operations are managed by the dedicated PCSP Officer, who is responsible for implementing the PCSP strategy and

Action Plan, coordinating with stakeholders, and driving community engagement efforts. The PCSP Assistant Officer is responsible for day-to-day delivery, while further support is provided by the PCSP Administrative Assistant.

Ards and North Down PCSP

The Ards and North Down PCSP plays a vital role within the council by addressing community safety concerns, building trust in policing, and supporting initiatives that promote safer neighbourhoods and a more cohesive community. The PCSP operates as a collaborative body that brings together representatives from various sectors, including elected officials, statutory bodies, voluntary organisations, and community representatives.

The PCSP's role is to create a space for dialogue and problem-solving on pressing community issues, ensuring that a wide range of perspectives and voices contribute to decision-making. By fostering strong partnerships with organisations such as the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), local schools, youth services, and voluntary groups, the PCSP has been able to drive impactful initiatives and respond flexibly to emerging issues in the borough.



Figure 3: Comber Fair in the Square

PCSP Members

The membership of the Ards and North Down PCSP reflects the diversity and expertise required to address complex community safety needs. Members include representatives from the council, the PSNI, community and voluntary sector groups, statutory agencies, and independent members from the local area. This multidisciplinary approach helps the PCSP to develop well-rounded strategies and targeted interventions that are sensitive to local needs and effectively support community wellbeing. The tables below outline the PCSP Members:

ELECTED MEMBERS	
NAME	PARTY
Cllr Alistair Cathcart	DUP
Ald. Trevor Cummings	DUP
Cllr Libby Douglas	DUP
Cllr Nigel Edmund	DUP
Cllr Hannah Irwin	Alliance
Ald. Lorna McAlpine	Alliance
Cllr Gillian McCollum	Alliance
Cllr Victoria Moore	Alliance
Cllr Richard Smart	UUP
Cllr Pete Wray	UUP

INDEPENDENT MEMBERS
Jo Scott
Sandra Henderson
Michael Palmer
Deborah Marcus
Stephen Gibson
Alison Blayney
Karen Smith
Sarah Collyer
Sarah Robinson

STATUTORY ORGANISATIONS
Education Authority
Health & Social Care Trust
Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service
Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Probation Board for Northern Ireland
PSNI
PSNI
Youth Justice Agency

Subgroups and Relevant Forums

To enhance its effectiveness and ensure specialised attention to key areas, the PCSP has established various subgroups and participates in relevant forums. These subgroups allow the PCSP to focus on specific themes, such as anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, and support for vulnerable populations. Each subgroup operates with a clear mandate, meeting regularly to review progress, address emerging challenges, and align efforts with broader PCSP objectives. These subgroups and forums include:

- PCSP Community Safety Sub-Group
- Ards and North Down PCSP Monitoring Subgroup

- Community Safety Team (CST)
- South Eastern Drugs & Alcohol Team (SEDACT)
- South Eastern Domestic & Sexual Violence Partnership
- Anti-Social Behaviour Forum
- Concern/ Support Hub

The AND PCSP also actively engages in district-wide forums and collaborative networks. This includes participation in multi-agency meetings, community planning forums, and partnerships with organisations focused on social cohesion, youth engagement, and public health.

Current AND PCSP Priorities

Strategic Priority 1:	To ensure effective delivery in response to local need, and improve the visibility and recognition of the work of the PCSP through effective consultation, communication and engagement
Strategic Priority 2:	To improve community safety by prioritising and addressing local community safety issues, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour
Strategic Priority 3:	To support confidence in policing, including through collaborative problem-solving with communities

Examples of Successful Programmes and Projects

The AND PCSP has delivered several successful programs and projects that demonstrate its commitment to community safety and public engagement. These initiatives are designed to address priority issues identified through consultation with the community and analysis of local safety data. Some recent examples include:

Drugs and Alcohol ASB

The PCSP works closely with the PSNI regarding the monitoring and reduction of criminality related to alcohol and substance abuse in the Borough. PCSP staff also engaged with the South Eastern Drugs and Alcohol Coordination Team (SEDACT) to support a range of important interventions to reduce the level of drug related criminality in the Borough. PCSP commissioned two Tier 2 drug intervention programmes and supported community RAPID drug bins for the disposal of prescription medication. We continued to promote a Borough wide drug awareness campaign through social media and the distribution of flyers and posters.



Figure 4: PCSP Roadsafes Roadshow

RAPID Drug Bins

AND PCSP now operate 6 RAPID bins. Publicity has continued and the contents lifted from these bins are reported to the members.

Domestic Violence Female Victim Support Programme

Kilcooley Women's Centre delivered a programme of advice and support and training to female victims of sexual and domestic abuse. They delivered 17 sessions to 45 women who reported feeling safer and having a 93% increase in their knowledge of Domestic Violence and the support services available.

These projects illustrate the PCSP's adaptive approach, ensuring that initiatives are responsive to the community's evolving needs. By leveraging data, community feedback, and multi-agency collaboration, the PCSP continues to make meaningful contributions to the safety and wellbeing of residents in Ards and North Down.

Development of Ards and North Down PCSP Strategy

The methodology for developing the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) strategy was structured to ensure an inclusive, evidence-based approach that accurately reflects community needs and priorities. The process included the following elements:



Figure 5: Development Process

Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation

A key piece of the methodology was engagement with stakeholders to ensure the strategy was rooted in the needs and priorities of the community. This began with a series of face-to-face consultations held across the Borough, with at least one event in each District Electoral Area (DEA). These consultations provided residents, council staff, and local stakeholders with a platform to discuss their specific community safety concerns and suggest improvements. By hosting at least one event in each DEA, it ensured representation across the Borough, allowing us to capture diverse local insights and priorities.

DATE	VENUE
4/11/24	Hamilton Road Community Centre
4/11/24	Donaghadee Community Centre
5/11/24	Redburn Community Centre
6/11/24	Portavogie Community Centre
7/11/24	Comber Community Centre
8/11/24	Ballygowan Village Hall
11/11/24	Ards Arena
12/11/24	Kilcooley Women's Centre
12/11/24	St Patrick's Community Centre, Portaferry

Alongside the face-to-face sessions, a survey was designed and distributed to widen the reach of the consultation process. This survey was designed to gather perspectives from a broad audience, including the public, council staff, elected members, PCSP members, and other stakeholders. It was distributed via social media and to those on the community database. The survey data helped us identify recurring themes and unique community safety challenges, while also providing a quantitative measure of community feeling.



Figure 6: Consultation Advert

Several 1 to 1 meetings were also held via Microsoft Teams with key stakeholders. These individual sessions provided an opportunity for detailed discussions on specific topics and allowed stakeholders to share perspectives in a confidential setting.

Review of Local and Regional Strategies and Policies

To ensure that the strategy aligned with the broader policy landscape, a detailed review of relevant local and regional strategies and policies was conducted. These included Borough-level strategies such as those related to community safety, economic development, and public health. This helped to identify areas of overlap and potential for strategic integration, ensuring that the PCSP strategy would complement other ongoing plans within the Borough.

At the regional level, policies and strategies relevant to policing and community safety across Northern Ireland were reviewed. Understanding the priorities and guidelines set at a regional level, ensured that the PCSP strategy would align with Northern Ireland's broader safety and policing objectives, while also meeting regulatory requirements. This review process provided a comprehensive understanding of the policy context, highlighting opportunities for synergy and ensuring consistency with wider strategic goals.

Analysis of Key Statistics

In collaboration with the council's Data and Evidence Analyst, a thorough analysis of statistical data was conducted to ground the strategy in objective evidence. The data review covered a range of indicators, including crime statistics, community safety trends, and demographic information. This quantitative analysis complemented qualitative feedback, ensuring that the strategy was both evidence-based and responsive to real-world trends.

Benchmarking of Best Practices from Other PCSPs

To enhance the effectiveness of the approach, a benchmarking exercise of projects undertaken by other PCSP's across Northern Ireland was conducted. This benchmarking exercise helped to assess the effectiveness of different strategies in tackling common safety issues and provided insights into potential enhancements or new approaches that could be tailored to the Borough's unique needs.

"Turning the Curve" Exercise with PCSP Members

Finally, a "Turning the Curve" exercise was conducted with PCSP members on 25th November 2024 to refine the strategic direction going forward. This workshop-based exercise facilitated a focused discussion on key indicators of community safety, with participants brainstorming ways to shift negative trends and improve outcomes. The "Turning the Curve" approach enabled PCSP members to prioritise strategic actions and set achievable goals, ensuring that the strategy was both ambitious and feasible. This collaborative process fostered a sense of shared ownership among PCSP members, strengthening their commitment to the strategy's objectives and to implementing impactful change in the community.

Socio Economic Profile of AND

The population of the Ards & North Down Borough Council area on Census Day in 2021 was 163,659, residing across 70,445 households. The resident population was 51% female and 49% male, with an age demographic presented as follows:

Age Bracket	Ards & North Down	Northern Ireland
0 – 14	17%	19%
15 – 39	27%	31%
40 – 64	34%	32%
65+	22%	17%

Overall, the ANDBC area has a slightly more elderly population than the Northern Ireland national average.

Key Economic Stats (Source: ONS, 2022 unless otherwise stated)

- Economic Inactivity in the ANDBC area is 25.2%, lower than the Northern Ireland rate of 26.3%
- The local employment rate is 72.8%, lower than the Northern Ireland rate of 73.8%
- Median Gross Annual Pay in the ANDBC area was £23,377, lower than the Northern Ireland median of £28,825
- Gross Value Added per hour worked was £36.50
- The Council area has 4,645 active businesses, including 400 new businesses and 450 business deaths in 2022.
- As of July 2024, the claimant count in ANDBC area is 2.9% of the working age population. The Northern Ireland rate is 3.2% of the working age population.
- In 2023, ANCBC had an annual average claimant count of 2,662. This equates to 2.7% of the borough's working age population, which is lower than the Northern Ireland average of 3.1%.
- 81.1% of the ANDBC working age population enjoy 'Very good or good health', higher than the NI average of 80.7%.
- 20.2% of the ANDBC population stated their day-to-day activities were 'limited' by a long-term health problem or disability, slightly lower than the NI average of 20.7%.
- 33.6% of the ANDBC population stated they had at least one long-term health condition, higher than the NI average of 32.1%.
- The population of ANDBC boasts a higher skills profile than the NI average rates for each recognised level of attainment. In addition, ANDBC has a lower rate of the working age population with no qualifications (9.2%) than the NI

average (13.6%). This rate has fluctuated in ANDBC over the past 15 years but is markedly lower than the high of 15.8% recorded in 2013.

DEA Population Summaries

In order to provide additional context to the statistics presented, the population of each of the District Electoral Areas composing the ANDBC area is presented below:

DEA	Population	% of Total Population
Newtownards	29,395	18.0%
Bangor Central	26,637	16.3%
Ards Peninsula	24,964	15.3%
Bangor East and Donaghadee	22,850	14.0%
Holywood and Clondeboye	20,809	12.7%
Bangor West	19,517	11.9%
Comber	19,487	11.9%
Total	163,659	100%

The Newtownards area records the largest population of all seven DEAs in the ANDBC area, with almost 30,000 residents. This is almost 10,000 residents greater than the two smallest DEAs – Bangor West and Comber, which have 19,517 and 19,487 populations respectively.

Summary of Deprivation and Disadvantage

An assessment of deprivation and disadvantage was carried out by NISRA in 2017, which assessed the relative areas of deprivation within communities across multiple measures. This analysis brought to the fore several considerations pertaining to ANDBC communities, namely:

- The Scrabo 2 area of Newtownards, which falls within the 10% most deprived communities in Northern Ireland overall, but most notably in terms of income, employment, and skills.
- The Glen 1, Central, Conlig 3, Harbour 1, Donaghadee South 1, and Portaferry 2 Super Output Areas all fall within the 25% most deprived areas in Northern Ireland overall.

Income Deprivation

Income deprivation takes account of a single indicator, which is the proportion of the population living in households with an equivalised income below 60% of the NI median. In total, 13 Super Output Areas in AND are ranked within the 25% most deprived areas in NI in relation to this measure, with Central and Glen 2 both falling within the 10% most deprived, and Scrabo 1 within the 5% most deprived.

Employment Deprivation

Employment deprivation is used to define the proportion of the population who are involuntarily excluded from the labour market. In total, ten Super Output Areas in AND fall within the 25% most deprived areas in NI in relation to this measure. These neighbourhoods are spread across the Borough, in major towns such as Newtownards, Bangor, and Donaghadee, but also in smaller towns and villages such as Ballywalter, Portaferry, Conlig, and Portavogie.

Health and Disability Deprivation

Health and disability deprivation considers a range of measures for each Super Output Area, including preventable death ratios, ratios of people registered as having cancer, ratios of people with a long-term health problem or disability, and ratios of people with multiple prescriptions (as well as others). The Conlig 3 Super Output Area ranked 86th out of 890 in this measure, placing it amongst the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in NI. A further six Super Output Areas in Newtownards, Comber, and Portaferry also ranked amongst the 25% most deprived in relation to this measure.

Education and Skills Deprivation

The education and skills deprivation measure takes into consideration a combination of indicators such as absentee rates, proportion of young people not in education, training, or employment (NEET), and the proportion of adults with no qualifications or a low level of educational attainment.

Education and skills deprivation is a concern in 12 of the Council area's 86 statistical districts, all of which fall within NI's 25% most deprived areas in relation to this measure. Of particular concern is the Glen 1 and Scrabo 2 Super Output Areas in Newtownards, and the Comber North 1 Super Output Area in Comber, which all fall amongst the region's 10% most deprived areas in relation to this measure.

Diversity and Inclusion (Ethnicity, country of birth, and religion)

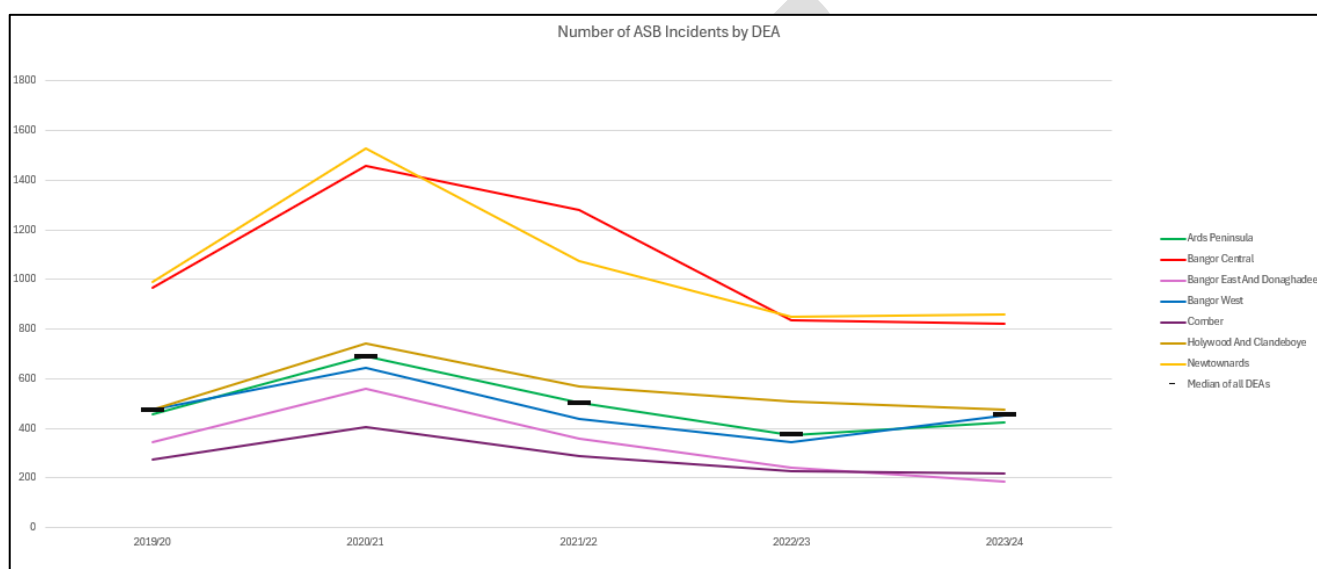
On Census Day in 2021, the resident population of the ANDBC area was composed 87% of people who were born in Northern Ireland, with a further 8% born elsewhere in the UK or Republic of Ireland. 5% were born in other countries.

The resident population of AND was 98% from a white ethnic group. In terms of religious background, 68% of citizens residing in AND identified as being from a Protestant background, with 14% from a Catholic background. 17% did not identify with any particular religious background, with just 1% associating with another, non-Christian faith.

- Crime and Anti-social Behaviour Data (anti-social behaviour, hate crimes, and policing challenges)

Anti-Social Behaviour Incidents

There were a total of 3,887 recorded instances of Anti-Social Behaviour in the Ards and North Down Council area in 2023, a slight increase on the 2022 figure of 3,757 but lower than the 2019, 2020 and 2021 rates. The 2023 AND figure accounted for 7.6% of all such incidents in Northern Ireland, and was the 5th highest of the eleven Council areas.



The Newtownards and Bangor Central DEAs consistently recorded the highest instances of Anti-Social Behaviour of all 7 DEAs in the Council area.

Hate Crimes

The following analysis presents statistics related to crime incidents with either a racist or sectarian motivation in the Ards and North Down Borough Council area between 2019/20 and 2023/24. A combined total of 253 incidents were recorded in the area during this period.

All Crimes with a Racist Motivation

The table below depicts all crimes which have been recorded in the ANDBC area with a racist motivation

DEA	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Ards Peninsula	2	1	1	7	1
Bangor Central	4	8	14	12	9
Bangor East And Donaghadee	3	0	1	4	1
Bangor West	6	1	1	4	2
Comber	1	1	1	0	3
Hollywood And Clandeboye	4	0	0	7	6
Newtownards	6	6	12	7	7
Grand Total	26	17	30	41	29

A total of 143 incidents of a racist nature were recorded in the ANDBC area between 2019/20 and 2023/24. The overall trend across the area is that crimes of a racist motivation have declined over one year, but are still higher than levels experienced at the turn of the decade. In each year (with the exception of 2019/20 – although the lower levels experienced in this year could be explained by the public restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic), the Bangor Central DEA emerges as the area with the highest incidents of race-related crime, with the Newtownards DEA recording the second-highest incidents across the 5-year period.

All Crimes with a Sectarian Motivation:

DEA	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Ards Peninsula	2	2	1	7	5
Bangor Central	3	4	7	5	2
Bangor East And Donaghadee	0	0	3	2	0
Bangor West	0	7	3	6	4
Comber	4	0	3	0	2
Hollywood And Clandeboye	1	0	4	4	1
Newtownards	8	2	5	7	6
Grand Total	18	15	26	31	20

With 110 recorded incidents between 2019/20 and 2023/24, crimes of a sectarian nature in the ANDBC area have been lower than incidents motivated by racism. Whilst overall, a similar trend emerges in that levels of recorded crime are lower in 2023/24 when compared to 2022/23 but are higher than 2019/20 levels (although the lower levels experienced in this year could be explained by the public restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic).

The Newtownards DEA emerged as the area with the highest numbers of recorded incidents of a sectarian motivation over this 5-year period, with the Bangor Central DEA and Peninsula DEA also experiencing higher occurrences of crime of this nature compared to the Comber, Bangor West, Bangor East and Donaghadee and Holywood and Clondeboy areas.

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Recorded Crime

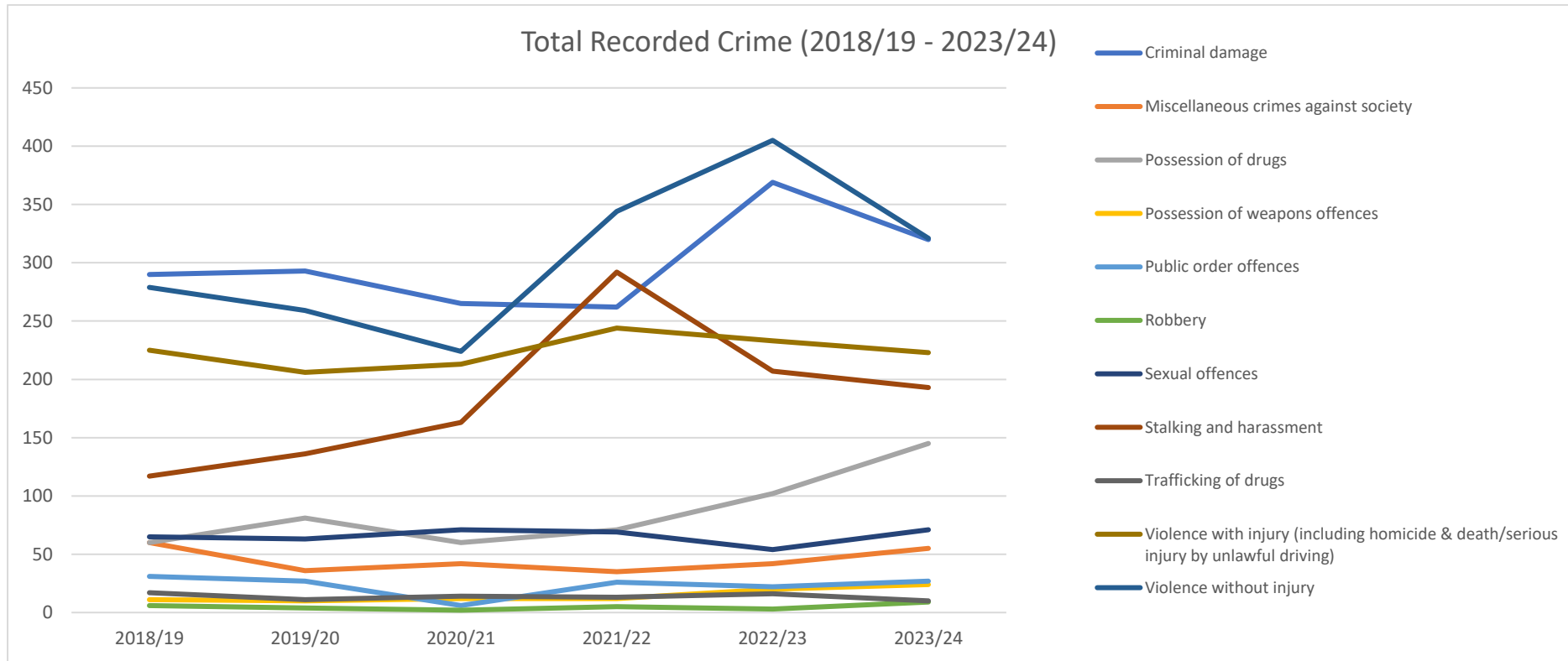
Year	Criminal damage	All Drugs Offences*	Weapons offences	Public order offences	Robbery	Sexual offences	Stalking / Harassing	Violence with injury**	Violence without injury	Other	Grand Total
2018/19	290	77	11	31	6	65	117	225	279	60	1161
2019/20	293	92	10	27	4	63	136	206	259	36	1126
2020/21	265	74	12	6	2	71	163	213	224	42	1072
2021/22	262	84	12	26	5	69	292	244	344	35	1373
2022/23	369	118	20	22	3	54	207	233	405	42	1473
2023/24	320	155	24	27	9	71	193	223	321	55	1398
Total	1799	600	89	139	29	393	1108	1344	1832	270	7603

*Includes possession and trafficking

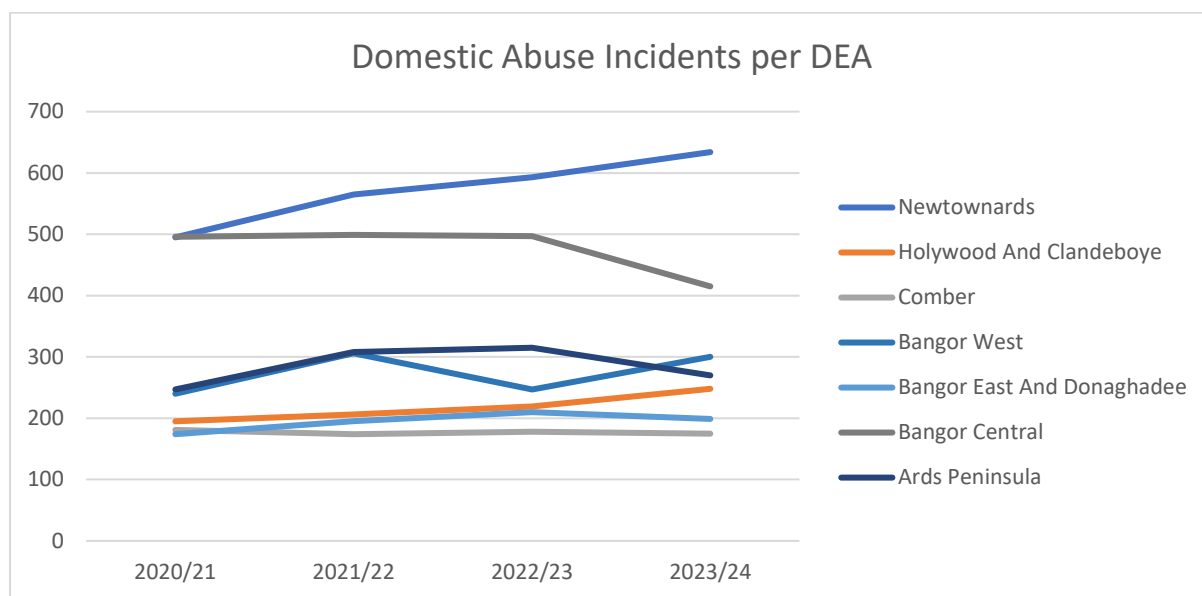
** Includes homicide & death/serious injury by unlawful driving

Recorded Crime overall is lower in Ards and North Down in 2023/24 than both 2022/23 and 2021/22, but is higher than crime levels witnessed between 2018 and 2020. The largest increases realised since 2018 have included instances of Drugs, Weapons, Stalking and Harassment, and Violence without injury.

A point of note is that the Stalking Act (NI) came into operation in April 2022, which introduced two new offences under this category of recorded crime.



Incidents of Domestic Abuse



	N'Ards	H'wood & C'boye	Comber	Bangor West	Bangor East And D'dee	Bangor Central	Ards P'sula	Total
2020/21	495	195	181	240	174	496	247	2028
2021/22	565	206	174	306	195	499	308	2253
2022/23	593	219	178	247	210	497	315	2259
2023/24	634	248	175	300	199	415	270	2241
Total	2287	868	708	1093	778	1907	1140	

Recorded instances of domestic abuse have also increased in the AND area over the past 4 years, rising 10.5% from 2028 annual incidents to 2241. Increasing prevalence of domestic abuse can be highlighted particularly in the Newtownards, Hollywood and Clandeboye, Bangor West DEAs, all of which recorded rises of 25% or higher.

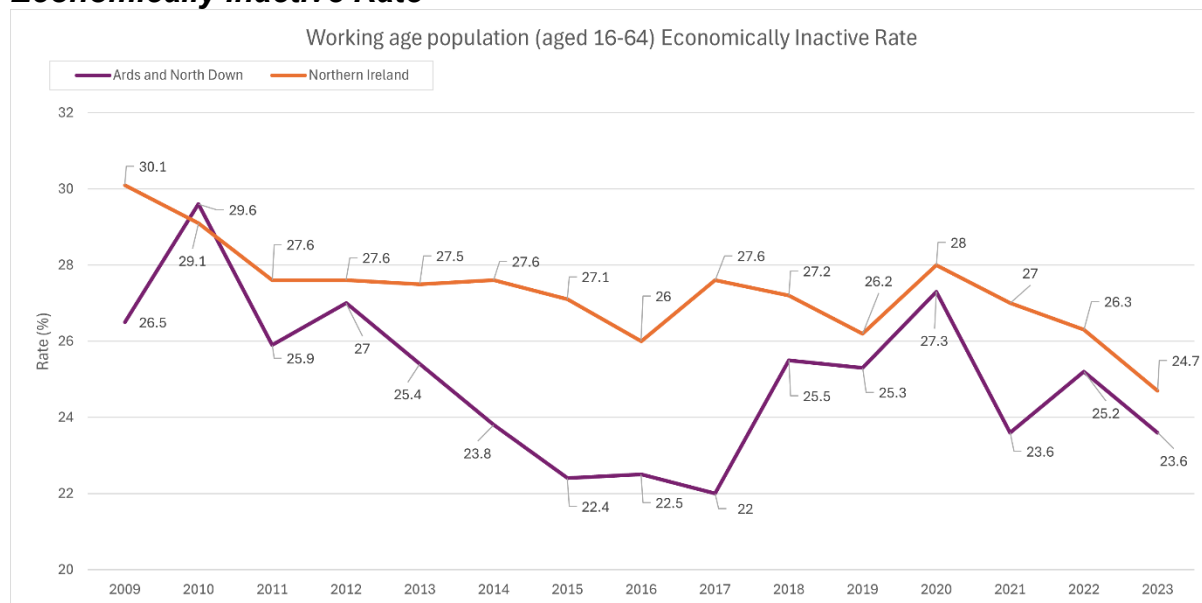
Crimes of a Sexual Motivation

Recorded crime of a sexual motivation remains comparatively low across the Ards & North Down Council area, with 43 incidents recorded between the 2019/20 and 2023/24 statistical years. Despite recording the second lowest population of any ANDBC DEAs, the Bangor West area recorded the highest number of incidents of any DEA during this period of analysis, with 11 incidents recorded (25.6%) of the total.

Economic Statistics

Economic Statistics

Economically Inactive Rate



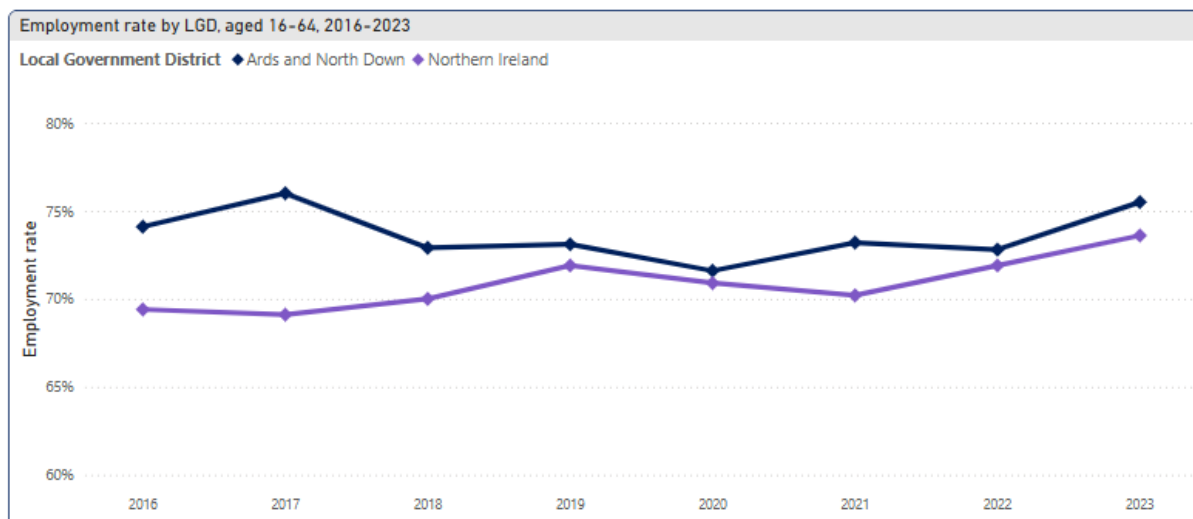
(Source: Labour Force Survey, NISRA)

The most recently available Labour Force Survey data highlights that the economically inactive rate within the Ards and North Down population fell back to its 2021 level of 23.6% in 2023, continuing to be lower than the Northern Ireland rate of 24.7%.

These figures represent an improvement in the economically inactive rate compared to 2022 levels, when the rate for NI population aged between 16 and 64 was 26.3%, with AND recording a slightly lower rate of 25.2%.

Unemployment

The employment rate for AND rose in 2023 to 75.5% from its 2022 level, and is 1.5 percentage points higher than the Northern Ireland rate of 73.6%. Unemployment in the ANDBC area fell from 2.7% in 2022 to 1.1% in 2023.



(Source: Labour Force Survey, NISRA)

Employment Rate per Age Category

	16-24	25-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Total
AND Employment Rate	60.5%	92.6%	88.0%	66.3%	11.4%	75.5%
NI Employment Rate	55.8%	83.4%	84.6%	66.0%	12.0%	73.6%
Variance (+/-)	+4.7%	+9.2%	+3.4%	+0.3%	-0.6%	+2.2%

The ANDBC employment rate outperforms the Northern Ireland average in nearly every age group. Most notably, the employment rate amongst 25-34 year olds is 9.2 percentage points higher than the national rate. The sole age category where the ANDBC area falls behind is in the '65+' category, where the local average is 0.6 percentage points below the NI rate.

Traffic Incidents and Road Safety

Police District	2022/23				2023/24				Variance
	Killed	Seriously Injured	Slightly Injured	Total	Killed	Seriously Injured	Slightly Injured	Total	
Belfast City	6	135	1,714	1,855	4	145	1,647	1,796	-3.2%
Derry City & Strabane	2	44	587	633	2	58	544	604	-4.6%
Antrim & Newtownabbey	5	62	535	602	7	70	529	606	0.7%
Ards & North Down	4	66	483	553	3	81	508	592	7.1%
Causeway Coast & Glens	5	67	462	534	10	72	481	563	5.4%
Lisburn & Castlereagh City	2	77	519	598	1	77	501	579	-3.2%
Mid & East Antrim	4	55	345	404	9	68	398	475	17.6%
Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon	3	103	750	856	9	96	757	862	0.7%
Fermanagh & Omagh	8	77	407	492	8	66	381	455	-7.5%
Mid Ulster	15	69	473	557	8	74	507	589	5.7%
Newry, Mourne and Down	7	119	629	755	12	115	635	762	0.9%
Northern Ireland Total	61	874	6,904	7,839	73	922	6,888	7,883	0.6%

Road safety continues to be a concern in the Ards and North Down area, with the region recording 7.5% of all Road Traffic Injuries or Fatalities in Northern Ireland in 2023/24, the 6th highest of all Northern Ireland Council areas. Injuries or deaths rose by 7.1% in the AND area between 2022/23 and 2023/24

Conclusions:

There are a number of key conclusions which can be drawn from this statistical summary of the population of the ANDBC area:

Economic Profile – the economic performance of the ANDBC area is mixed when compared to economic indicators for Northern Ireland as a whole. Economic Inactivity, Employment Claimant Rates are more favourable than the national average, Median Earnings fall short of the NI rate.

Health & Wellbeing – the physical wellbeing of the population of the ANDBC area is higher than the Northern Ireland average in terms of the proportion of the population enjoying 'Very Good' or 'Good' health, as well as the proportion of the population stating that their activities were limited by a long-term health problem or disability. The percentage of citizens with at least one long term health problem was however slightly higher than the national average.

Skills & Qualifications - The population of AND boasts a higher skills profile than the NI average rates for each recognised level of attainment. In addition, ANDBC has a lower rate of the working age population with no qualifications (9.2%) than the NI average (13.6%). This rate has fluctuated in AND over the past 15 years but is markedly lower than the high of 15.8% recorded in 2013.

Deprivation – The main neighbourhoods within the ANDBC area which experience the highest levels of socio-economic deprivation include the Scrabo 2 area of Newtownards, which falls within the 10% most deprived communities in Northern Ireland overall, as well as Glen 1, Central, Conlig 3, Harbour 1, Donaghadee South 1, and Portaferry 2 Super Output Areas, all of which fall within the 25% most deprived areas in Northern Ireland.

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour - There were a total of 3,887 recorded instances of Anti-Social Behaviour in the Ards and North Down Council area in 2023, a slight increase on the 2022 figure of 3,757 but lower than the 2019, 2020 and 2021 rates. The 2023 AND figure accounted for 7.6% of all such incidents in Northern Ireland and was the 5th highest of the eleven Council areas.

The general trend within crime overall is that levels are lower than those experienced between 2021 and 2023, but higher than rates recorded between 2018 and 2021. The notable exception is recorded incidents of Domestic Abuse, which has risen over 10% in the past 4 years.

Road Safety - Road safety continues to be a concern in the Ards and North Down area, with the region recording 7.5% of all Road Traffic Injuries or Fatalities in Northern

Ireland in 2023/24, the 6th highest of all Northern Ireland Council areas. Injuries or deaths rose by 7.1% in the AND area between 2022/23 and 2023/24

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Strategic Context

STRATEGY	AIMS/ OBJECTIVES OF STRATEGY	RELEVANCE TO PCSP
<p>Corporate Plan 2024-28</p>	<p>The Ards & North Down Borough Council Corporate Plan for 2024 – 2028 sets out the Council’s priorities in terms of providing civic leadership, promoting prosperity and delivering essential services to people who live, work and visit Ards and North Down. The 7 key outcomes which the Council have prioritised as being integral to creating a Sustainable Borough include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment. 2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets. 3. A thriving and sustainable economy. 4. A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors. 5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing. 6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy. 7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high-performing organisation. <p>Under each of these outcomes are various key strategic actions which it is anticipated will see these outcomes realised.</p>	<p>There are several of the outcomes contained within the Ards & North Down Borough Council Corporate Plan which are explicitly relevant to the Council’s Policing and Community Safety Partnership priorities.</p> <p>Specifically, Outcome 5 relates to ensuring that the Borough is safe, welcoming and inclusive and that its resident communities have the opportunity to flourish. This Outcome aligns with PCSP priorities, which seek to address areas of identified concern amongst citizens in relation to community safety, and to foster increased trust in policing.</p> <p>The 2024-2028 Corporate Plan also aims to ensure that the Council is a high-performing organisation (Outcome 7). By ensuring that the</p>

		<p>PCSP Strategic Assessment and Action Plan are evidence-based, and incorporate the views of citizens and communities across the Borough, the Council can be confident of delivering positive outcomes through tailored solutions.</p>
<p>‘The Big Plan’ and ‘The Big Plan Part II: Our Big Priorities’</p> <p>Ards & North Down Borough Council Community Plan</p>	<p>‘The Big Plan’ sets out Ards & North Down Council’s community planning priorities and objectives for the 15-year period from 2017 to 2032.</p> <p>The Big Plan outlines how public service providers in Ards and North Down work together to maintain and improve the well-being of citizens in line with the five outcomes.</p> <p>In 2022, following a review of the Big Plan, the Big Plan Part II: Our Big Priorities was published. In 2024, the Big Plan and the Big Plan Part II were further reviewed, and additional amendments made.</p> <p>The key outcomes which ANDBC are seeking to deliver through the successful delivery of ‘The Big Plan’ following a further review in 2024 are set out as follows:</p> <p>Outcome 1 - Opportunities to fulfil their lifelong potential Outcome 2 - Being equipped to enjoy good health and wellbeing</p>	<p>The ANDBC ‘Big Plan’ contributes to enhancing Community Safety in a number of key ways.</p> <p>Outcome 1 of ‘The Big Plan’ is concerned with ensuring that all citizens of the Borough have access to all opportunities without hindrance. Moreover, Outcome 3 specifically relates to ensuring that all citizens of the Borough enjoy safety and security.</p> <p>The ANDBC PCSP Action Plan will promote increased access to information, services and initiatives which will stand to</p>

	<p>Outcome 3 - Live in Communities where they are respected, are safe and feel secure</p> <p>Outcome 4 - Benefit from A prosperous and inclusive economy</p> <p>Outcome 5 - Feel pride from having access to an environment that is valued, well-managed and accessible. sustainable environment</p> <p>The cross-cutting themes which underpin ‘The Big Plan’ include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To have empowered, resilient individuals and communities; • To reduce inequalities; • To promote good relations and sustainability; and • To improve the accessibility of all public services. 	<p>improve communities’ confidence and to enhance public safety. The Action Plan will also seek to give citizens the confidence to take action to improve their own lives and to address any issues regarding their own personal safety and/or wellbeing.</p>
<p>Ards and North Down Local Policing Plan 2022 -23</p>	<p>The Ards and North Down Local Policing Plan 2022 - 23 highlights the priorities for the PSNI in the District across three key outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a safe community; • We have confidence in policing; and • We have engaged and supported communities. <p>The Local Policing Plan also presents key actions to be undertaken across the six key priority areas of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visibility; • Neighbourhood Policing; • Vulnerability and Mental Health; • 101 Call Handling; 	<p>There is a clear alignment between the priorities of the ANDBC PCSP and the Local Policing Plan in that one of the key functions of the PCSP is to engage with communities and also to foster increased trust and confidence in policing.</p> <p>The Ards and North Down Local Policing Plan 2022-2023 also specifically highlights the need for collaboration and multi-agency</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration and Multi-Agency Working; and • Competing Police Demand 	<p>working, and a need to increase the awareness of the role of the PCSP within communities.</p> <p>A further priority of this action plan is to increase engagement with young people and at risk, disadvantaged and diverse communities – aligning with the inclusive approach to be adopted in the delivery of the ANDBC PCSP Action Plan.</p>
<p>EA Local Assessment of Need: ANDBC- 2023</p>	<p>Undertaken by the Education Authority, this Assessment of Need takes into consideration demand for Youth Services across the ANDBC area in order to inform the allocation of staff and resources in response to priority policy areas. The Local Assessment of Need specifically focuses, amongst other thematic areas, on matters directly relevant to the ANDBC PCSP, with a review carried out specifically in relation to Living in Safety and Stability.</p> <p>The key findings of this assessment highlight that whilst overall, high numbers of young people reported feeling safe in their own communities in Ards & North Down, paramilitarism remains a high risk for young people. This is especially true of young people living in areas of high deprivation.</p>	<p>The EA’s Local Assessment of Need for the Ards & North Down Borough Council area highlight a need for continued engagement with young people to ensure that the positive sentiments in relation to community safety remain as such and do not deteriorate.</p> <p>The findings of this review also align with the findings of consultation carried out, whereby paramilitarism was noted as an ongoing risk within</p>

		communities in the ANDBC area.
<p>The Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland report “PCSPs, A review of governance delivery and outcomes”</p> <p>2019 – 2022</p>	<p>The primary purpose behind the development of this report was to assist Policing & Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) to set out the priority areas for action by the PCSP.</p> <p>Acknowledging that PCSPs are required to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and confirm priority policing and community safety issues based on a strategic assessment; • Describe what the PCSP aims to achieve; • Communicate the content of their action plans and how the PCSP will work to deliver its action plans; • Explain how the PCSP will work in partnership to make the best use of resources; and • Explain how Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) will be used to measure and manage performance of PCSPs. <p>The report highlights the requirement for ‘Turning The Curve’ methodology to aid forward planning for relevant projects and programs of work, and the use of OBA performance management principles to monitor and measure the impact of work and the implementation of action plans.</p>	<p>The Ards and North Down PCSP Action Plan aligns with this report in that it adheres to all recommendations and requirements of the operation, governance and reporting structures of PCSPs as set out in the delivery guidelines.</p> <p>The approach taken to develop this action plan also included the adoption of ‘Turning the Curve’ methodologies and incorporates key learnings from the delivery of previous Action Plans and initiatives delivered in other Council areas.</p>
<p>Criminal Justice Inspection NI report: “Community Safety and Local Policing Arrangements in Northern Ireland”</p>	<p>The March 2024 CJINI Report sets out strategic and operational recommendations in relation to the vision for community safety in Northern Ireland, and alludes strongly to the importance of the</p>	<p>The priorities of the Ards and North Down PCSP Action Plan align with several of the recommendations</p>

<p>March 2024</p>	<p>role of local Policing and Community Safety Partnerships. Key areas of improvement were identified in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of best practice • Better highlighting of the linkages between PCSP and Local Policing Plan 	<p>outlined in this review as the activities contained within it have been designed using best-practice benchmarks, and have also been informed by the ANDBC Local Policing Action Plan</p>
<p>‘Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most’</p> <p>Northern Ireland Draft Programme for Government 2024 – 2027</p>	<p>The Northern Ireland Programme for Government 2024-2027 was published in September 2024, with a public consultation on the priorities contained within it concluding in November 2024.</p> <p>‘Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most’ sets out a three-year agenda for the Northern Ireland Executive across the following cross-cutting priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy • Deliver More Affordable Childcare • Cut Health Waiting Times • Ending Violence Against Women and Girls • Better Support for Children and Young People with Special Education Needs • Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing • Safer Communities • Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment • Reform and Transformation of Public Services 	<p>The priorities of the Ards and North Down Borough Council PCSP align with the priorities contained within the ‘Safer Communities’ strand of the Draft Programme for Government.</p> <p>The Draft PfG highlights domestic abuse, tackling paramilitarism and protecting vulnerable people as key priority areas.</p> <p>The ANDBC PCSP Action Plan contains key activities and actions aimed at tackling the challenges faced across each of these identified thematic areas.</p>

Northern Ireland Community Safety Framework

Department of Justice, October 2020

The purpose of the Community Safety Framework is to ensure effective connectivity between the community safety work of the responsible agencies and provide an operational roadmap on how to collectively deliver the safer community objectives set out in the PfG and Community Plans, whilst providing the mechanism to respond proactively and reactively to operational need.

The Framework recognises the ongoing relevance of many of the priorities, approaches and need for collaborative working among agencies, as set out in the previous “Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities, A Community Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-17” which centred on reducing crime, anti-social behaviour (ASB), fear of crime, building community confidence and ensuring local solutions to local concerns.

Overall, the Framework stands to prioritise community safety by:

- Providing local solutions to local problems
- Placing prevention and early stage intervention as the primary aim
- Focusing on wider social issues, including anti-social behaviour, fear of crime, quality of life issues, and related public health, social and economic factors
- Delivering through a partnership approach, involving the statutory, voluntary and private

The Ards & North Down PCSP Action Plan is aligned with the priorities of the Northern Ireland Community Safety Framework in that it provides a platform through which local issues and safety challenges can be identified, as well as aiming to provide solutions to wider issues such as anti-social behaviour.

The work of the PCSP ensures a collaborative approach and ensures that a wide range of relevant stakeholders have oversight and input into activities and actions aimed at promoting public safety and increasing confidence in local policing.

	<p>sectors, as well as community groups and individual citizens; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering holistic and problem-oriented solutions. 	
<p>NIPB - The Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2020-2025 and Strategic Outcomes for Policing 2020-2025</p>	<p>The Policing Plan 2020-2025 outlines the collective policing ambition for the next five years and the key priorities for the people of Northern Ireland in terms of policing. The three primary outcomes for policing are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a safe community; • We have confidence in policing; and • We have engaged and supportive communities <p>Contained with the Northern Ireland Policing Plan are key actions to ensure that policing activities are shaped by the issues identified in Local Policing and PSCP Action Plans, as well as highlighting the particularly important role that PCSPs play in working collaboratively with community partners.</p>	<p>The ANDBC aligns with the key aims of the Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2020-2025 in that it has identified a range of key issues which are important to communities and citizens of the ANDBC area.</p> <p>The PCSP also ensures that key community partners have a meaningful involvement in shaping policing priorities at a local level.</p>
<p>The Executive Office: Draft Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework</p>	<p>The development of a strategy and action plan to end violence against women’s and girls. A call for views was held in 2022 and a period of co-design began in autumn of 2022. The aim is to develop a 7 year. strategic framework and action</p> <p>The action plan, published in summer 2023, outlines four actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Prevention</u> 	<p>One of the key findings of the statistical review which informed the development of the ANDBC PSCP Strategic Action Plan was the increasing incidents of Domestic Abuse.</p> <p>The ANDBC PCSP will set in place</p>

	<p>Changed Attitudes, Behaviours & Social Norms Healthy, Respectful Relationships Women and girls are safe and feel safe everywhere</p> <p>2. <u>Protection and Provision</u> Quality frontline services, protection, and provision for victims and survivors of violence against women and girls.</p> <p>3. <u>Justice System</u> A justice system which has the confidence of victims, survivors and the public in its ability to address violence against women and girls,</p> <p>4. <u>Working Better Together</u> All of government and society working better together to end violence against women and girls</p>	<p>programmes and measures aimed at preventing incidents of domestic abuse, as well as supporting individuals who have been impacted by such incidents.</p>
<p>Department of Justice- Executive Programme for Tackling Paramilitary Activity and Organised Crime</p>	<p>The Tackling Paramilitarism, Criminality, and Organised Crime Programme plays a crucial role in assisting vulnerable individuals and communities across Northern Ireland who may be under the influence of paramilitary groups. The Programme has been in operation since 2016 and receives funding from both the NI Executive and UK Government. During its initial Phase 1, which extended until March 2021, the Programme pursued 38 diverse commitments outlined in the original Executive Action Plan on paramilitarism, criminality, and organised crime. A thorough review of the Programme was conducted in 2020, resulting in the commencement of a new phase (Phase 2) in April 2021.</p>	<p>The continued presence and influence of paramilitarism within communities in the ANDBC area was something which was continually highlighted during the consultation process which informed the development of this ANDBC PCSP Action Plan.</p> <p>The ANDBC PCSP Action Plan contains measures to monitor the activities</p>

	<p>The Programme has secured funding until 2024, ensuring its continued efforts in addressing the pressing issues of paramilitarism, criminality, and organised crime, and working towards a safer and more resilient society. Its primary focus is twofold: immediate harm prevention and early interventions to safeguard future generations from falling victim to paramilitary coercion, control, and violence.</p> <p>The ultimate objective of the Programme is to create safer communities that are resilient against paramilitarism, criminality, and coercive control. With the implementation of over 80 projects and interventions, the Programme addresses deep-rooted and complex issues that have persisted for a long time. All activities within the Programme are aligned with two key long-term objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensuring people and communities are protected from the harm caused by paramilitarism. 2. Strengthening people and communities, making them less susceptible to paramilitary influence and involvement in paramilitarism, criminality, and organized crime. 	<p>associated with paramilitarism in the region, and ensure that all insights are disseminated.</p>
<p>Department of Education - Children & Young People's Strategy 2020-2030</p>	<p>This strategy, spanning from 2020 to 2030, supersedes the previous Cross-departmental Children and Young People's Strategy that covered the period from 2019 to 2029. The new strategy serves as a comprehensive framework to</p>	<p>The Ards & North Down PSCP Action Plan will prioritise actions to promote safety for young people in the Council area, and will deliver a</p>

advance various children's issues effectively. Its main purpose is to establish an all-encompassing and cohesive structure that guides and monitors departments in their efforts to achieve eight specific outcomes, all aimed at enhancing the well-being of children and young people. By doing so, the strategy aims to drive positive progress and improvements in the lives of children and young individuals across the region. The eight specific outcomes are:

- Children and young people live in a society in which equality of opportunity and good relations are promoted
- Children and young people are physically and mentally healthy
- Children and young people enjoy play and leisure
- Children and young people learn and achieve
- Children and young people live in safety and stability
- Children and young people experience economic and environmental well-being
- Children and young people make a positive contribution to society
- Children and young people live in a society which respects their rights

series of programmes aimed at empowering young people and giving them the confidence to feel safe and secure within their own communities and when visiting others.

The Ards and North Down Council PCSP Action Plan is rooted in public sector policy alignment, and the activities directly complement the overarching aims of multiple local government departments and arm's length bodies.

By promoting public safety and confidence, the activities of the PCSP also indirectly support a wider range of local strategies such as the Council's Tourism and Economic

Development Strategy, Arts and Heritage Strategy and Labour Market Partnership Action Plan.

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Consultation and Engagement

This section will present the key findings from the consultation and engagement phase of the strategy development process. Feedback gathered through surveys, consultations, and one-on-one meetings will be organised according to the three strategic priorities, along with any emerging themes that were identified. The findings will be presented as follows:



Summary of Public Consultation – Survey

In order to determine the views of citizens of the Ards & North Down Borough Council area, a public consultation exercise was held between (insert dates) whereby residents could provide their thoughts and opinions in relation to Good Relations and aspects of Community Safety and Policing in the Council area.

The themes which were consulted upon are listed as follows:

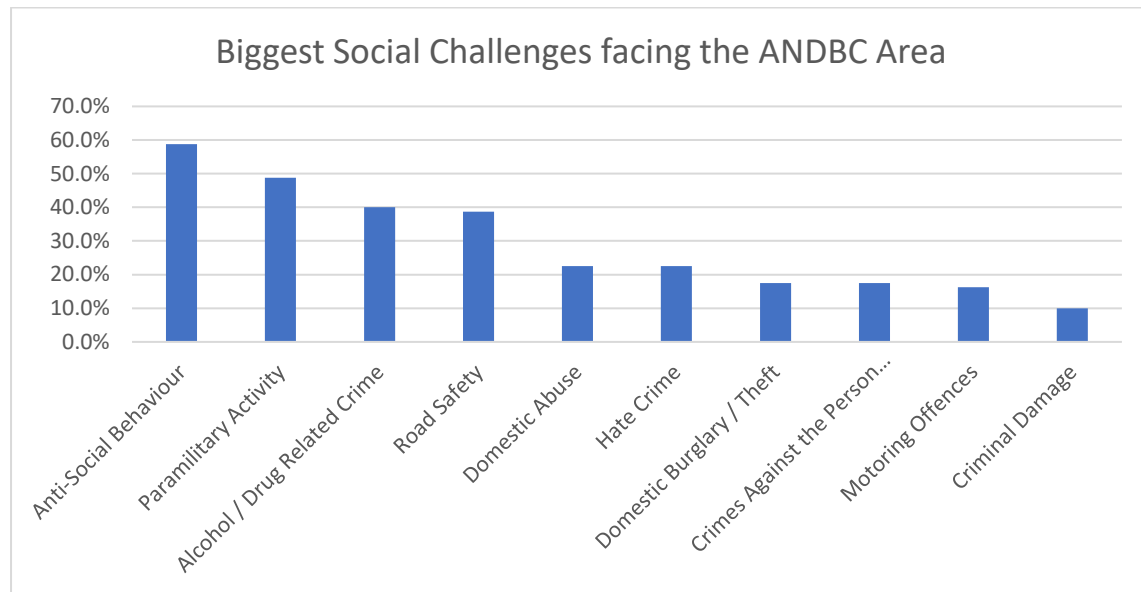
- Social challenges facing those living the ANDBC area;
- Priorities for the PSNI;
- Confidence in Policing;
- Suggestions for improving confidence in Policing;

The survey was open from 18th October to 15th November, during which time 104 responses were received.

Challenges Facing the ANDBC Population

With a view of understanding the wider social issues currently facing the population of the ANDBC area, and with a view of helping to prioritising the efforts of the Council's

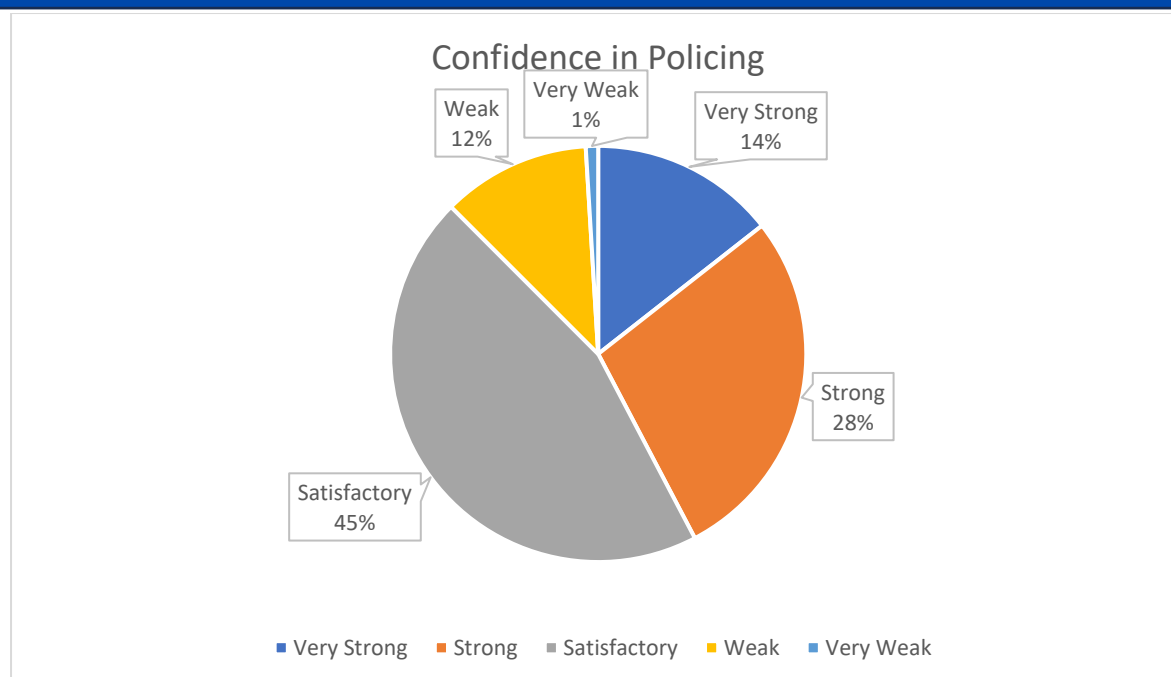
PSCP Team, the survey went on to ask respondents what they felt the biggest challenges facing their communities were.



‘Anti-Social Behaviour’ emerged as the challenge which survey respondents identified as being the most pressing issue in terms of safety, with 58.8% of respondents selecting this option. ‘Paramilitary Activity’ (48.8% of responses) and ‘Alcohol / Drug Related Crime’ (40% of responses) were also considered to be of immediate concern. ‘Motoring Offences’ and ‘Criminal Damage’ were not viewed as being particularly prevalent or in urgent need of addressing, with 16.3% of respondents and 10% of respondents opting for these selections respectively.

Confidence in Policing, and Policing Priorities

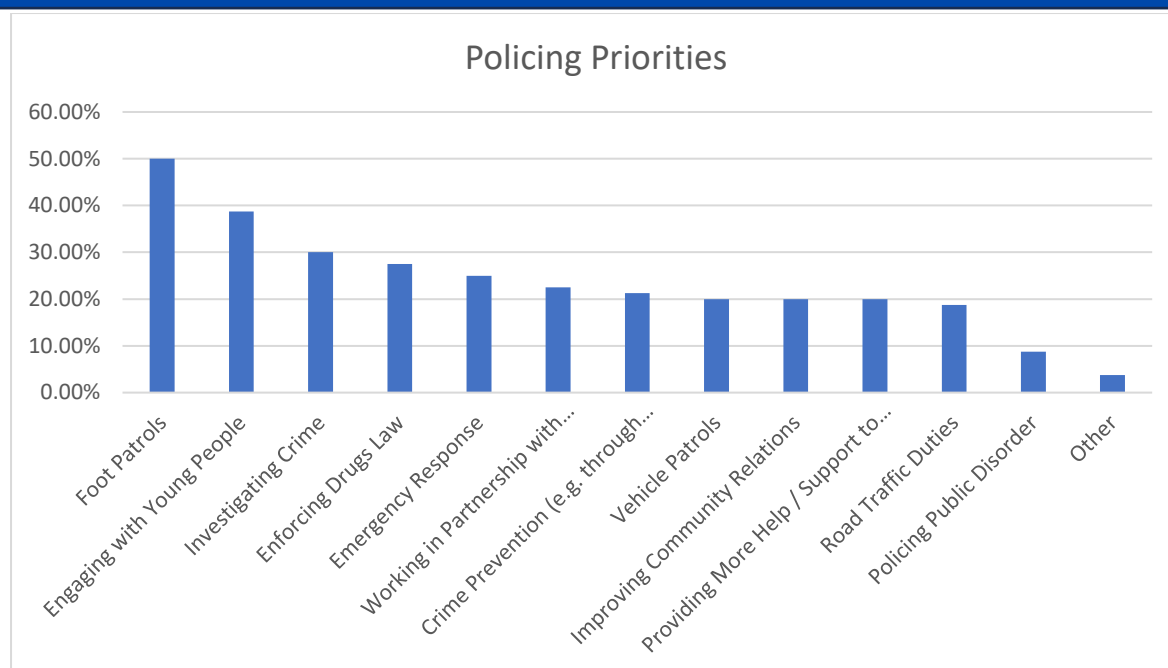
The theme of the survey then moved on to survey respondents’ confidence in policing, and insights as to what local policing priorities should be.



Confidence in policing can be said to be reasonably positive amongst survey respondents, with 42.3% noting that they had either 'Very Strong' or 'Strong' confidence in local policing, compared to just 12.5% of respondents whose confidence in local law enforcement was 'Weak' or 'Very Weak'. The prevailing opinion (45% of respondents) was that survey respondents viewed local policing to be 'Satisfactory'. Qualitative feedback received in relation to confidence in policing included:

- Not enough funding and resources for agencies to tackle identified issues
- Reporting challenges and crimes are difficult in areas where there is a fear of reprisals
- Lack of police presence and/or ease of contact with police can exacerbate problems
- There is limited awareness of who the local policing team are
- Response times can sometimes be poor
- Lack of diversionary activities for young people results in increased participation in crime and anti-social behaviour

In relation to the priorities of the PSNI in the ANDBC area, there was a strong sentiment expressed that 'Foot Patrols' should be viewed as the most important aspect of policing efforts. 'Engaging with Young People' and 'Investigating Crime' also emerged as being particularly salient with survey respondents.



'Road Traffic Duties' and 'Policing Public Disorder' were viewed as the lowest priorities for the PSNI by survey respondents.

To conclude the survey, respondents were asked to provide their thoughts in relation to ways through which confidence in policing in the ANDBC area could be improved. A range of qualitative responses were provided by respondents, with the most pertinent themes are outlined below:

- A more visible police presence, including foot patrols, would go some lengths in increasing engagement levels and reassurance. This included greater visibility in rural areas.
- Greater community involvement and a multi-agency approach to tackling complex issues such as paramilitarism and drugs offences.
- Greater involvement and more meaningful engagement with young people, particularly within hard-to-reach groups.
- Enhanced policing resources, such as recruitment of more officers.

The survey concluded with an opportunity for respondents to give contact details, should they wish to be contacted further about any matters arising from the survey, or to find out more about ANDBC Good Relations and/or PCSP activities.

Conclusion

Following analysis of the responses provided to this survey, a range of key conclusions can be drawn:

Social Challenges – Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour, Paramilitarism and Drugs / Alcohol Related Issues were viewed as the most urgent social challenges facing communities in the ANDBC area in need of addressing.

Policing – Confidence in Policing by survey respondents was considered to be fairly strong, however a clear emphasis was placed on the PSNI becoming more visible across communities in the ANDBC area in the form of foot patrols and enhanced community engagement.

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Focus Group Findings

This section of the strategy will discuss the views, experiences, and concerns of PCSP members, residents, community organisations, statutory organisations and others, highlighting key barriers to community safety, policing, and effective engagement. The consultations highlighted recurring challenges, identified areas for improvement, and provided a foundation for strategic recommendations. By incorporating these insights, the PCSP can implement informed projects and programmes to develop trust, enhance safety, and strengthen relationships between the community, police, and other stakeholders.

Main Barriers to Community Safety and Policing

The consultations highlighted several persistent barriers that undermine community safety and effective policing in the Ards and North Down area. Among the most frequently mentioned challenges were lack of awareness of the PCSP and its role, insufficient police visibility, delayed response times, and limited resources. Many participants commented on issues regarding paramilitary groups. Additionally, underreporting of crimes—particularly hate crimes, domestic abuse, and anti-social behaviour—was flagged as a significant issue. Community members also noted a lack of collaboration and clear communication between agencies, contributing to confusion about responsibilities and accountability. These barriers not only hinder the effectiveness of policing but also erode public confidence and community cohesion. Addressing these challenges will require strategic investments in resources, communication, and collaboration.



Community Safety

The consultations highlighted community safety as a basis of public concern, with many participants emphasising the need for visible and proactive policing. The lack of PSNI presence in certain areas was a recurring theme, with people commenting on delayed response times and the limited engagement of officers with local communities. Additionally, concerns about drugs, alcohol misuse, and domestic abuse were frequently raised, particularly regarding the impact on vulnerable groups such as women, children, and individuals with disabilities. Participants stressed that a holistic

approach involving both the police and community organisations is necessary to tackle these challenges effectively.



Recommendations

Foster Collaboration- Partner with charities, and community groups to co-design and deliver safety programmes.

Expand Campaigns- Launch borough-wide safety campaigns focusing on issues such as domestic violence, drug misuse, and hate crimes.

Resource Allocation- Allocate additional resources to hotspots identified through data analysis and community feedback, this could be through a small grants programme that allows organisations to react to local needs.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Anti-social behaviour was one of the most frequently discussed topics in the consultations. Many commented on the lack of a meaningful response to ASB, citing inadequate police intervention and insufficient engagement with young people. The community emphasised the importance of addressing the root causes of ASB, such as lack of recreational opportunities for youth and peer pressure.



Recommendations

Youth Engagement: Develop and fund recreational activities, such as sports programmes, dance programmes, drama programmes and creative arts workshops, to provide positive outlets for young people.

Community Education: Conduct awareness workshops in schools and community settings on the consequences of ASB and the importance of civic responsibility.

Anonymous Reporting: Introduce accessible and confidential mechanisms for reporting ASB incidents to encourage community involvement.

Hotspot Analysis: Use data to identify and prioritise high-risk areas, enabling targeted interventions and resource allocation. This could be a grants programme for organisations to apply to.

Communication and Engagement

The consultations underscored a critical need to improve communication and engagement between the PCSP, PSNI, and local communities. Many participants were unaware of the PCSP's role, with some expressing confusion over which agencies were responsible for specific issues. People commented on the need for more transparent and accessible communication channels, particularly for those without regular internet access.

Communication And Engagement

**Recommendations:**

Diversified Communication: Combine digital methods, such as social media, with traditional approaches like leaflets, booklets and posters to reach all demographics.

Local Outreach: Partner with community hubs, such as schools, libraries, and places of worship, to disseminate information about PCSP initiatives.

Public Events: Host regular town halls and drop-in sessions where residents can voice concerns and learn about PCSP activities. Also, identify events where there is a large level of footfall to promote the PCSP at.

Service Directory: Create and distribute a comprehensive guide detailing available safety resources and key contact points.

Feedback Mechanisms: Implement structured feedback loops to evaluate and improve communication efforts based on community input.

Emerging Challenges

Emerging challenges such as cyber-crime, human trafficking, and the integration of newcomer communities were highlighted as growing concerns. Participants noted the increasing prevalence of online scams and abuse, as well as the difficulties faced by newcomer community in accessing support due to language barriers and cultural differences. People also commented on the need for proactive measures to address these evolving threats.

Emerging Challenges



Recommendations

Cyber-Safety Campaigns: Educate the community on recognising and protecting themselves against online threats.

Support Networks for Newcomers: Establish programmes that provide language assistance, cultural orientation, and access to services for immigrant populations.

Scam Awareness Workshops: Host sessions for older adults and other vulnerable groups to build resilience against sophisticated scams.

The consultations provided invaluable insights into the challenges and opportunities for improving community safety and policing in the Ards and North Down area. The recommendations outlined in this report offer a clear roadmap for addressing these issues. By prioritising visibility, engagement, and collaboration, the PCSP can foster a safer and more connected community. The next steps will involve translating these insights into concrete actions, with continued input from residents and stakeholders to ensure success.

Turning the Curve Exercise

On November 25, 2024, a "Turning the Curve" exercise was conducted with 24 PCSP members to refine the strategic direction moving forward. The members were provided with handouts containing the strategic priorities, detailed activities, crime and policing statistics, and feedback from prior consultations. This exercise allowed members to vote on whether activities should continue, continue with amendments, or cease entirely.



The purpose of the exercise was to ensure the strategic priorities were still relevant and aligned with community needs. By gathering feedback on various activities, the aim was to prioritise initiatives that effectively contribute to improving community safety, enhance public engagement, and ensure better resource allocation.

Key Findings

Broad Support for Continuing Many Activities: Several activities, especially those addressing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and community safety, received strong support for continuation.

Need for Innovation: Some activities, such as those focused on drug awareness, required amendments to better align with emerging needs and trends.

Resource Allocation: Members highlighted the importance of reviewing resource allocation, ensuring that funding and efforts were directed toward high-impact areas. This included adapting the small grants programme.

Engagement and Communication: There was a clear consensus on the need to improve visibility and public engagement, particularly through social media, local events, and community-led initiatives.

The table below presents a statistical analysis of the votes cast by PCSP members during the "Turning the Curve" exercise, highlighting the distribution of their feedback on various strategic priorities.

Turning the Curve Findings

Strategic Priority 1 – To ensure effective delivery in response to local need, and improve the visibility and recognition of the work of the PCSP through effective consultation, communication, and engagement				
THEME	ACTIVITIES	GREEN	AMBER	RED
Raise awareness of the PCSP and community engagement	PCSP Awareness raising	73%	27%	0%
	Local Community Engagement initiatives	16%	84%	0%
	Youth Voice	16%	84%	0%
Implement the three year AND PCSP Strategy 2022-25 and Action Plan 2024- 25	PCSP Action Plan review for 2024/25	0%	100%	0%
Strategic Priority 2 - To improve community safety by prioritising and addressing local community safety issues, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour				
THEME	ACTIVITIES	GREEN	AMBER	RED
Drugs & Alcohol Initiatives	Develop an early intervention/training programme to be delivered in the Borough.	10%	90%	0%
	RAPID Bin initiative	0%	68%	32%
	Substance Abuse Awareness Project	16%	84%	0%
ASB	Addressing ASB amongst Youth - Sports Programme	67%	33%	0%
	Addressing ASB hotspots areas- Collaborative Community Safety Team & Multi-Agency approach	74%	26%	0%
	Small Grant Programme with a focus on diversion and prevention.	28%	72%	0%
	Voluntary Safety Wardens	81%	19%	0%
	Schools education Programme to include ASB	67%	33%	0%
	Enhanced Detached Youth Programme (EA)	84%	16%	0%
Domestic and Sexual Abuse	SED&SVP	5%	95%	0%
	Healthy Relationships Awareness	40%	60%	0%
	DV Female victim support programme	27%	73%	0%
	DV Male victim support programme	43%	57%	0%

Hate Crime	Hate Crime Initiative	33%	67%	0%
Cybercrime	Deliver initiatives to raise awareness of cyber crime	45%	55%	0%
Burglary and Fear of Crime	4-Tier Home Secure	67%	33%	0%
Road Safety	Road Safety	75%	25%	0%
	2.8.2 The P7 Be- Safe programme.	100%	0%	0%
Supporting those most vulnerable	Support Hub	93%	7%	0%
Strategic Priority 3 – To support confidence in policing, including through collaborative problem solving with communities				
Engagement of the police with the local community	Policing Committee Public and Private meetings	35%	65%	0%
Building confidence in Policing	Building confidence in Policing - direct delivery by the PSNI	39%	61%	0%
Vulnerabilities from Organised crime (including Paramilitarism)	Paramilitary Crime	27%	55%	18%

Green- continue
 Amber- continue and amend
 Red- stop

Going Forward- Strategic Priorities

As we look toward the 2025-2028 period, the Ards and North Down Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) is committed to refining its approach to community safety, building confidence in policing, and engaging with local communities. The strategic priorities outlined below are informed by extensive consultations, surveys, crime statistics, and the findings from the "Turning the Curve" exercise conducted in November 2024. These priorities will address the key issues identified by the community and provide clear, actionable goals for the coming years.

Strategic Priority 1: To ensure effective delivery in response to local need and improve the visibility and recognition of the work of the PCSP through effective consultation, communication and engagement.

Key Findings from the Consultation

The need for increased visibility and engagement from the PCSP and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) emerged as a critical issue from the consultations. Feedback highlighted that many residents felt disconnected from the work of the PCSP and were unsure how to engage with it. In the consultations, quite a few participants indicated they had limited or no knowledge about the activities of the PCSP.

The "Turning the Curve" exercise further emphasised the need for communication as a key area for improvement. In this exercise, members of the PCSP identified that communication and visibility were essential for fostering stronger relationships between the police and the community, especially in areas with higher crime rates and lower engagement levels. Of the members, 73% (green) supported continuing activities that enhance visibility and communication, while 27% (amber) suggested amendments, with no votes for stopping these activities.

Key Theme	Details
Increased Community Engagement	Greater involvement of residents in PCSP activities. PCSP members to attend more events.
Communication	A need for improved communication channels between the community, PCSP, and the PSNI.
Visible Policing	Ensuring that police are regularly visible in local communities to build trust and security.
Local Outreach	Targeted outreach campaigns to areas with lower awareness or engagement. Linking in with large scale events.

Strategic Priority 2: To improve community safety by prioritising and addressing local community safety issues, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour

Key Findings from the Consultation

Community safety remains a top priority for residents of Ards and North Down. Crime statistics and feedback from community consultations highlight a significant concern around ASB and substance misuse. ASB accounted for 27% of all recorded crimes in the previous year, with areas such as Donaghadee and Newtownards showing higher rates of incidents. According to the survey, 59% of residents cited ASB as one of their top concern, while 40% highlighted drug and alcohol misuse as contributing factors to community safety issues.

Feedback from the "Turning the Curve" exercise showed that PCSP members felt strongly that crime prevention should not only focus on policing but also on prevention through engagement and education. Youth programmes were seen as crucial in preventing future generations from becoming involved in crime.

Key Theme	Details
Youth Engagement & Diversionary Activities	Positive outlets for youth are essential in reducing ASB and preventing crime. It was felt that these successful programmes should be expanded to include activities outside of sport.
Substance Abuse Education	Drug and alcohol misuse were highlighted as contributing factors to crime and ASB, requiring continued focus on prevention and education.
Multi-Agency Collaboration	A multi-agency approach, including partnerships with local schools, the PSNI, community groups, and health services, is critical to tackling crime and ASB effectively.
Funding for Local Projects through Small Grants	Adequate funding is crucial for delivering community safety programmes and initiatives, as highlighted by consultations which identified resource gaps.
Education & Awareness	Campaigns focused on drug and alcohol misuse, mental health awareness, and safe driving must be continued.
Cybercrime	Cybercrime was identified as a significant concern, with various forms such as fraud, sexual exploitation, and other criminal activities being reported within the community.

Strategic Priority 3: To support confidence in policing, including through collaborative problem solving with communities

Key Findings from the Consultation

Building trust in policing has emerged as one of the top priorities for the PCSP, as evidenced by the results of the surveys and consultations. Although the PSNI was generally regarded positively, concerns about the visibility of officers and the accessibility of services were frequently mentioned.

The "Turning the Curve" exercise underscored that stronger community-police relations are key to ensuring that public safety is effectively maintained. There was strong support for initiatives aimed at increasing police visibility and fostering closer ties between the police and residents.

Key Theme	Details
Police Visibility	Ensuring that police officers are regularly visible and accessible to the public in key locations to foster community trust.
Community Engagement	Building better relationships through increased communication between the PCSP, police and community members.
Youth Policing Initiatives	Engaging younger generations in understanding and collaborating with the police through educational programmes.
Paramilitarism	Engaging with the CIT team to brief the PCSP and provide an update on the work it is undertaking in the Borough to combat paramilitary activity and related criminality.

The strategic priorities for the 2025-2028 period have been carefully developed to address the key concerns of the Ards and North Down community, as identified through consultations, surveys, crime statistics, and the findings from the "Turning the Curve" exercise. By focusing on enhancing community engagement, reducing crime and ASB, and building trust in policing, the PCSP is committed to creating a safer and more cohesive community. These priorities will be continuously monitored, with actions adjusted as necessary based on ongoing community feedback and evolving crime data. With clear, actionable goals in place, we are confident that these strategies will lead to tangible improvements in public safety and community trust across Ards and North Down.

Action Plan

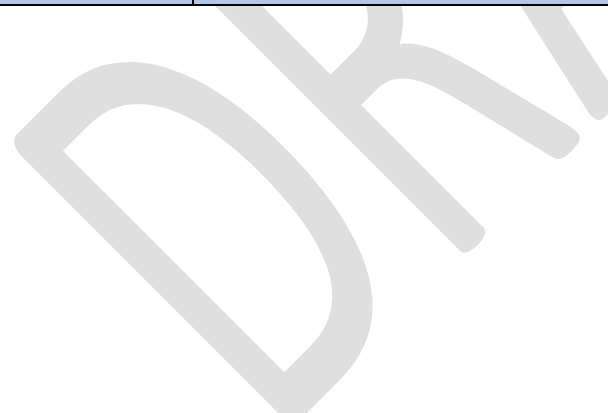
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Strategic Priority 1: To ensure effective delivery in response to local need, and improve the visibility and recognition of the work of the PCSP through effective consultation, communication and engagement through:

- carrying out meaningful engagement in the district with the local community, relevant statutory partners / agencies, businesses and the community & voluntary sector in the development and implementation of PCSP Action Plans.
- ensuring ongoing two-way engagement in the district with the local community, relevant statutory partners / agencies, businesses, and the community & voluntary sector to provide a problem-solving forum to identify effective solutions to local issues, ensuring sufficient flexibility to address issues as they emerge, and seeking relevant expertise from the designated organisations as appropriate.
- using a range of platforms, including multi-media, to communicate and promote the work of the PCSP; and
- increasing awareness of the work of the PCSP.

Indicators		% People who have heard of PCSPs % People who know how to contact their local PCSP about local policing and community safety					
Project	Aims & description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or Cost	Performance measures	Reporting Quarter



<p>Raise awareness of the PCSP and community engagement</p>	<p>To evidence impact through the delivery of a PCSP communications strategy.</p>	<p>PCSP Awareness Raising including PR and Comms</p> <p>Implement and monitor the AND PCSP annual communications plan, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - website updates - social media engagement - video creation - branded PCSP merchandise and equipment 	<p>4/25</p>	<p>3/26</p>	<p>£15,800</p>	<p>How much did we do? # Of social media reach # Of PR campaigns/pr ojects developed and launched How well did we do it? # Of social media reach or % increase in social media reach #/% increase in PCSP Facebook page likes Is anyone better off? # & % of people with awareness of the PCSP and its work</p>	<p>2,3,4</p>
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		<p>Delivery of PCSP Meetings</p> <p>To include a minimum of 4 full PCSP meetings per annum, and additional sub-group meetings as required.</p>	4/25	3/26	£3,000	<p>How much did we do? # Of meetings held</p> <p>How well did we do it? # Of members attending meetings</p> <p>Is anyone better off? # of members with a better understanding of the PCSP and its work</p>	2,3,4
		<p>Local Community Engagement initiatives</p> <p>Provision of community engagement meetings and events around the Borough with relevant PCSP partners. To include a minimum of 4 quarterly community-based public events to address themes around a variety of community safety issues, such as road safety, rural crime, and so on. Themes to reflect</p>	4/25	3/26	£10,000	<p>How much did we do? # Of engagement sessions</p> <p># Of participants involved</p> <p>How well did we do it? % Of participants satisfied with</p>	2,3,4

		changing crime trends to ensure relevance.				the support/ advice offered Is anyone better off? % & # of participants who believe their area is safer as result of the engagement sessions % & # of increase of attendees at Community Engagement events	
		Youth Voice Continue to engage with the Youth Council and advocate for youth issues around safer communities, spaces and issues affecting young people, Youth Council to be invited to deliver a presentation to PCSP around a relevant issue, such as Ending Violence Against Women & Girls	4/25	3/26	£4,000	How much did we do? # Of meetings held # Of youth attendees How well did we do it? % Of participants satisfied with the meetings	2,3,4

						<p>Is anyone better off? # % with an increased confidence in policing following the activities # % participants more likely to engage with the PSNI</p>	
	<p>Action Plan Review 2025- 26</p>	<p>PCSP Action Plan review for 2025/26 Review of annual action plan in line with strategy and outcomes with a focus in maximising opportunities for collaborative planning and the development of preventative work programmes in areas of highest need over the three-year period and develop the year one action plan informed by the current strategy and further consultation.</p>	4/25	3/26	£0	<p>How much did we do? # Of consultation opportunities # Of people engaged in consultation # 2025-2026 Development of Action plan How well did we do it? % People satisfied with consultation process</p>	2,3,4

						# 2024-25 review of Action plan & developed. Is anyone better off? # & % members with improved awareness of the issues to be addressed in the strategy and Action plan
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Strategic Priority 2 : To improve community safety by prioritising and addressing local community safety issues, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour through:

- utilising the partnership created by the statutory, elected, and independent/ community membership of the PCSP to initiate and lead work to improve community safety and tackle ASB locally.
- working in partnership to develop outcome and locality focused interventions to address the most pressing crime types and behaviours impacting local community safety, as evidenced by local need, with appropriate targets and indicators so that impacts can be measured.
- drawing on best practice, promote early intervention and collaborating effectively to improve PCSP-supported projects and programmes that address the underlying causes of ASB, crime and the fear of crime in the community, including, where appropriate, a focus on changing behaviours.
- enhancing safety and feelings of safety, in particular for those who might be more vulnerable.
- engaging with partners in the district, to horizon scan in order to respond to and re-direct resources to respond to emerging local community safety issues.
- having cognisance of the Community Safety Framework in developing local plans, and providing a feedback loop to the Community Safety Board on local issues in order to inform community safety policy development – and vice versa; and
- providing comprehensive community input into decision making processes about tackling actual and perceived anti-social behaviour and giving feedback to the community on the effectiveness of interventions on meeting outcomes.

Indicators		% Who perceive high levels of ASB (NI) % Who perceived local crime to have increased % Perceived local crime to have decreased (NI) % Very worried about crime overall by age group 16-29: 30-59: 60+ (NI)					
Project	Aims & description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or cost	Performance measures	Reporting Quarter
	To deliver initiatives which will raise awareness of the	Develop an early intervention/training	4/25	3/26	£9,500	How much did we do?	2, 3, 4

<p>Drugs & Alcohol Initiatives</p>	<p>impact of drug and alcohol misuse within our communities and provide safe facilities for disposing of legal and illegal drugs</p>	<p>programme to be delivered in the Borough. To include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier 1 and Tier 2 intervention for young people aged 13-20 years, reaching 800-900 participants over a minimum of 60 sessions. • Issues around drugs and alcohol, as well as emerging issues such as vaping. 				<p># Of training sessions delivered # Of participants attending How well did we do it? % Of participants satisfied with the training delivered Is anyone better off? # & % of participants reporting increased knowledge and understanding of the detrimental effects of drugs and alcohol</p>	
		<p>RAPID Bin initiative Promote and monitor as required across the Borough to encourage use in getting drugs including prescription drugs off the streets. Promotion to ensure that members of the public are aware of Rapid bins, their uses and their locations.</p>	4/25	3/26	£200	<p>How much did we do? # Of promotional campaigns undertaken # Rapid bins in use How well did we do it? % Satisfaction by PSNI with number</p>	2,3,4

						of drugs taken off streets Is anyone better off? % and # of types of drugs being deposited in the bin	
		<p>Substance Abuse Awareness Project To deliver substance abuse awareness, support and Tier 2 counselling with 80-100 individuals who need support with substance addiction, with a minimum of 300 sessions delivered.</p>	4/25	3/26	£10,000	<p>How much did we do? # Of sessions delivered # Of participants engaged from across the Borough How well did we do it? % Of participants satisfied with the support offered Is anyone better off? # & % of individuals with changed behaviours after completing the programme # & % of</p>	2,3,4

						participants with an increased knowledge of the risks and harm caused by excessive drink and drugs	
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<p>ASB</p>	<p>Youth Education Programme: Addressing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Engaging with young people in various settings such as schools, colleges, youth clubs, community groups, and looked-after homes. The programme will deliver themed sessions aimed at raising awareness of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in specific areas of need across the Borough.</p>	<p>The Youth Education Programme aims to address Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) by engaging young people across the Borough. The programme will deliver educational sessions in schools, youth clubs, and community groups, raising awareness of ASB and its consequences. Co-designed and delivered by the Community Safety Team, the sessions will focus on the specific needs of local areas. In addition to education, the programme will offer creative and physical activities such as sports, dance, drama, and music. These activities will be tailored to local needs and developed in collaboration with the community safety team, PSNI, EA, the Council, and other organisations. The programme aims to provide positive alternatives to ASB.</p>	<p>4/25</p>	<p>3/26</p>	<p>£13,000</p>	<p>How much did we do? # Of schools/ community groups # Of sessions # Of participants engaged, educated, and supported How well did we do it? % Of participants satisfied with their experiences on the programmes Is anyone better off? # & % who have a raised awareness of ASB # % of participants with changed attitudes to ASB as a result of their engagement in the project activities</p>	<p>2,3,4</p>
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	<p>Enhanced Detached Youth Programme (EA) Support for a range of programmes led by the Education Authority throughout the Borough to enhance detached youth work with 13-19 year olds in ASB hotspot areas. Programmes to link with community safety team, PSNI, street pastors, voluntary organisations, and Council's leisure services.</p>	4/25	3/26	£14,000	<p>How much did we do? # Of sessions # Of participants engaged, educated, and supported How well did we do it? % Of participants satisfied with their experiences on the programmes Is anyone better off? # & % who have a raised awareness of ASB # & % reduction of ASB # & % of participants with changed attitudes to ASB as a result of their engagement in the project activities</p>	2,3,4
	<p>Address ASB hotspots areas- Collaborative Community Safety (CST)</p>	4/25	3/26	£6,000	<p>How much did we do? # Of targeted diversionary and</p>	2,3,4

		<p>Team & Multi-Agency approach To co-design and co-deliver innovative initiatives to reduce ASB in hotspots across the Borough; for example, graffiti workshops, litter picks, day trips, and so on. Work will be done in partnership with other agencies including PSNI and EA and community groups involved in initiatives in local hotspots.</p>				<p>detached youth sessions # Of participants on same How well did we do it? % Of participants with increased understanding of the consequences of risk-taking behaviour and ASB Is anyone better off? # & % reduction in ASB at identified hot spots</p>	
	<p>Reducing and addressing ASB problems in hotspot neighbourhoods and town centres within the Borough</p>	<p>Voluntary Safety Wardens To support Voluntary Wardens and to create an on-street presence that promotes community safety and reduces ASB across the Borough. The volunteer wardens and their on-street presence will be rolled out at different times and locations across the Borough based on advice from the community safety</p>	4/25	3/26	£38,000	<p>How much did we do? # Of patrols # Of participants engaged, educated, and supported How well did we do it? # & % of users reporting attitudes were changed as</p>	2,3,4

		team, the PSNI and the community safety subgroup and will include an on-street presence at large scale events and pub/ club closing times.				<p>a result of engagement</p> <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <p>% reduction of ASB in the borough</p> <p># Of people reporting feeling safer in the Borough as a result of the scheme</p>	
Domestic and Sexual Abuse	Coordinate activities in relation to the reduction of and reporting of domestic abuse and sexual crimes	<p>SED&SVP</p> <p>To work in partnership with the SED&SVP to deliver domestic/ sexual violence awareness raising events and encouragement wider engagement.</p>	4/25	3/26	£4,000	<p>How much did we do?</p> <p># Of attendees at SED&SVP</p> <p># Of awareness raising events</p> <p>How well did we do it?</p> <p>% Of attendees satisfied with the content of the collaboration meetings</p> <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <p># % of attendees reporting</p>	2,3,4

						increased awareness of how to deal with DV and sexual violence	
	DV Male victim support programme	<p>DV Male victim support programme A programme of support for male victims of domestic and sexual violence in the Borough, to include counselling support and awareness raising activities.</p> <p>Provision of a minimum of 140 counselling / therapeutic sessions for minimum 20 male victims of domestic and/or sexual abuse in the borough.</p>	4/25	3/26	£6000	<p>How much did we do? # Of sessions held # Of clients supported</p> <p>How well did we do it? % Of participants satisfied with the support received</p> <p>Is anyone better off? # & % number of participants with improved awareness of how to gain help in relation to domestic and sexual violence. # & % of participants who feel safer after receiving support</p>	2,3,4

	<p>Raise awareness domestic and sexual violence.</p>	<p>Healthy Relationships Awareness To deliver an early intervention on healthy relationships. The Healthy Relationships Programme and Domestic Violence Female Victim Support Programme will be funded through the TEO's Change Fund for Ending Violence Against Women & Girls in 2025-2026. These programmes will remain part of the PCSP Action Plan but will have no allocated budget at this time. The PCSP will continue to support these activities alongside the funding stream.</p>	4/25	3/26	£0	<p>How much do we do? # Of schools, colleges, youth groups engaged # Of young people attending events How well did we do it? % Of participants satisfied with the information received Is anyone better off? # & % of participant with increased awareness of DV/ SV/CB # & % reporting increased awareness of where to access support services</p>	2,3,4
	<p>Raise awareness of DV by supporting drop-in services accessible to the public</p>	<p>DV Female victim support programme To offer crises support for women and families who are</p>	4/25	3/26	£0	<p>How much did we do? # Of clients supported through project</p>	2,3,4

		<p>the victims of sexual violence or domestic abuse.</p> <p>The Healthy Relationships Programme and Domestic Violence Female Victim Support Programme will be funded through the TEO's Change Fund for Ending Violence Against Women & Girls in 2025-2026. These programmes will remain part of the PCSP Action Plan but will have no allocated budget at this time. The PCSP will continue to support these activities alongside the funding stream.</p>				<p># Of clients receiving equipment or emergency support</p> <p>How well did we do it?</p> <p>% Of participants satisfied with the support received</p> <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <p># & % number of participants who feel safer and more supported as a result of the programme</p> <p># & % with improved awareness of how to gain help in relation to domestic and sexual violence.</p>	
Hate Crime	Raise awareness of all types of local hate crime and the reporting process.	<p>Hate Crime Initiative</p> <p>To work in partnership with ANDBC Good Relations Dept to encourage greater reporting of all types of hate crime; deliver cultural</p>	4/25	3/26	£2,000	<p>How much did we do</p> <p># Of interagency meetings attended</p> <p># Of events delivered # Of</p>	2,3,4

		diversity and hate crime awareness raising events; and encourages a greater sense of integration, belonging and cohesion across the Borough.				attendees at events How well did we do it? % Of attendees satisfied with the events Is anyone better off? # & % increase of participants who feel safer as a result of the service # & % increase in the confidence in reporting hate crime to the PSNI	
Cybercrime	Scheme to address cybercrime	Deliver initiatives to raise awareness of cybercrime To include a minimum of 2 workshops targeting relevant groups, to address current cybercrime issues. For example, parental concern around children and digital technology, romance scams, catfishing, older people and technology, and so on.	4/25	3/26	£2,000	How much do we do? # Of schools, colleges, groups engaged # Of people attending events How well did we do it? % Of participants satisfied with the information received	2,3,4

						<p>Is anyone better off? # & % of participant with increased awareness of cybercrime # & % reporting increased awareness of where to access support services</p>	
Burglary and Fear of Crime	Scheme to address the fear of burglary and crime	<p>4-Tier Home Secure Deliver a 4-tier home secure project providing equipment and installation – as a reactive and preventative service working in partnership with the PSNI crime prevention team.</p>	4/25	3/26	£35,000	<p>How much did we do? # Of referrals to scheme # Home security measures fitted How well did we do it? % Beneficiaries satisfied with the equipment and service they received. Is anyone better off? # & % of recipients who feel safer as a result of the</p>	2,3,4

						support offered to them	
Road Safety	Road Safety initiatives	<p>The P7 Be- Safe programme. Deliver the P7 Be- Safe programme in partnership with other Council departments, to provide a collaborative approach to awareness raising and education about safety in order to provide added value and maximise outputs. Circa 1500 young people will be engaged. Community Safety Team to assist with delivery.</p>	4/25	3/26	£8,000	<p>How much did we do? # Of sessions viewed # Of pupils attending # Schools participating How well did we do it? % Of attendees satisfied with the video sessions Is anyone better off? % & # of participants reporting increased road safety awareness</p>	2,3,4
Supporting those most vulnerable	Supporting those most vulnerable in the Ards & North Down Area	<p>Support Hub To participate in a multi-agency partnership approach – the Ards and North Down Support Hub which focuses on supporting those most vulnerable in the Ards and North Down area – led by Council –and including the</p>	4/25	3/26	£0	<p>How much did we do? # Of Support Hub Meetings # Of attendees # Of vulnerable people supported How well did we do it?</p>	2,3,4

		<p>Health Trust and Council, NIFRS, PSNI, Ambulance Service, EA, Probation Board & Youth Justice Agency.</p> <p>Funding is provided directly from DoJ, and will be used for administration and facilitation of the Support Hub, as well as promotion and networking among relevant agencies.</p>				<p>% Of participants satisfied with the support offered</p> <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <p># % of agencies engaged reporting fewer repeat calls</p> <p># % of agencies satisfied with the effectiveness of collaborative working</p>	
Small Grants	<p>To support community-led projects that address local safety concerns, including hate crime, cybercrime, road safety, anti-social behaviour, drugs & alcohol issues.</p>	<p>Publicise the small grants programme through community networks, social media, and council communications.</p> <p>Evaluate and award grants based on alignment with PCSP priorities.</p> <p>Small Grants of £2000-5000 will be available to locally-based community and voluntary groups, with staggered closing dates throughout the year as funding allows.</p>	4/25	3/26	£ 54,000	<p>How much did we do?</p> <p># of applications received</p> <p>#of small grants awarded / projects supported</p> <p>How well did we do it?</p> <p># and % of applicants satisfied with the small grants programme process</p> <p># and % of grant applications received which meet the quality</p>	2,3,4

						<p>standard (assessment criteria)</p> <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <p># and % of groups reporting increased ability to engage with wider community members through their small grants (if relevant) # and % of participants with increased confidence in PSNI</p> <p># and % of participants more likely to engage with PSNI following project</p>
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Strategic Priority 3: To support confidence in policing, including through collaborative problem solving with communities through:

- ensuring local accountability through the Policing Committee’s role in monitoring police performance.
- identifying priorities from the PCSP Plan for consideration in the development of the local Policing Plan which are consistent with the Northern Ireland Policing Plan.
- providing views to the District Commander through the Policing Committee and supporting the PSNI to engage with the community to identify and address local problems.
- delivering initiatives that link to identified local problems that impact confidence in policing.
- carrying out meaningful local events aimed at increasing PSNI engagement with local communities to build and strengthen public confidence in policing.
- delivering PCSP initiatives in the hardest to reach communities.
- providing a platform for the PCSP and PSNI to engage with young people, including on the themes of upholding the rule of law, and of ways of increasing confidence in policing; and
- building community confidence in the rule of law by helping mitigate the harm caused to people and communities by paramilitarism, criminality and organised crime consistent with wider Programme for Government objectives and through use of co-design principles, where appropriate.

Indicators	% Increase in community confidence in policing Level of reporting to the police (NI Crime Survey) % Increase in the level of police and community engagement Community confidence in ability of PCSP to monitor local police performance
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Project	Aims & description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or cost	Performance measures	Reporting Quarter
Community and police engagement							
Engagement of the police with the local community	To increase engagement with the police and build more confidence in policing	Policing Committee Public and Private meetings Host Policing Committee Public and Private meetings including consultations for future plans and developments.	4/25	3/26	£1,000	How much did we do? # Of private policing committee meetings How well did we do it? % of PCSP members attending Is anyone better off? % of participants who have an improved understanding of the role of the policing Committee	2,3,4
Building confidence in Policing	To evidence impact through the delivery of projects and activities that build community confidence in the rule of law and embed a culture of lawfulness	Building confidence in Policing - direct delivery by the PSNI A programme of activities undertaken & supported by the PSNI, and its neighbourhood policing teams and PCSP that builds community confidence in	4/25	3/26	£19,000	How much did we do? # of engagement activities/meetings involving PSNI & local communities How well did we do it? # & % of public	2,3,4

Project	Aims & description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or cost	Performance measures	Reporting Quarter
		the rule of law and embeds a culture of lawfulness. Funding will be distributed through a Small Grants process directly targeted at Neighbourhood Policing Teams.				satisfied with engagement events/meetings Is anyone better off? # & % more likely to engage with PSNI # & % of participants with increased confidence in policing	
Vulnerabilities from Organised crime (including Paramilitarism)	Addressing Paramilitary Crime	Paramilitary Crime To engage with the CIT team to brief the PCSP and provide an update on the work it is undertaking in the Borough.	4/25	3/26	£0	How much did we do? # Of meetings / events relating to tackling paramilitarism/organised crime How well did we do it? #% of participants reporting satisfaction with activities/meetings Is anyone better off? # & % of participant's with a greater understanding of	2,3,4

Project	Aims & description	Key Activities	Start Date	End Date	Resource or cost	Performance measures	Reporting Quarter
						paramilitarism, criminality and organised crime	

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Monitoring and Evaluation

Effective monitoring and evaluation will be essential to ensure that the Ards and North Down Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) Strategy for 2025-2028 is meeting its objectives, addressing community needs, and delivering tangible outcomes. Regular monitoring will provide insight into the progress of the strategic priorities, allowing for adjustments and improvements to be made as necessary. Evaluation will help assess the overall impact of the strategy on community safety and public confidence in policing. The monitoring and evaluation processes will be led by the PCSP Officer, with input and oversight from PCSP Members, ensuring that both operational and strategic perspectives guide the assessment.

Monitoring the Strategy

Monitoring the implementation of the PCSP Strategy will involve a range of activities designed to track progress, identify challenges, and ensure accountability. This process will be driven by the PCSP Officer, who will work closely with the PCSP Members, ensuring that the strategy's goals are being met efficiently and effectively. Key activities for monitoring will include:

Regular Progress Reports- The PCSP Officer will oversee the creation of quarterly progress reports that evaluate the completion of planned activities, identify any delays or obstacles, and ensure that the objectives of each strategic priority are being pursued. These reports will be shared with PCSP Members, local partners, and other relevant stakeholders to maintain transparency.

Community Feedback- Ongoing community feedback is crucial for understanding how the strategy is being received and whether it is effectively addressing local needs. This will include regular consultations, surveys, and public engagement sessions that allow residents and local groups to provide input on their perceptions of community safety, the visibility of PCSP activities, and any emerging concerns. The feedback will be reviewed and used to refine and adapt the strategy.

Evaluating the Strategy

Evaluation of the PCSP Strategy will be conducted annually to assess its overall impact and effectiveness. The evaluation process will be led by the PCSP Officer, with active involvement from PCSP Members. This collaborative approach will ensure that the evaluation is comprehensive, objective, and focused on real outcomes. The evaluation process will include:

Review of Strategic Goals- At the end of each year, the PCSP will assess whether the strategic priorities have been met, and a review of the one year Action Plan. This will involve reviewing the KPIs, progress reports, and feedback from community consultations to determine the extent of success in each area.

By combining continuous monitoring with annual evaluations, the PCSP will ensure that the strategy remains responsive to community needs, adaptable to change, and ultimately successful in achieving its objectives of improving community safety and building public confidence in policing. The PCSP Officer, supported by the ongoing involvement of PCSP Members, will be key to ensuring that this process is carried out effectively over the three-year period.

DRAFT

Appendices

Appendix I – Survey Questions

1. Please rate your perception of Good Relations in your area (select as appropriate): -
2. Please explain your answer
3. What do you think are the top three barriers to achieving good relations in your area?
4. What do you think could be done to improve good relations between people of different religious or racial backgrounds in your area?
5. In your opinion, what are the biggest problems in the Ards and North Down Borough Area?
6. In the Ards and North Down area, what activities should the PSNI concentrate on?
7. How much confidence do you have in local policing? (Tick as appropriate)
8. If you wish to receive information about the results of this survey or the work of the Ards and North Down Good Relations or PCSP please complete the optional contact information below

DRAFT

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	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	24 February 2025
File Reference	CW22
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Service Plan 2025-2026. Community and Culture.
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Community and Culture Service Plan 2025 - 2026

Members will be aware that Council is required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil this requirement Council approved the Performance Management Policy and Handbook in October 2015. The Performance Management Handbook outlines the approach to the Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually
- Service Plan – developed annually

Not Applicable

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

Attached is the 2025-26 Service Plan for Community and Culture in accordance with the Council's Performance Management Policy and Handbook.

Plans are intended to:

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

The attached Plan:

- Has been developed to align with the objectives of the Big Plan (2017 – 2032) and the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028 and has been developed in conjunction with staff, officers and management, and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.
- Sets out the objectives for the Service for 2025-26 and identifies the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service will try to attain along with key actions required to do so.
- Is based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g. due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP), the Plan may need to be revised.
- Will be reported to Committee on a six-monthly basis as undernoted.

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Quarter 1 and Q2	April – September	December
Q3 and Q4	October – March	June

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council approve the Service Plan.

COMMUNITY & CULTURE

Service Plan: 01 April 2025 – 31 March 2026



**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council

APPROVALS

Prepared By	Peer Reviewed By	Approved By Director
Nicola Dorrian	Ian O'Neill	Graeme Bannister
Head of Community and Culture	Head of Leisure Services	Director of Community and Wellbeing
24/02/2025	24/2/2025	24/02/2025

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1. Introduction to Service

Name of Service	Community and Culture
Directorate	Community and Wellbeing

Introduction and Reflection

Community and Culture

The Community and Culture Department sits within the Community and Wellbeing Directorate in Council and includes the following service units:

- Arts & Heritage
- Community Development
- Externally Funded Programmes

The Community and Culture Department strives for community cohesion and pride in our culture and heritage and empowers communities through capacity building, peace building and instilling pride.

The service supports all three of the corporate priorities but in particular the SOCIAL priority - improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality.

Staff engage with individuals and groups across the whole borough to ensure we continuously amend and improve our service in line with the needs of the community in the borough.

Arts and Heritage Service Unit

The Arts and Heritage Manager leads the Unit.

The arts team is based at Ards Arts Centre (Ards Town Hall) providing a comprehensive programme of exhibitions, creative classes, outreach programmes, music, puppetry, craft and literary festivals, grant schemes, bursaries, community-based arts programmes, and advice and support for the arts and craft sector.

The heritage/museum team is based at North Down Museum. Open 6 days per week - North Down Museum provides exhibitions and touring exhibitions, maintains permanent collections, delivers community based and extensive educational programmes, heritage grants, along with advice, support and development for the Heritage sector.

Community Development Service Unit

The Community Development Service Unit offers support directly and indirectly to enable and empower communities.

The service facilitates partnership working with a range of community and voluntary organisations.

The Section provides the direct delivery of a range of Community based Programmes, play clubs, special needs clubs, older

peoples groups during term time. A number of summer schemes run across the Borough during July, and it is proposed to enhance this provision in partnership with the Leisure Service department. Additional summer provision is supported via a number of community partners.

Community Development offer training for community groups and volunteers, including guidance on good governance, attendance at AGM's and interagency meetings and the provision of a range of grants for local festivals, running costs and Christmas Festivals.

Staff provide support for the Department of Communities, Neighbourhood Renewal Programme in Kilcooley including administrative support for Kilcooley Neighbourhood Partnership.

Staff manage a comprehensive list of grant programmes each year to support the community in line with the Councils social priority - - improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality.

Externally Funded Programmes Service Unit

The Externally Funded Programmes Service Unit consists of:

Good Relations - The Good Relations Team delivers activities and programmes under an agreed Strategy and Action Plan which includes the following themes from the T:BUC Strategy: Our Children and Young People, Our Shared Community, Our Safe Community and Our Cultural Expression.

Policing and Community Safety - The Policing and Community Safety (PCSP) Team, in line with the Department of Justice and Northern Ireland Policing Board priorities, delivers the functions of the Policing and Community Safety Partnership for the area, to improve community safety by tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and support community confidence in policing. A new Strategy and one year Action Plan have been consulted upon and will be implemented in the next financial year.

Community Safety - The Council's Community Safety Team work to make our Borough a safer place to live by tackling anti-social behaviour, such as noisy behaviour, damage to property, road nuisance and nuisance behaviour at events. The team work with community, voluntary and statutory agencies such as Street Pastors, YMCA, the Youth Service and PSNI to patrol anti-social behaviour hotspots across the Borough and deliver educational programmes for schools and communities.

PEACEPLUS - Work on the PEACEPLUS Programme commenced in 2022 with community consultation to develop of a co-design PEACEPLUS Plan for Ards and North Down. The PEACEPLUS Plan has been submitted to the funding body

Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) to access £5.6 million for local projects which will result in shared and inclusive local services, facilities and spaces and make a significant and lasting contribution to peace and reconciliation.

2. Context, Challenges and Key Assumptions

Staff from the Community and Culture Section attended a service planning event where they considered external issues impacting upon the service.

Political	External factors - Funding impact on PEACEPLUS, GR, PSCP and Community Development Political decision making
Economical	Uncertainty of external funding Budget reductions due to external factors Pressure to manage funding appropriately which comes to Council from central government very late in the financial year due to monitoring rounds
Social	The implications of the cost-of-living crisis on a range of factors including social need, mental health, jobs, economic instability Poverty, Social Need and Welfare Reform Urban/Rural split and access to services Demographics and aging population
Technological	Staff require training on new updated systems and packages. Lack of available space to work in the office. The whole team is unable to access the office at one time which is affecting the culture within the team. Lack of breakout space in the office to allow for meetings with visitors or to take a teams call in private.
Legal	Legislative changes due to Brexit General Data Protection Regulations and Freedom of Information Targeting Social Need, Equality and Rural Proofing Financial and Procurement Regulations

	Procurement procedures for not-for-profit grant funding. Time pressure when funds become available and the capacity of local organisation in completing large tender processes.
Environmental	Climate Change

Staff from the Community and Culture Section attended a service planning event where they considered challenges which the Service will face over the period of the plan as follows:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Resilience and flexibility of the team in a fluid environment. Local knowledge and understanding of community need Skilled and motivated staff Public consultation on projects Positive community relationships	Crisis = increase in the number of groups = decrease in the amount awarded to each group All grants oversubscribed, successful groups getting less% of ask Succession planning Limited resources Delay in receiving Letter of Offer from central government Working from or across multiple locations each with different challenges Arts and Heritage facilities at capacity
Opportunities	Threats
To seek new resource avenues To deliver more equitable direct service provision To try new approaches Meaningful evaluation – to show impact, but to implement changes for better service delivery PEACEPLUS capital and projects New 3-year strategies Citizen’s Hub Development	Staffing Restructuring/ Transformation Budget cuts internal and external Delay in Letter of Offer limits delivery timeframe and impact Rationalisation of office accommodation (the Castle/Museum)

3. Strategic Objectives and Collaboration

Within our new Corporate Plan 2024-2028 we have a vision of *A Sustainable Borough*. One where Economic, Environmental and Social Wellbeing are linked and in which we, as a Council, make decisions about policies, services, investments and resources that balance the demands of each.

By doing so we can positively impact the people and the assets in our Borough and play a part in addressing some of the world’s most pressing problems e.g. poverty, inequality, depletion of natural resources, climate change, economic growth etc.

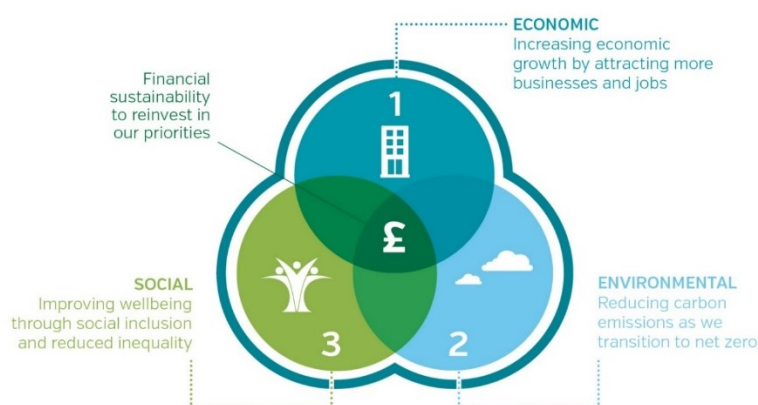
In brief, *A Sustainable Borough* is one where we make sure that we think about economic, social AND environmental impacts when we make decisions.

The three **priorities** we will be delivering against are:

- **ECONOMIC** - increasing economic growth by attracting more jobs and businesses
- **ENVIRONMENTAL** - reducing carbon emissions as we transition to net zero
- **SOCIAL** - improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality

These priorities align with the three pillars of sustainable development. They are ambitious, and we will need to work in partnership and collaborate to achieve them.

The diagram below summarises our three Corporate Priorities and shows how they all link together. As you will see at the heart of the diagram is our commitment to address the key issue of our financial sustainability – as without that, we will be less able to deliver on all our ambitions.



We have also identified **seven outcomes** that we want to achieve to meet our priorities. They are (not in order of priority):

1. An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment
2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets
3. A thriving and sustainable economy
4. A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors
5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing
6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy
7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation

The table below reflects the key projects/ objectives that will be achieved by our Service over the next 12 months, and the key Services across the Council that will be collaborated with as part of the process. In addition, each objective is linked to the Corporate Plan priorities and outcomes.

Strategic Objective	Collaboration Required
Objective 1	
Roll out of Social Value projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformation • Parks and Cemeteries • Leisure Services • Environmental Health Protection and Development
Objective 2 -	
Online Grants System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism • Economic Development • Regeneration • Leisure Services • Finance • Administration • Parks and Cemeteries • Digital Services • Transformation
Objective 3	
Community Centre/ Halls Review - Enhanced direct provision - community development	Community Halls, Leisure Services, EFP, Waste Services, Environmental Health, Parks, Communications
Objective 4	
Provision of a social supermarket within the Borough, to break the cycle of poverty in a time of financial hardship that supports people on a pathway to education or work. To increase and support positive changes to mental health and wellbeing.	Community Planning, procurement, communications

Objective 5	
Implement the PCSP Action Plan (2025-2026)	Community Halls, Procurement, Good Relations, Leisure Services, Community Safety, Finance, Communications, Environmental Health
Objective 6	
Implement the Good Relations Action Plan (2025-2026)	Community Development, Community Halls, Leisure Services, EFP, Procurement, Finance, Administration, Communications, Parks
Objective 7	
Implement PEACEPLUS Plan	Community Development, Community Halls, Leisure Services, EFP, Procurement, Finance, Capital projects, Communications, Regeneration, Parks, Assets & Property
Objective 8	
Implement Arts Plan/Arts and Heritage Strategy Review	Communications, Externally Funded Programmes, Tourism
Objective 9	
Develop AND Arts Network membership and Engagement Opportunities	Corporate Communications, Community Development
Objective 10	
Develop and deliver 4 community arts-based projects that help address areas of social need identified in partnership with Externally Funded Programmes and/or Community Services/Planning	Community Development, Good Relations, PCSP, Community Planning
Objective 11	
Implement the Museum Forward Plan	Communications, Community Development, Tourism,

Objective 12	
Development of the Adult SEND programming at North Down Museum focusing on engagement with individuals and groups with disabilities. Engaging through use of the museum collection, crafts and the stories of our borough	Corporate Communications, Multi-Media
Objective 13	
Utilise the newly installed 'Little Historians' gallery to actively engage and educate our youngest visitors to North Down Museum offering a bespoke Family Friendly experience.	Corporate Communications, Multi-Media

4. Service Improvement

Service development/improvement 2025/26?	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
Community Development Community Halls Transformation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	To consider the optimum use of community halls in tandem with provision of community development services.	ND / IO'N	Leisure – Community Halls, Transformation, Consultants, Community Stakeholders and Collaborative approach by relevant Council departments
Develop AND Arts Network membership and Engagement Opportunities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	Enhance relationships with local artists, increase local engagement	ND/ EC	Corporate Communications, Community Development
Develop and deliver 4 community arts-based projects that help address areas of social need	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	Opportunities for people to be active and healthy Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing	ND/EC	Community Development, Good Relations, PCSP, Community Planning
Development of the Adult SEND programming at North Down Museum focusing on engagement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency	Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing Opportunities for people to be active and healthy	ND/EC	Corporate Communications, Multi-Media

Service development/improvement 2025/26?	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
with individuals and groups with disabilities. Engaging through use of the museum collection, crafts and the stories of our borough	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation			

5. Service Risk Register

Service Risk Register should align with the Corporate Risk Management Strategy.

When completing your Service Plan you must review and consider your current Service Risk Register. Please confirm this has been completed.

Yes

6. Key Activities (KPIs) for 2025/26

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporting end of Q2 Target	Reporting end of Q4 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
	% Spend against budget	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes		100%		100%	100%	100%	Fixed
	% Staff attendance	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes		94%		95%	94.5%	95%	Fixed
	% of completed Employee Appraisals	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes		100%		100%	-	100%	Fixed
	Number of PEACEPLUS Revenue projects implemented	Service Led	6 monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	20	10	20	Cumulative
	Offer a space to every P7 pupil in the Borough to attend a session of the Bee Safe 9-day programme highlighting safety risks and how to stay safe both online and in person	Service Led	Year end	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	1608 pupils 46 schools	1600 pupils 46 schools	1700 pupils 46 schools	1600 pupils 46 schools	0	1600	fixed

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporting end of Q2 Target	Reporting end of Q4 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
	Number of participants on Living History visits to places that can be perceived as contentious followed by meaningful discussion	Service Led	Year end	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A	40	0	40	fixed
	Increase number of participants having a positive learning experience using Community development direct provision services	Service Led	Year end	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	4608	4700	260	4700	2300	4700	Cumulative
	A min of 140 households supported by the social supermarket's, with a target of 50% of those households to be enabled to break the cycle of poverty and to have a positive social outcome	Service Led		<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	132	132	132	140 households and 50% positive social outcome	70	140	Cumulative
	Number of engagements with North Down Museum Adult SEND Programme. 3 Groups	Service Led		<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	0	3	3	3	1	3	Cumulative
	4 no. community arts-based projects that help address areas of social need delivered in partnership	Service Led		<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	4	4	4	4	2	4	Cumulative

7. What Services/ Activities will be stopped

What service/ activities will we be stopping/ changing in 2025/2026	Reason for stopping / changing activity	Savings	Impact on Performance	Impact on the Public	Impact on staffing
Book start	Funding received from another location delivery will be via community midwives not registration	No Saving - Cost £7,500 it had to be found within existing budgets	None	None the same citizens will receive the same items via another avenue	No impact – low amount of staff time required for this activity within this department.
Mapping of Council's Public Art	Complete	No Saving	None	None	No impact – one off project.

8. Reporting, Monitoring and Review

Provide detail below how this plan will be monitored and reviewed.

Monitoring Method	Frequency	Responsible Officer
Team Meeting	Monthly	HoST/ SUMs/ Line Managers
HoST	Quarterly	HoST
Standing Committee	6 Monthly	Directors and HoST
Performance Improvement Plan	Annually (30 th June)	Transformation Manager
Self-Assessment Report	Annually (30 th September)	Transformation Manager
Other		

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	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure Services
Date of Report	24 February 2025
File Reference	LS/LA 14
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Service Plan 2025-26. Leisure Services
Attachments	Appendix 1: Leisure Services Service Plan 2025-26

Members will be aware that Council is required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil this requirement Council approved the Performance Management Policy and Handbook in October 2015. The Performance Management Handbook outlines the approach to the Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually
- Service Plan – developed annually

Not Applicable

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

Attached is the 2025-26 Service Plan for Leisure Services in accordance with the Council's Performance Management Policy and Handbook.

Plans are intended to:

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

The attached Plan:

- Has been developed to align with the objectives of the Big Plan (2017 – 2032) and the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028 and has been developed in conjunction with staff, officers and management, and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.
- Sets out the objectives for the Service for 2025-26 and identifies the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service will try to attain along with key actions required to do so.
- Is based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g. due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP), the Plan may need to be revised.
- Will be reported to Committee on a six-monthly basis as undernoted.

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Quarter 1 and Q2	April – September	December
Q3 and Q4	October – March	June

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council approve the Service Plan.

LEISURE AND AMENITIES

Service Plan: 01 April 2025 – 31 March 2026



**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council

APPROVALS

Prepared By	Peer Reviewed By	Approved By Director
Ian O'Neill	Nicola Dorrian	Graeme Bannister
Head of Leisure	Head of Community & Culture	Director of Community & Wellbeing
16/02/2025	23/02/2025	25/02/2025

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1. Introduction to Service

Name of Service	Leisure Services
Directorate	Community and Wellbeing

Introduction and Reflection

The Leisure Service comprises of:
Two service units – Leisure Services and Community Centres & Halls. The service area comprises of a Head of Service and a Service Unit Manager for each service unit. Within the two units there are 218 full time equivalent posts.

Leisure Services

The Leisure Services section is delivered through the provision of a range of indoor leisure centres, sports pitches and associated pavilions, tennis courts, bowling greens and a designated Sport Development Unit. The management and operation of the facilities is undertaken by a team of well qualified and skilled individuals all committed to ensuring facilities are fit for purpose and where the service is delivered the delivery is done to the highest standard and specification. The service continues to be delivered by two distinct entities, the in-house team deliver the facilities operated by the former Ards Borough Council and NCLT/Serco have recently secured a 5-year extension to operate and manage the facilities of the former North Down Borough Council.

The service has been developed to offer opportunities for everyone, regardless of their age, ability or gender to gain maximum benefit from their activity whether it is undertaken for health benefits, sporting excellence or simply to make the most of their recreation time. Through direct and indirect support, we help individuals, clubs and associations to maximise their potential to participate in their chosen activity at whatever level they aspire to. This is achieved through, but not limited to, functions such as Sports Development who manage grants to individuals and clubs to fulfil their sporting potential, the leisure centres where everyone can participate in a wide range of sporting, leisure, and recreational activities.

Community Centres and Halls

The Council has direct responsibility for the provision of twenty-one Community Centres and Halls across the Borough. These facilities are managed by this section which is responsible for all aspects of the provision including staffing, customer service, budgets, and marketing. The section provides a staffing resource for all bookings to ensure that all customers are provided with a quality service that meets their booking needs whilst also ensuring compliance with Council's health and safety.

The Local Government Act (NI) 2014 requires Ards and North Down Borough Council to initiate, maintain, facilitate and participate in Community Planning for our district. As part of the Community Plan, Leisure contributes to the wellbeing of our citizens by enabling participation and inclusion through many different means, including sport and leisure and offering facilities for communities to meet so improving the quality of life for our citizens.

Whilst there is no statutory requirement for Council to directly provide leisure facilities or community centres and halls the Council is still required under the Recreation and Youth Service Order (Northern Ireland) 1986, "Each district council shall secure the provision for its area of adequate facilities for recreational, social, physical and cultural activities".

It is essential that this Service Plan is linked to the Corporate Plan which

for the next 3 years is titled
'Towards a Sustainable Borough'

Summary of Our Corporate Plan

Vision: A Sustainable Borough

To achieve our vision of **A Sustainable Borough**, Ards and North Down Borough Council's Corporate Plan is centred on three priorities, seven outcomes and seventeen strategic actions.

The three priorities we are focused on are:

1. Increasing economic growth attracting more jobs and businesses.
2. Reducing carbon emissions as we transition to net zero.
3. Improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality.

The Seven outcomes we want to achieve will result in:

1. An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses given opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment.
2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets.
3. A thriving and sustainable economy.
4. A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors.
5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing.
6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy.
7. Ards and North Down Borough Council being a high performing organisation.

The development of the Leisure Strategy will seek to build on this vision of a Sustainable Borough and importantly how we can contribute to a fitter and healthier population.

Whilst it is the third priority that the leisure strategy will mostly influence, it can also contribute to increasing economic growth by helping to grow employment opportunities – public sector leisure staff, sports coaches, fitness instructors, personal trainers – and commercial leisure operations. Improving wellbeing, that is, people having better physical and mental health, will help economic growth by strengthening the labour force and improving people's livelihoods. Given that nearly a quarter of the working age population in Ards and North Down was economically inactive in 2021 the link between improving wellbeing and economic growth is important to recognise. A Borough that has an impressive array of opportunities for active leisure is more likely to be attractive to incoming businesses and to existing businesses looking to expand. Economic growth is a key priority for the Council; as inactive people within *'harder to reach'* communities become more active, social and economic benefits will follow.

It is the outcome *‘opportunities for people to be active and healthy’* that is directly relatable to the proposal for a leisure strategy. Two strategic actions will achieve this outcome:



Success indicators are noted, two of which are directly relevant:



Progress towards achieving this outcome will be measured by using a combination of whole population Big Plan indicators, Council-specific performance measures included in services’ unit plans and feedback from the biennial resident’s survey. The Big Plan indicators are:

- Number of preventable deaths
- Gap in life expectancy between most and least deprived
- Obesity rates (adult and children)
- % of population who were low self-efficacy (ages 16+ and 60+)

The Leisure Services section contributes towards several areas of The Big Plan due to the wide span of activities performed within the section.

The Community Plan for Ards and North Down has this objective.

‘Creating positive outcomes for everyone by empowering individuals and communities to be more resilient; reducing inequality; promoting good relations and sustainability; while at the same time improving the quality and accessibility of all public services is at the heart of the Big Plan for Ards and North Down.’

Published in 2017, the Big Plan runs through to 2032 with actions focusing on five outcomes for all people:

- Fulfil their lifelong potential
- Enjoy good health and wellbeing
- Live in communities where they are respected, are safe and feel secure
- Benefit from a prosperous economy
- Feel pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment

The leisure strategy can contribute to the first two outcomes by getting more people active and encouraging active lifestyles. These outcomes are similar to other national, regional and local strategies which emphasises the need for agencies and organisations to work together to achieve the full potential of shared outcomes.

2. Context, Challenges and Key Assumptions

<p>Political</p>	<p>The political environment is relatively stable at this time and scanning ahead does not indicate any change in this status.</p> <p>Nationally the new Labour government has identified tackling inactivity as a priority for action and this is likely to create opportunities at the NI level for additional funding and support for initiatives to tackle inactivity in our communities</p>
<p>Economical</p>	<p>https://www.investni.com/sites/default/files/2022-07/investni-performance-council-area-ards-and-north-down-2022.pdf</p> <p>https://explore.nisra.gov.uk/local-stats/N09000011/</p> <p>The following detail has been extracted from the 2021 Census or the Invest NI website. Links to both sites are provided above where more detail on the economic and health data streams for the borough can be accessed. Where percentages do not add up to 100 it is usually because respondents have chosen not to indicate a status</p> <p>In the Ards and North Down Census area 2% of the working age population are unemployed, 54% are employed and 43% are economically inactive this is marginally better than the NI average. Gross Domestic Product for the Borough is £2,896,000 which makes it the lowest ranked area in Northern Ireland, Belfast, as expected, is the highest with a GDP of £17,388,000. GDP is often expressed as a per head calculation and for AND in 2020 this was £15,939 up 6% from the 2016 calculation, this compared to the NI average of £25,575 a growth of 5% from the 2016 calculation</p> <p>The Average Gross Annual Wage is £29,382 which is ranked 7th of the 11 Council areas in Northern Ireland, Belfast is ranked 1st with an average wage of £35,811 and Causeway Coast and Glens was last with an average wage of £27,027</p> <p>Invest NI note there are 4,870 business in AND, this accounts for 6% of the total businesses in NI. 90% of these businesses are ranked as Micro businesses that employ 9 people or less. A further 9% are ranked as small employing 45 people or less. The services sector accounts for 65% of all businesses in AND which is higher than the NI average of 56%, surprisingly the agriculture sector at 12% is lower than the NI average of 16%</p> <p>34% of the population of AND have a level 4 qualification or better, this compares to 32% of the overall population of NI.</p> <p>Life expectancy of both male and females within the borough is higher than the NI average with Males expected to live to 80 compared to 78.4 as the NI average and females to 82.9 compared to 82.3 as the NI average.</p>

	<p>General health of the population in AND is rated as good or very good by 78% of the population compared to 79% as a NI average.</p> <p>Local Authority expenditure is under increasing pressure with reduced central grant and expected low increases in the level of domestic rates, this means that leisure will have to maximise income and minimise expenditure to achieve the highest possible levels of efficiency and effectiveness. Council may need to pursue external funding in order to fund service improvements.</p> <p>Global financial downturn and increasing austerity creating financial uncertainty for many, this may negatively affect disposable income and discretionary spending with adverse effects on market. Leisure will have to ensure that those spending their disposable income on leisure recognise the leisure opportunities provided by the Council as excellent value for money compared to other leisure providers in the area and worth their limited disposable money being spend on their health and leisure interests. This in turn presents both opportunities and challenges for our free to use outdoor amenity facilities as users move toward the less formal and more passive forms of outdoor activity.</p> <p>Increasing costs for supply for raw materials. It has been noted that the costs of current Leisure projects have increased substantially across the life of the project thus far and this trend for increased costs can be expected to continue.</p>
<p>Social</p>	<p>The provision of local authority leisure in the area does not exist in isolation and we need to take cognisance of national and local trends in leisure and reflect these through our own programmes. The use of the demographic modelling tools to help identify demographic trends in the area will allow the Leisure and Amenities section to develop programmes that reflect the needs of the community.</p> <p>Reference will be made to appropriate central government health and sporting initiatives to take advantage of the interest stimulated by these initiatives. In providing these services, the leisure service will be able to contribute to the Community and Wellbeing Directorate's objectives by applying the principles of the Five Ways to Wellbeing. These are a set of evidence-based actions, which promote health and wellbeing, they are Connect, Give, Be Active, Take Notice and Keep Learning.</p>
<p>Technological</p>	<p>The industry is technologically upgraded by utilizing numerous tools for personal fitness training, digital equipment, upgrade booking system by software, Internet technology.</p> <p>Electronic leisure also poses both a threat and an opportunity for the leisure service; where many people using social media apps or online training programs (e.g. peloton) can partake in physical activities such as dance and fitness classes in the comfort of their own homes, reducing the need to travel to facilities such as those provided by the leisure service, while opportunity presents itself through the development of more sophisticated group activities that would benefit from the facilities available throughout the Borough.</p>

	<p>The growing use of Social Networking sites by the public at large both represents an opportunity and a challenge to the provision of facilities and activities undertaken by the leisure service.</p> <p>Online booking is becoming an integral part of the book and pay options available at our leisure facilities. The implementation of the new Legend management system opens up opportunity to expand this throughout leisure's programme of activities.</p> <p>Fitness technology is improving all the time, and with the opening of the Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing & Leisure Complex, the Leisure Services section is at the forefront of leisure technology and users of our facilities have access to the very best fitness and leisure facilities available. In addition to the innovations noted in the previous paragraph, Leisure Ards have added the Technogym Wellness App to all the equipment in the fitness suites at its three managed sites; this allows members to track their fitness across all items of the equipment in the gym and follow personalised programmes of activity through the App, allowing gym staff to offer assistance to those that need it most. Serco provide a similar service through their Life Fitness App.</p>
<p>Legal</p>	<p>Council now benefits from no longer having to pay VAT on leisure income, similar to the NCLT/Serco. This will have a significant benefit in the cost of providing this service.</p> <p>Council is bound by the rules and regulation of the UK government. For example, Civil Rights Act 1964 and Sex Discrimination Act 1975 for restricting discrimination in hiring, compensation, privileges, conditions and terms of employment on the basis of gender, race, religion. Council is also bound to adhere to increases in payroll costs resulting from LG pay review agreements which can add significant pressures to staffing budgets.</p> <p>Management must be aware of the growing threat of litigation for any type of incident that leads to hurt or injury and ensure the safety of the customers and staff is paramount in any operating environment.</p> <p>Council remains in ongoing litigation regarding various aspects pertaining to the construction of Bangor Aurora.</p> <p>ANDBC is a very risk averse Council and this has led to a growth in consultant appointments to advise on so many aspects of various leisure projects designed to avoid future challenges, these are expensive and add greatly to the cost and time in the delivery of projects.</p>
<p>Environmental</p>	<p>Leisure will continue to contribute to Council's target of working towards net zero targets.</p>

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall level of customer satisfaction good - reported through customer survey • Strong links with local sports clubs, NGBs, schools, colleges and local communities • Quest+ accreditation achieved at key facilities • Strong internal/council led staff development/training • Ability to attain strong customer information through Legend system • Highly trained and motivated skilled workforce following transformation within leisure operational staff • High level of support from other Council departments • Growing swimming lessons and fitness programmes • Recent upgrades to facilities - eg. Comber Leisure Centre gym • Strong financial performance across Leisure against KPI's and Income targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging portfolio of Community Halls, outdoor pavilions, tennis facilities and pitches - failures/closures • Review of Community Halls provision not yet commenced • Energy management • Staffing pressure in some facilities including low uptake during recruitment exercises • Sickness/absence above Councils target % • ABM gym reaching membership capacity • Two Operators providing one leisure service • Customers using facilities without paying • Poor condition of Splash Pool floor at ABM • Tiling at Aurora needs replaced • Portaferry Sport Centre Gym- Urgent need of investment • Lack of Car Parking at ABMWLC

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New leisure strategy soon to be completed and implemented • Newly implemented strategy for artificial pitch replacement • Modernisation of Community Halls provision following Consultant led Transformation • Collaborative working within Council departments • Partnership working with NCLT • Energy management investments • Development of the 'social value' offered by Leisure provision • Meeting the need for low cost, subsidised leisure and community activities • Supporting the Trust, PHA and public health initiatives to aid and improve people's physical/mental health - opportunity to access funding to support provision • Utilising technology to support, develop and grow service • Growth in sports for ladies/girls • Installation of access control at ABMWLC and tennis courts. • Appointment of an Officer to carry out monitoring, manage capital projects and scan for financial support opportunities • Development of a new Athletics facility to replace sportsplex facility/ • Increased grants to support more clubs and athletes • Modernisation of Community Development Strategy and Community Halls Consultant-led Provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rising costs for raw materials • Pressure on public spend - budgetary constraints and investment prioritisation coming from Council • Increasing public expectations • Increasing costs/failures associated with outsourced facilities • Cost of living increases, resulting in existing/potential customers have less money for leisure activity • Growth in the private or commercial Leisure sector • Reduction in External Funding opportunities • Poor condition of Sportsplex complex due to subsidence • Plan for future of Holywood leisure complex needed. • Lack of car park space at ABM • Council Restructure

3. Strategic Objectives and Collaboration

Within our new Corporate Plan 2024-2028 we have a vision of *A Sustainable Borough*. One where Economic, Environmental and Social Wellbeing are linked and in which we, as a Council, make decisions about policies, services, investments and resources that balance the demands of each.

By doing so we can positively impact the people and the assets in our Borough and play a part in addressing some of the world's most pressing problems e.g. poverty, inequality, depletion of natural resources, climate change, economic growth etc.

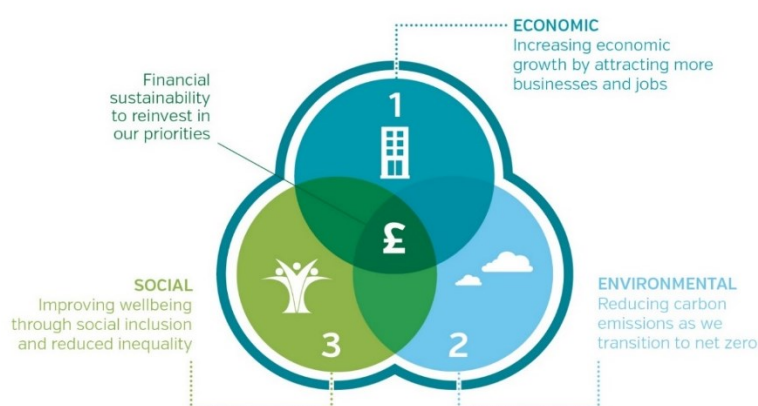
In brief, *A Sustainable Borough* is one where we make sure that we think about economic, social AND environmental impacts when we make decisions.

The three **priorities** we will be delivering against are:

- **ECONOMIC** - increasing economic growth by attracting more jobs and businesses
- **ENVIRONMENTAL** - reducing carbon emissions as we transition to net zero
- **SOCIAL** - improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality

These priorities align with the three pillars of sustainable development. They are ambitious, and we will need to work in partnership and collaborate to achieve them.

The diagram below summarises our three Corporate Priorities and shows how they all link together. As you will see at the heart of the diagram is our commitment to address the key issue of our financial sustainability – as without that, we will be less able to deliver on all our ambitions.



We have also identified **seven outcomes** that we want to achieve to meet our priorities. They are (not in order of priority):

1. An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment
2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets
3. A thriving and sustainable economy
4. A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors
5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing
6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy
7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation

The table below reflects the key projects/ objectives that will be achieved by our Service over the next 12 months, and the key Services across the Council that will be collaborated with as part of the process. In addition, each objective is linked to the Corporate Plan priorities and outcomes.

Strategic Objective	Collaboration Required	Corporate Plan Priority	Corporate Plan Outcome
Objective 1			
Leisure Strategy Implementation Year 1 of Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transformation • Finance • External Partners • Strategic Implementation group formed • Others listed in consultation documents 	Social	1, 6, 7
Objective 2			
Community Halls Transformation Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Services • Human Resources • Consultancy firm once recruited • Assets and Property • Finance 	Social	1, 5, 7
Objective 3			
Leisure Staff Transformation and KPI's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources • Finance • Assets and Property • Trade Unions • Transformation 	Economic	3, 7
Objective 4			
Portavogie 3G Pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Projects Team • Finance • Assets and Property 	Social	1, 6

Objective 5			
Peninsula 3G Pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Projects Team • Finance • Assets and Property 	Social	1, 6
Objective 6			
Donaghadee Sports Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Projects Team • Finance • Assets and Property 	Social	1, 6
Objective 7			
Sportsplex Consultant - Future of Athletics and the site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serco • Assets • Parks • Wider stakeholders • Peace plus/ Community Services 	Social	1, 6, 7
Objective 8			
Artificial pitch refurbishment and replacement - Comber Leisure Centre: 2 no. 2G Sand Tennis Courts (outdoor), Commons, Donaghadee: 3no. 2G Sand Tennis Courts, Ward Park: 4 no. 2G Sand Tennis Courts, Helens Bay Tennis: Upgrade of 3 no. Tarmacadam Tennis Courts to 2G Sand Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serco • Assets • Parks • Wider stakeholders • Finance • Procurement 	Social	1, 6
Objective 9			
Padel Tennis (Holywood)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance • Procurement • Finance • Assets and Property 	Social	1, 6

4. Service Improvement

The “**Service development/ improvement**” element should identify areas of the service that require development/ improvement along with any new, innovative ideas for future improvements. **Please state clearly in the “Rationale” section why the improvement is being undertaken and what evidence there is to support the decision.**

Only Service improvement activities should be included in this section, ‘business as usual’ activities should be detailed in Section 6.

Please ensure KPIs are included in Section 6 to measure Service development/ improvement(s) outlined below.

Service development/ improvement 2025/26?	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
Implementation of Leisure Strategy- Year 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	This will be the first leisure strategy for this Council, it will determine the future of leisure provision in the Borough for the next 10 years. Year one of the Acton Plan will be delivered in 2025/26.	ION AJ	There is a long list of external partners, in its broadest sense, identified in the consultation document
Leisure Staff Transformation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	This has been an ongoing exercise and is designed to ensure leisure is an agile organisation ready for the challenges ahead	ION AJ	HR & OD Unions Finance
Community Halls Transformation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation		ION SMcC	Community Development and Culture, Consultants, Community Stakeholders and Collaborative approach by relevant Council departments

5. Service Risk Register

Service Risk Register should align with the Corporate Risk Management Strategy.

When completing your Service Plan you must review and consider your current Service Risk Register. Please confirm this has been completed.

Yes

6. Key Activities (KPIs) for 2025/26

Please ensure service development/ improvements detailed in Section 4 are included as KPIs.

KPIs should be aligned to the 7 Outcomes of the Corporate Plan 2024-2028, detailed below:

1	An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment
2	An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets
3	A thriving and sustainable economy
4	A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors
5	Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing
6	Opportunities for people to be active and healthy
7	Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation

Label	Performance Measures. Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	2025/26 Reporting end of Q2	2025/26 Reporting end of Q4	Cumulative or Fixed
EC.07.L A.01	% Spend against budget	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	100%	10.2%	100%			Fixed
SO.07.L A.01	% Staff attendance	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	94%	93.13%	95%			Fixed
SO.07.L A.02	% of completed Employee Appraisals from April 2025 to March 2026	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	0%	100%	0%	100%			Fixed

Label	Performance Measures. Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	2025/26 Reporting end of Q2	2025/26 Reporting end of Q4	Cumulative or Fixed
				<input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7									
EC.07.L A.02	Income per head of population (164,200) Leisure Ards income only	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	£20.93	£19.07	£20.00			Cumulative
EC.07.L A.03	Net Expenditure Per Head of Pop (164,200)	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	£4.65	£0.62	£0.60			Cumulative
EC.07.L A.04	Income per member of Staff (FTE) 60	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	£56,865	£43,200	£56.000			Cumulative
EN.02.L A.01	% sent to recycling rather than Landfill for Leisure Sites	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	59%	58%	62%	65%			Fixed
EC.07.L A.05	Attrition Rate	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	N/A	6%	4%	4%			Fixed

Label	Performance Measures. Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	2025/26 Reporting end of Q2	2025/26 Reporting end of Q4	Cumulative or Fixed
EC.07.L A.06	Retention Rate	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	N/A	94%	96%	96%			Fixed
SO.07.L A.03	Maintain Quest awards for all 4 Leisure Sites	Service Led	Annual	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	4	4	4	4			Fixed
SO.06.L A.01	Number of fitness classes per week (Leisure Ards and Serco/NCLT)	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	250	220	240	250			Fixed
SO.06.L A.02	Total footfall across all Leisure Sites (Ards)	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	900,000	660,000	1,00,000			Cumulative
SO.06.L A.03	Total footfall across all Leisure Sites (Serco)	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	1,000,000	690,475	1,000,000			Cumulative
				<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2									

Label	Performance Measures. Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	2025/26 Reporting end of Q2	2025/26 Reporting end of Q4	Cumulative or Fixed
SO.06.L A.04	Number enrolled in Learn to Swim programmes for AAC and ABMWLC (monthly)	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	6,595	1500	5700	5,800			Fixed
SO.06.L A.05	No of Active Aging Memberships (Ards)	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	3,014	3,100	3,663	4,000			Fixed
SO.06.L A.06	Number of Sports Forum Grants Awarded	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	226	250	266	300			Cumulative
SO.07.L A.04	Number of individuals attending Sports Education Courses	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	36	100	32	100			Cumulative
SO.06.L A.07	Participation in Sports Development Programmes	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	689	70	1,472	500			Cumulative
EC.07.L A.07	Number of Sports Capital Grants Awarded to Clubs	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment	Yes	9	10	14	15			Cumulative

Label	Performance Measures. Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	2025/26 Reporting end of Q2	2025/26 Reporting end of Q4	Cumulative or Fixed
				<input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Social								
SO.06.L A.08	Number of Clubs affiliated with the Sports Forum	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	99	110	99	110			Cumulative
New Label Needed	Implementation of Leisure Strategy – Year 1	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	New	New	New	Year 1 targets			Cumulative
New Label Needed	Leisure Staff Transformation	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	New	New	New	Completed			Cumulative

Label	Performance Measures. Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	2025/26 Reporting end of Q2	2025/26 Reporting end of Q4	Cumulative or Fixed
Community Centres and Halls													
SO.07.L A.05	Total hours booked in Community Centres	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	32,242	26,000	25,378	28,000			Cumulative
EC.07.L A.08	Net expenditure per head of population (164,200)	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	£4.10	£3.61	£4.00			Cumulative
New Label Needed	Income per head of population (164,200)	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	N/A	£1.39	£1.62			Cumulative
EN.02.L A.02	% sent to recycling rather than Landfill	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	58%	60%	54%	60%			Fixed
SO.06.L A.09	Total Footfall at Community Centres	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	144,415	120,000	112, 435	150,000			Cumulative

Label	Performance Measures. Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	2025/26 Reporting end of Q2	2025/26 Reporting end of Q4	Cumulative or Fixed
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7									
EC.07.L A.09	% Spend against Budget	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	100%	94%	100%			Cumulative
SO.07.L A.06	% Staff Attendance	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	N/A	95%	93.85%	95%			Cumulative
SO.07.L A.07	% of completed Appraisals in the period April 2025 to March 2026	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	0%	100%	0%	100%			Cumulative
SO.07.L A.08	Customer Engagement (Number of groups and engagement sessions)	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	0	9	5	9			Cumulative
New Label Needed	Income per member of Staff (FTE) 23.5	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	New	New	New	£12,254			Cumulative

Label	Performance Measures. Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	2025/26 Reporting end of Q2	2025/26 Reporting end of Q4	Cumulative or Fixed
New Label Needed	Community Halls Transformation	Service Led	6 Monthly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	Yes	New	New	New	100%			Cumulative

7. What Services/ Activities will be stopped

Please add detail of KPI's that have previously been monitored that will no longer be reported on for 2025/26. An example is provided below.

What service/ activities will we be stopping/ changing in 2025/2026	Reason for stopping / changing activity	Savings	Impact on Performance	Impact on the Public	Impact on staffing
<i>EC.04.TO.03 Number of attendants at large scale events</i>	<i>Activity not planned for the coming year</i>	<i>£5,000</i>	<i>None – alternative activity planned</i>	<i>None – alternative activity planned</i>	<i>Staff time reallocated to other activity</i>

8. Reporting, Monitoring and Review

Provide detail below how this plan will be monitored and reviewed.

Monitoring Method	Frequency	Responsible Officer
Team Meeting	Monthly/ Quarterly (finance)	HOST/ SUMs/ Line Managers
HOST	Quarterly	HOST
Standing Committee	6 Monthly	Directors and HOST
Performance Improvement Plan	Annually (30 th June)	Transformation Manager
Self-Assessment Report	Annually (30 th September)	Transformation Manager
Other		

Unclassified

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Environmental Health Protection and Development
Date of Report	24 February 2025
File Reference	CW22
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: N/A
Subject	Environmental Health Protection and Development Service Plan 2025-2026
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Environmental Health Protection and Development Service Plan 2025-26

Members will be aware that Council is required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil this requirement Council approved the Performance Management Policy and Handbook in October 2015. The Performance Management Handbook outlines the approach to the Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually
- Service Plan – developed annually

Not Applicable

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The Council’s 18 Service Plans outline how each respective Service will contribute to the achievement of the corporate objectives including, but not limited to, any relevant actions identified in the PIP.

Attached is the 2025-26 Service Plan for XXXX in accordance with the Council’s Performance Management Policy and Handbook.

Plans are intended to:

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

The attached Plan:

- Has been developed to align with the objectives of the Big Plan (2017 – 2032) and the Corporate Plan 2024 – 2028 and has been developed in conjunction with staff, officers and management, and in consultation with key stakeholders where relevant.
- Sets out the objectives for the Service for 2025-26 and identifies the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service will try to attain along with key actions required to do so.
- Is based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g. due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP), the Plan may need to be revised.
- Will be reported to Committee on a six-monthly basis as undernoted.

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Quarter 1 and Q2	April – September	December
Q3 and Q4	October – March	June

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the Service Plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROTECTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Service Plan: 01 April 2025 – 31 March 2026



Ards and
North Down
Borough Council

APPROVALS

Prepared By	Peer Reviewed By	Approved By Director
Adele Faulkner	Stephen Daye	Insert Name
Head of Environmental Health Protection and Development	Head of Parks & Cemeteries	Director of Community and Wellbeing
17/01/2025	19/02/2025	25/02/2025

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1. Introduction to Service

Name of Service	Environmental Health Protection and Development
Directorate	Community and Wellbeing
Introduction and Reflection	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Aligning with the Corporate vision of A Sustainable Borough, the role of the Environmental Health Protection and Development (EHPD) is to ensure a better quality of life for all.</p> <p>Service Vision: Working together for service excellence with a team who enjoy their job and take pride in their work; ensuring all who live in, work in and visit Ards and North Down feel safe and live well in a sustainable environment.</p> <p>Service Mission: To protect, promote and improve health, safety and wellbeing for residents, visitors and businesses within the Borough through the range of services we deliver.</p> <p>Environmental Health covers the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, the products we use, the places we work and play and the homes we live in. We protect public health and contribute to the three Corporate priorities and all seven outcomes of the Corporate Plan through our service units which include Food Control, Consumer Protection, Health & Safety, Noise, Petroleum & Caravan Site licensing, Health and Wellbeing, Public Health and Housing, all supported by administration/business support.</p> <p>The service of 55 staff responds to approximately 4000 service requests annually and regulates 4500 businesses in the Borough. The staff work in partnership with a range of internal and external partners including other Councils and receive funding from Public Health Agency (PHA), Food Standards Agency (FSA), Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs of Northern Ireland (DAERA), Department of Justice NI (DoJ), Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) and Office for Product safety and Standards (OPSS) to deliver on Service Level Agreements (SLA's) and MOU's.</p> <p>Successes</p> <p>Despite staffing challenges on 2024, the service met the majority of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). This includes the elimination of the food inspection backlog. (Outcomes 3,4,5 and 7)</p> <p>The Council continues to progress the "Whole Systems Approach to Obesity" with the next phases of causal mapping and developing the action plan progressing in 2025/26. (Outcomes 6 and 7).</p>

Age Friendly work has progressed a collaborate action plan with SEHSCT on dementia; delivery of the first year of the action plan of the Age Friendly Strategy 2024-2027; the creation of a memory booklet; 7 community hub stands; and 2 walkability audits. (Outcomes 1, 5 and 6).

There has been a significant investment in training for the staff teams in line with training needs identified in the new appraisal systems. This has included legal training, personal safety training and specific technical training for individuals and teams including major incidents, dementia awareness, racking safety, noise investigations and food safety. (Outcomes 3,6 and 7).

The second wave of new legal duties under the Private Tenancies Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (PTA) came into force during the year. New work processes were implemented to ensure effective regulation with the Council. (Outcomes 4 and 5).

Through the rate setting process it was agreed by Council that the charges made by this service should be reviewed and increased/introduced where appropriate in order to maximise income. These changes have been introduced and income has increased – particularly in relation to wasp nests. (Outcomes 3 and 7).

Tobacco control. As the result of a notice of motion significant progress has been made in relation to a partnership approach with HMRC in relation to tobacco products. We actively engaged on proposals from Government Departments on A smoke free generation and the proposed ban on disposable vapes. (Outcomes 2,3,4,5,6).

Legal Cases

A number of significant Legal cases were instigated or concluded during the year 2024-25, including a Judicial review (noise) and County Court appeal (Harassment and illegal eviction). (Outcomes 5 and 7).

Emerging issues

The Windsor Framework continues to present challenges to businesses trading with Great Britain and the EU, particularly where a divergence has been seen non-food items being sold in NI from GB. (Outcome 3).

With a number of experienced staff leaving to move to councils closer to where they live, significant resource has gone into recruitment and subsequent training of new officers. A full team of officers has been in place from December 2024. (Outcomes 3 and 7).

Landlord Registration is transferring to local government this year, with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council taking over operations from DfC. Proposed business models for the new scheme have included a requirement for councils to carry out compliance checks relating to property fitness. This must be funded by income generated by landlord registration fees, but it is not yet known what the final model will be or what level of funding is forthcoming. (Outcomes 4 and 5).

Challenges are presented on managing funded projects, with budgets which no longer completely covering staff costs due to pay increases (thereby reducing programme budgets) and recruitment issues related to short term contracts/agency work. (Outcome 7).

Two candidate bathing waters at Brompton Bay and Donaghadee may be formally identified for the commencement of the 2025 Bathing Season. The additional designated beaches will require additional resourcing for risk assessment and signage. This is a high-profile area within which the department has very little control yet receives significant attention from the public and members as was seen with the recent slurry spillage impacting Ballyholme bathing waters. (Outcomes, 2, 4, 5 and 6).

There will be an impact on the inspection workload of the food team from a new Food Standards Agency food standard delivery model new regime. (Outcome 3, 5 and 7).

Additional funding has been secured in a number of areas including pigeon management in Conway Square, cycle to work facilities, surveying of properties and businesses to cleanse our database, additional staff wellbeing activities and the use of remote IT solutions.

A joined-up approach to the planning & health and safety of events in the Borough has been established. As the head of service is the chair of the Safety Advisory Group, support will be needed from the noise, food and health and safety teams, this is a significant commitment without any additional resource. (Outcomes 3, 4 and 5).

The increased use of vapes, particularly by adolescents has become a subject of concerns within the borough. The team will remain involved and vigilant to imminent changes in legislation around smoke free and disposable vapes making this challenging area. The implications of any changes are not yet fully known and is likely require agility from the team and additional resources. (Outcomes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7).

Mind, Body and Business funding has been withdrawn by PHA from April 2025, however internal funding has been secured to allow this valuable grant fund to continue. Wellbeing initiatives offered to ANDBC businesses can therefore continue (75+ business and 1300+ employees direct sign ups) (Outcomes 3, 4 and 6).

The organisational redesign is likely to have a significant impact on this service. The outworking of this is currently unknown, therefore agility in relation to this will be necessary throughout the year and beyond.

Assumptions

- The resources allocated to the EHPD unit will be broadly in line with the 2024- 25 budget.
- External funding from FSA, OPSS, and PHA will be available at a similar level to 2024-25, other than those mentioned as ceasing.
- The Service area will have a full staff compliment and the ability to recruit staff should vacancies arise.

- The staff team will remain mainly working in the Church Street office with ad hoc agile working arrangements as agreed by service unit managers.
- No major pandemics, outbreaks or emergency incidents have been accounted for in the development of this plan.

2. Context, Challenges and Key Assumptions

Political	Stormont Assembly has resumed with amendments to the operational arrangement of the Windsor Framework. The implications of this are unknown in terms of funding and priorities but there is potential for impact across the service from changes in legislation, divergence and funding priorities.
Economical	Local Authority expenditure is under increasing pressure with reduced central grant and expected low increases in the level of domestic rates. Areas of deprivation and low disposable income remains an issue for many, meaning families have less to spend. There may be an increased number in food/fuel poverty, tax changes, lower income and increase in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) fees for landlords and higher rent for tenants. Impact of Private Tenancies Act on landlords and tenants. Increased cost of living impacts on business owners and landlords overheads have increased and this makes securing compliance more difficult e.g. maintenance, reports etc
Social	The work of our Service provides enhanced social cohesion through Age Friendly and other health and wellbeing initiatives through the Community Plan including working towards being dementia friendly. We also contribute to health and wellbeing across the borough which have significant social and wellbeing factors. There is an increase in the number of people living in the rented sector, an increased number in food/fuel poverty and an increase in public expectation generally with a greater demand and reliance on funded services/support and voluntary support.
Technological	Advances in technology have allowed for changes to software and processes for data capture, transfer and retention and contributed to more agile working. This can be developed further. The Tascomi database is in need of renewal and a business case outlining this is being developed. There is a need for a corporate approach to use of SharePoint, S drive etc.
Legal	The Service operates under several statutory regulations which are subject to change and amendment. FSA are introducing a new Compliance regime, and a new Private Tenancies Act is being implemented, both of which will have significant impacts on resourcing. Ongoing changes to Policies, Procedures and Practice also need to be considered. The number and complexity of legal cases this year has increased resulting in the increase in spending on legal fees. The legal budget has been increased in 2025/26 to account for this.
Environmental	The impact of changing environmental and climatic patterns will continue to be significant and the service will need to take cognisance and have the ability to adapt as a result, including areas such as bathing waters and air quality. Internally cramped office space, lack of meeting/ interview rooms, falling ceiling tiles and leaks etc can impact on staff morale and productivity. The Council accommodation strategy and agile working policy will impact on this.

Strengths	Weaknesses
High quality service which contributes to the Corporate Plan and has close links with Big Plan objectives. Recognition of local service needs and the value of local delivery.	Inadequate recognition of the strengths and abilities of Environmental Health (EH).
Recognition of local service needs and the value of local delivery.	Under-selling ourselves (not strong enough voice) not usually seen as politically sensitive or influential in council.
Well educated, trained, professional and empathetic workforce. Officers have problem-solving skills over a broad spectrum of functions and a proven record regarding internal and external partnership working	Lack of succession planning management opportunities for staff against skills shortages in certain areas. Shortage of suitably experienced EHO's to cover temporary absences.
Regional and sub-regional collaboration for the service, leading to consistency of approach.	Perception that EH is a regulatory service only
Readiness to adopt and deliver new functions and to adapt to change.	Lack of office space and poor quality office space, meeting rooms and interview rooms. Can impact on staff morale and productivity
Good communications across the service internally and externally. Statutory nature of many functions	Limited resources to aid adopting and delivering new functions.
Opportunities	Threats
Links to the Corporate Plan and Big Plan.	Implications of the Cost of living crisis on the NI Assembly are unknown in terms of funding and priorities and there is potential for impact across the service from changes in legislation and funding priorities.
IT- potential for greater flexibility and more efficient service.	New statutory functions arising without resource such as PTA.
Experience of working at the forefront of the quality and consistency agenda.	Wide remit can dilute resource and expertise.
EH well-placed to provide linkages in the future delivery of health and wellbeing to meet the needs of the Big Plan.	Increased public impatience about regulatory processes making progress with investigations difficult.
Ability to link service with external partners e.g., FSA, PHA, HSENI, to address identified health needs and to deliver service.	Increased FOI, EIR and legal requests impacts resources.
Ability to adapt to new/changed legislation and processes	Increasingly levels of mental health issues in customers requiring training e.g., safeguarding.
Closer working with internal council services and stakeholders to better promote the work of the department	Large number of Big Plan lead roles with very little resource. including Whole systems approach to obesity, age friendly etc

3. Strategic Objectives and Collaboration

Within our new Corporate Plan 2024-2028 we have a vision of *A Sustainable Borough*. One where Economic, Environmental and Social Wellbeing are linked and in which we, as a Council, make decisions about policies, services, investments and resources that balance the demands of each.

By doing so we can positively impact the people and the assets in our Borough and play a part in addressing some of the world's most pressing problems e.g. poverty, inequality, depletion of natural resources, climate change, economic growth etc.

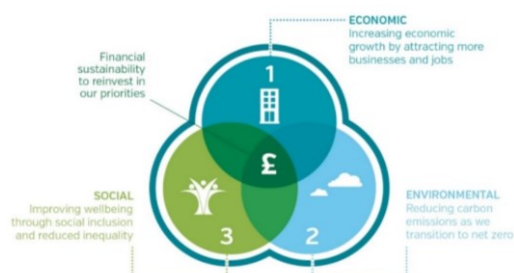
In brief, *A Sustainable Borough* is one where we make sure that we think about economic, social AND environmental impacts when we make decisions.

The three **priorities** we will be delivering against are:

- **ECONOMIC** - increasing economic growth by attracting more jobs and businesses
- **ENVIRONMENTAL** - reducing carbon emissions as we transition to net zero
- **SOCIAL** - improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality

These priorities align with the three pillars of sustainable development. They are ambitious, and we will need to work in partnership and collaborate to achieve them.

The diagram below summarises our three Corporate Priorities and shows how they all link together. As you will see at the heart of the diagram is our commitment to address the key issue of our financial sustainability – as without that, we will be less able to deliver on all our ambitions.



We have also identified **seven outcomes** that we want to achieve to meet our priorities. They are (not in order of priority):

1. An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment
2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets
3. A thriving and sustainable economy
4. A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors
5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing
6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy
7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation

The table below reflects the key projects/ objectives that will be achieved by our Service over the next 12 months, and the key Services across the Council that will be collaborated with as part of the process. In addition, each objective is linked to the Corporate Plan priorities and outcomes.

Strategic Objective	Collaboration Required	Corporate Plan Priority	Corporate Plan Outcome
Pigeon control in Conway square	Regulatory Services and Parks	Environmental	2,3,4,6
Whole systems approach to obesity	PHA, Community Planning, Parks, Leisure, Community, Planning, other Councils	Social	6
Organisational redesign	As yet, unknown.	Economic	3,7
Cycle to work improvements	Assets and Property, Finance, Parks	Environmental and Social	2,3,6
Social Return on Investment	Director of CWB, Parks, Community, Leisure, QUB	Economic	3
Use of mobile IT to increase agility of officers	Business Technology Strategic Transformation Team	Environmental	2,3,7
Age/Dementia friendly	Community Planning	Social	5,6
Survey of the district and database cleansing	IT, Tascomi	Economic	3,5
Smoke Free Generation and ban on disposable vapes	NET, PHA	Social and Environmental	2,3,4,5,6
Update and refresh our internal proactive note/cop/policy library	All services in EHPD Business Administration IT		

Commented [HM1]: Does this refer to our policies and procedures register/spreadsheet?

Commented [AF2R1]: Yes

4. Service Improvement

Service development/ improvement 2025/26?	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
Additional surveyor post providing updated position on private rented and commercial properties	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Innovation	The private rented and commercial premises data that we hold is outdated and need refreshed. This will enable us to have a more targeted approach.	Gareth Kinnear/ Hazel McKee/Julie Davidson	HR LCCC
Implement new Food standards delivery model	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	The new food standards delivery model will assist in a more risk based and intelligence driven approach with regard to inspections and interventions.	Julie Davidson	FSA, Tascomi, other Council
Develop an EHPD Customer Service Charter and communicate this to our staff and customers	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Effectiveness <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service Quality <input type="checkbox"/> Service Availability <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Efficiency <input type="checkbox"/> Innovation	Develop a clear standard of customer service providing clarity for staff and customers.	Gareth Kinnear	HR, other HoS

5. Service Risk Register

Service Risk Register should align with the Corporate Risk Management Strategy.

When completing your Service Plan you must review and consider your current Service Risk Register. Please confirm this has been completed.

Yes

6. Key Activities (KPIs) for 2025/26

Please ensure service development/ improvements detailed in Section 4 are included as KPIs.

KPIs should be aligned to the 7 Outcomes of the Corporate Plan 2024-2028, detailed below:

1	An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment
2	An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets
3	A thriving and sustainable economy
4	A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors
5	Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing
6	Opportunities for people to be active and healthy
7	Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation

In addition to the outcomes the KPI should align with one of the three **Corporate Priorities** of the **Corporate Plan**, detailed below:

Corporate Priority 1	Economic	Increasing economic growth by attracting more jobs and businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Support • Attracting Investment • Rural Regeneration • Labour Market Partnership • Sustainable Tourism • Town and City Regeneration • Vacant to Vibrant Scheme • Innovation Hub
Corporate Priority 2	Environmental	Reduce carbon emissions as we transition to net zero	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste Management • Digital and Physical Infrastructure • Estate Management • Tree Planting Strategy • Management of Outdoor Spaces • Local Development Plan • Litter Control and Enforcement • Sustainable Waste Resources Strategy • Sustainable Energy Management Strategy
Corporate Priority 3	Social	Improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport, leisure and outdoor recreation • Active travel • Environmental Health • Community Development • Neighbourhood Environment • Good Relations • Leisure Strategy • Placemaking

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporting end of Q2 Target	Reporting end of Q4 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
	% Spend against budget	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	83.85%	100%	90.7%	100%	100%	100%	Fixed
	% Staff attendance	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	93.02%	94%	94.84	95%	94.5%	95%	Fixed
	% of completed Employee Appraisals	Mandatory	6 Monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	100%	100%	100%	100%	-	100%	Fixed
	% of service requests responded to within 2 working days	Service Led	6 monthly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	95.7%	94%	95.2%	94%	94%	94%	Fixed
	% Customers satisfied with service upon completion of service request	Service Led	6 monthly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	98.1%	90%	96.3%	90%	90%	90%	Fixed
	% of High-Risk Food Premises Inspected	Statutory	6 monthly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	100%	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%	Fixed

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporting end of Q2 Target	Reporting end of Q4 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
				<input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7									
	Complete CP Market Surveillance exercises	Statutory	6 monthly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	3	3	3	3	1	3	Cumulative
	% of PTO applications completed within 180 days	Statutory	6 monthly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	91.3%	90%	92.5%	90%	90%	90%	Fixed
	% targets achieved for PHA SLAs	Statutory	6 monthly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	99%	97%	97%	97%	97%	97%	Fixed
	Complete H&S targeted inspection initiatives	Service Led	6 monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	3	3	2	3	1	3	Cumulative
	% of High Risk (H&S) Premises Inspected	Statutory	6 monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	71%	75%	64%	75%	75%	75%	Cumulative

Existing KPI Number	Performance Measures Should include improvement actions outlined in Section 4 and relevant measures both existing and new.	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service-led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	KPI to be included in Performance Improvement Plan	2025/26 Reporting						
							2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporting end of Q2 Target	Reporting end of Q4 Target	Cumulative/ Fixed
	% of Caravan and Petroleum Sites inspected annually and licences issued where appropriate		6 monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input type="checkbox"/> Environment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social	No	98%	90%	68%	90%	90%	90%	Cumulative
	% of premises which are permitted under the Pollution Prevention and Control legislation inspected.		6 monthly	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	100%	90%	20%	90%	90%	90%	Cumulative
	% Planning comments made within 15 working days		6 monthly	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 6 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environment <input type="checkbox"/> Social	No	92%	90%	89%	90%	90%	90%	Fixed

7. What Services/ Activities will be stopped

Please add detail of KPI's that have previously been monitored that will no longer be reported on for 2025/26. An example is provided below.

What service/ activities will we be stopping/ changing in 2025/2026	Reason for stopping / changing activity	Savings	Impact on Performance	Impact on the Public	Impact on staffing
<i>Water sampling</i>	<i>DWI potentially unwilling to fund this</i>	<i>Officer time</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>Reduction in confidence in private water supplies unless another provider is found.</i>	<i>More time to focus on food samples and inspections</i>

8. Reporting, Monitoring and Review

Provide detail below how this plan will be monitored and reviewed.

Monitoring Method	Frequency	Responsible Officer
Team Meeting	Monthly	HoST/ SUMs/ Line Managers
HoST	Quarterly	HoST
Standing Committee	6 Monthly	Directors and HoST
Performance Improvement Plan	Annually (30 th June)	Transformation Manager
Self-Assessment Report	Annually (30 th September)	Transformation Manager
Other		

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	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks and Cemeteries
Date of Report	17 February 2025
File Reference	CW22
Legislation	The Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Parks & Cemeteries Draft Service Plan for 2025-2026
Attachments	Appendix 1: Parks & Cemeteries Draft Service Plan for 2025-2026

Members will be aware that Council is required, under the Local Government Act 2014, to have in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions. To fulfil this requirement Council approved the Performance Management Policy and Handbook in October 2015. The Performance Management Handbook outlines the approach to the Performance Planning and Management process as:

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually
- Service Plan – developed annually

Not Applicable

The Council’s 18 Service Plans outline how each respective Service will contribute to the achievement of the corporate objectives including, but not limited to, any relevant actions identified in the PIP. Attached is the Draft Service Plan for Parks & Cemeteries in accordance with the Council’s Performance Management Policy and Handbook.

This Plan is intended to:

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

The attached plan:

- Has been developed to align with objectives of the Big Plan (2017 to 2032), the Corporate Plan (2024 to 2028). This Service Plan was created in association with various stakeholder feedback including a staff business planning day held on 29th November 2024. In addition, the plan is based on the agreed budget for Parks & Cemeteries. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g. due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP) the plan may need to be revised.
- Sets out the objectives for the Service for 2025-26 and identifies the key performance indicators used to illustrate the level of achievement of each objective, and the targets that the Service will try to attain along with key actions required to do so.
- Is based on the agreed budget. It should be noted that, should there be significant changes in-year (e.g. due to Council decisions, budget revisions or changes to the PIP), the Plan may need to be revised.
- The Community & Wellbeing Committee will be provided with update reports on performance against the agreed plan on a six-monthly basis as undernoted.

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Quarter 1 and Q2	April – September	December
Q3 and Q4	October – March	June

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the attached plan.

PARKS & CEMETERIES SERVICE

SERVICE PLAN

01 April 2025 – 31 March 2026



**Ards and
North Down**
Borough Council

APPROVALS

Prepared By	Peer Reviewed By	Approved By
Stephen Daye	Adele Faulkner	Graeme Bannister
Head of Parks & Cemeteries	Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development	Director of Community and Wellbeing
07/02/2025	21/02/2025	14/02/2025

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Kiltonga Nature Reserve, Newtownards

1. Introduction to Service

The Parks and Cemeteries Service operates within the Community & Wellbeing Directorate. The Service was created in 2022 following a structural review and has over one hundred employees. The Service has responsibility for the maintenance and development of approximately 300 hectares of Parks and other open spaces including burial grounds within the Borough. This also includes the maintenance of all outdoor sports facilities, play parks, greenways, amenity beaches and associated promenades along Council leased foreshore. In addition, the Parks and Cemeteries Service helps to enhance the appearance of the Borough through floral displays and other plantings at selected high-profile locations under its Ards and North Down in Bloom initiative. Seven of our facilities have received the Green Flag award. These are Castle Park, Londonderry Park, Kiltonga Nature Reserve, Linear Park, Ballymenoch Park, Clandeboye Cemetery (New in 2024) & Cairn Wood (New in 2024). The Green Flag Award is an international certification which recognises parks and open spaces with excellence levels of maintenance, facilities and community involvement.



Parks & Cemetery Staff at the 2024 Business Planning Day

The work of the Parks and Cemeteries Service also helps to raise the profile of the Borough through external award schemes such as Green Flag, Ulster in Bloom and Best Kept Awards. The Service also has responsibility for the Council's statutory duty for Biodiversity, the provision of allotments, and Outdoor Recreation.

Other initiatives include creating improvement strategies such as 'Let's Grow Together' (a sustainable community food growing strategy) and a Tree & Woodland strategy with the flagship **STAND4TREES** initiative that includes planting 15,000 trees per year. The Parks and Cemeteries Service carries out its activities on Council owned property and, in some cases, property owned by other agencies, for example DFI Roads roundabouts (with sponsorship income received) and strategic open space.

We work with our stakeholders to deliver a highest-quality, customer focused service supporting the local communities, while continuing to sustain and improve high standards of maintenance. We deliver high-quality standards of maintenance throughout the whole service area as well as achieving Green Flag Awards and In Bloom Awards and other external accolades. We maintain these successes and

continuous improvement against a backdrop of budget restraint. The knowledge and expertise of our professional teams enables us to deliver excellent levels of customer service, together with safe and secure facilities that rate highly with local people and visitors alike.



Parks & Cemetery Staff at the 2024 Business Planning Day

The Parks and Cemeteries Service Plan will support the delivery of the 2024-2028 Corporate Plan's vision of creating a sustainable borough by focusing on the three Corporate Priorities: economic, environmental and social sustainability which will assist in:

- **Boosting Economic Growth:** Attracting businesses and generating employment within the Borough.
- **Reducing Carbon Emissions:** Advancing our transition towards a net zero future.
- **Increasing Social Inclusion:** Reducing inequalities and promoting social inclusion.

In 2020 it was agreed by Council that as part of the Council's transformation agenda the Parks & Cemeteries Service would be suitable for a transformation project. In 2021 it was agreed to demerge the Leisure & Amenities Service creating two new business units i.e. the Leisure Service and a Parks & Cemeteries Service. A Head of Parks & Cemeteries was appointed in May 2022, with a clear action to develop and seek approval for a restructuring exercise that would transform service delivery and realise longer term savings. The agreement to transform has been carried out under a three-stage approach i.e. Phase One - Performance Improvement Initiatives such as merge area units, creating improvement strategies, standardising operating procedures within units and improving governance etc); Phase Two - Review and Restructure that

achieves a radical move to a new service model that requires changes in our culture, structure, and management. A structural review of the Service will be concluded in 2025; Phase Three - Transformation: we move to implement the key issues identified to ensure successful structural change and to realise additional savings, improved performance and excellent customer service.

2. Context, Challenges and Key Assumptions

Our ongoing transformation is already improving services and reducing our costs. In the next five years, with an improved structure in place to manage this transformation, the service will see a reduction in the cost to Council and build on the previous savings already achieved but with an improved customer focused service that will assist in achieving real differences in people's lives. The saving will be made up of efficiency revenue saving and a reduction in staffing costs plus income generation - this will be achieved by an improved structure, embracing volunteers and staff working smarter. To ensure this Service Plan is relevant we hold annual Business Planning Days in November for all our team, and this is reflected in the PESTLE analysis below.

2.1 PESTLE

Political

- Change of Westminster Government in 2024 may impact available funding and associated funding from NI Executive, Government Departments and Stormont Assembly.
- The Stormont Assembly started to meet again in 2024 and has remained unstable with major decisions and strategies in the pipeline or delayed.
- Brexit has now been in place for several years, and this has had an impact on the service with the purchase of plants and materials from the UK, we have attempted to resolve this difficulty by procuring directly from Europe.
- The importance of open spaces for health and wellbeing as well as biodiversity needs to be recognised more at local and regional government and then translated into Strategies/Action Plans and funding stream.
- The polarising impacts of Climate Change and the associated 2022 Act has a toxifying impact on progressing change. And allows climate change to be viewed differently along the political spectrum.
- The delivery of consultation, projects etc need to be undertaken outside of elections as far as possible.

Economical

- The new Labour government has introduced significant increases in employer national insurance, and this may have impacts on economic growth.

- Spending profiles and delivery timescales dictated by external funders creates a challenging environment and stress on team. Service unable to apply for funding due to Structural limitations.
- Local Authority expenditure is under increasing pressure with reduced central grant and expected low increases in the level of domestic rates, this means that our service will have to increase income and minimise expenditure to achieve the highest possible levels of efficiency and effectiveness.
- Council needs to pursue external funding to fund service improvements. In many cases to be able to avail of funding opportunities, revenue spend is required to design up projects, conduct the necessary surveys, business cases and submit planning applications etc. Given that most funding opportunities are yearly, there is not sufficient time to be able to do the necessary enabling works and then deliver a capital project within the funding timelines. Recognition should be given to this issue, as on many occasions funding opportunities cannot be availed of due to the lack of having the enabling works in place etc.
- Areas of deprivation and low disposable income remains an issue for many, meaning families have less to spend. However, this in turn presents both opportunities and challenges for our (mostly free to use) outdoor facilities, as users move toward the less formal and more passive forms of outdoor activity.
- Establishing amenity monetary value of parks and other open spaces has become a priority locally and globally.

Social

- The work of our Service provides enhanced social cohesion and civic pride through the provision and development of quality connected green spaces. A volunteering and Friends group policy has been agreed by Council and is in the process of being implemented. This gives local people opportunities to play a role in their local park and socially engage with likeminded individuals. It is intended that such social engagement will have a beneficial impact upon social isolation within the Borough. Parks and Open Space are integral to supporting greater levels of health and wellbeing within the Borough and as such the Parks and Cemeteries Service will be developing programmes to encourage a greater level of engagement with the natural environment and recreation opportunities available. To promote wider community participation, we launched Ards and North Down in Bloom in 2020.
- The Service is committed to embedding the 5 Steps to Wellbeing (Take Notice, Keep Learning, Connect, Keep Active & Give) into all aspects of our Service and collaborating with other departments to ensure widespread uptake of the initiative.
- The newly established Parks Development Business Unit has begun a series of events programmed around wellbeing, trees, biodiversity,

community growing, allotments, play and recreation. This programme will be further refined and expanded upon going forward.

- The Ards and North Down in Bloom initiative has been developed with three overlapping objectives which are: horticultural excellence, community participation and environmentally sustainable practices.
- The Ards and North Down in Bloom Community Competitions encourages everyone who lives or works in the Borough to think about their local environment and how attractive flowers, plants, trees and gardens can enhance it.
- By actively supporting this competition they will not only make their garden or business more attractive but also contribute to the Borough's entry to the Translink Ulster in Bloom Competition and other regional awards.
- Engagement within the new Corporate Plan has been emphasised and this works well with the structural changes that are in the process of being implemented within the Parks and Cemeteries Service. Empowering our stakeholders to take an active role in the Service is vital to ensure a sustainable future for Parks and Cemeteries. The lessons learnt around the erosion of community support for the implementation of the capital projects and ambitions, highlights the costs of not engaging.
- Currently provision for young people consists almost entirely of facilities such as skate parks, MUGA, and grass pitches etc. These are seen as meeting the needs of all young people when in fact they are places dominated by boys. The 'Make Space for Girls' initiative highlights the need to reexamine our service provision.
- Cultural and demographic trends, for example an ageing population may increase or decrease demand or take up of a particular service. Or if the profile of the local population is changing this may affect the need for translation services or other equal access considerations.
- Increasingly the Social Return on Investment of our Service has become an important factor, and this provides a principled approach that can be used to measure and account for a broad concept of value within Council's parks and cemeteries. It enables the social, environmental and economic benefits that a service or activity delivers to be calculated and monetised.

Technological

- The maintenance practices adopted by our Service are constantly subject to review following the introduction of new machinery, stricter safety limits, and advances in sports surfaces such as 3G and other synthetic surfaces. Additionally, new supply products on the market influence how the service is delivered.
- In 2025 we will continue to progress the phased implementation our monitoring software (PSS Ultimate), this mobile reporting app ensures the complete management of our teams and tasks, workload and priorities.
- A proactive machinery replacement strategy continues to be implemented across the service. This provides the scope to include the consideration of technical innovations in replacing aged equipment including the use of more

electric based equipment. This in turn will create better efficiencies across the service.

- In 2025 we will continue to progress the phased implementation our cemetery software (PlotBox) and a move towards a more efficient paperless administration system and online burial bookings etc.
- Council is using Treeconomics to better understand the value of all council owned/maintained trees and has produced a Tree Asset Valuation that quantifies and highlights the ecosystem services provided by our trees.
- A new website/online processes will create new opportunities to engage with our customers.

Legal

- Unknowns around the transition to the Procurement Act in February 2025.
- Legal challenges arising during the procurement and planning stages of major procurement exercises.
- Future EU legislation including further restrictions relating to artificial surfaces.
- The Service operates under several statutory regulations. Future statutory obligations in relation to Climate Change mitigation and adaption, Biodiversity Net Gain and Carbon NET Zero targets will increase demands on our service provision.
- Given the many important national and European designations within the Borough, certain services elements require NIEA approval and robust Habitat Regulations Assessments.
- The Burial Ground Regulations (NI) 1992 present significant challenges to the burials service in terms of dealing with historical burial issues and potential future developments and public expectations.
- Legislative changes in pesticide control products will have a significant bearing on the delivery of certain service elements including weed control and the use of insecticides. The service takes account of this and review our practices to include alternative weed and pest control methods, and this is reflected with an agreed policy change agreed by Council in 2021 and updated in 2024.
- Changing categories of vehicle omissions for procurement.

Environmental

- Surfacing treatments included in capital projects needs to be carefully considered to ensure that minimal maintenance is required in terms of weed control etc as herbicide use is reduced.
- The impact of changing environmental and climactic patterns will continue to be significant and the Service will need to take this into consideration and can adapt as a result.

- A major challenge for the Borough is the impact of coastal erosion, with our coastline being the longest of any Council in Northern Ireland, we expect this to have more of an impact than Councils with more limited coastline.
- Coastal erosion impacts many areas managed by the Service including amenity beaches and coastal paths. Possible coastal strategy underway at regional level.
- The Natural Capital of our greenspaces will put a cost to our Parks and other open spaces.
- The Biodiversity Unit has received significant internal funding to implement the new Local Biodiversity Action Plan. The Biodiversity Unit is under significant pressure to deliver on both internal and external projects which require advice and appropriate assessment processes i.e. Habitat Regulation Assessments.
- The Service continues to progress electrification of its equipment and will be trialling robotic machinery including lawnmowers. Climate issues within the new Corporate Plan have been emphasised and this works well with the structural changes that are to be implemented with Parks and Cemeteries Service.
- Identification of land for our tree planting ambitions will become a major impact if new land cannot be purchased.

2.2 SWOT

A SWOT analysis helps to interpret the findings of the PESTLE analysis to determine the Service strengths and weaknesses, and opportunities and threats. As it is important, as a part of the internal focus, to conduct the SWOT analysis prior to completing our business plan. The SWOT analysis below was completed during a pre-session in October 2024 and highlights the future challenges which our Service will face.

Strengths

- Profile of Parks & Cemeteries Service within the public and media is high.
- New Corporate Plan with a strong focus on sustainability.
- Commitment to the Roadmap to Sustainability by incorporating sustainable practices with the service.
- Strategies such as the Local Biodiversity Action Plan, Play, Tree & Woodland, 5 Steps to Wellbeing etc have successfully refocused the Service and ensured linkages to the Corporate Plan and other local, regional, national and international strategies.
- Heritage/historic interest and distinct character of the sites.
- Highly skilled workforce with apprentices in place.
- Excellent service delivery quality, recognised through awards.
- Strategy in place to replace machinery and move towards electric.
- Provision of community participation and engagement through Friends Groups, Stakeholders & Volunteers.

- Delivery of a sensitive and efficient Cemetery Service.
- Broad range of recreation opportunities within the facility portfolio.
- Working closely with others to building strong relationships.

Weaknesses

- Lack of resources to seek additional external funding
- Criticism of the pitch maintenance Service.
- Office and other staff facilities are not fit for purpose and do not aid collaborative working.
- Lack of available data on impacts of climate change to allow for planning and response.
- Sickness levels have reduced but still above Council average.
- Need enabling revenue budget to realise capital funding available.
- Failure to plan for our future cemetery provision.
- Historic inconsistencies with the service Standard Operating Procedures.
- Some parks have limited ecological value, requiring new management techniques such as rewilding.
- Limited variety and consistency of sites within the geography of the Borough.
- Failing park infrastructure including street furniture, paths, fencing etc
- Need to further explore the potential recreation opportunities at our sites.
- Regional recognition of the importance of outdoor spaces for Health and Wellbeing purposes.
- Embracing sustainable transport and reducing staff car parking
- Identify need in underrepresented communities

Opportunities

- Social value of our greenspaces need investigated.
- Transformation projects underway
- Greater collaboration across teams and wider organisation.
- Taking a Natural Capital approach to Parks & Cemeteries, development of a green infrastructure plan.
- Our service has a strong role to play in both climate mitigation and adaption.
- Grow our Friends Groups and engagement with communities
- Further develop and grow our volunteering opportunities.
- Increase the use of open space through events and activities.
- Commercialisation activities to reduce ratepayer burden.
- Creating an enabling revenue budget to realise internal capital funding.
- Maximise potential of our coastal locations.
- National political awareness and benefits of Parks & Open Spaces highlighted after Covid.

- Valued as a community asset for fundraising, community work, exercise, and well-being.
- Improve attractiveness of borough as a tourist destination through provision of park and open space activities.
- Increase recreation across the Borough with additional infrastructure such as Trails and Greenways.
- Crematorium provision to meet local needs and the sustainability of burial provision.
- Provide additional memorial garden facilities within the Borough.
- Use of the LBAP to increase biodiversity net gain.
- National and local drive on climate adaption strategies highlighting value of parks and open spaces and potential investment opportunities.

Threats

- Insufficient revenue budgets leading to unsustainable future capital costs.
- Limited availability of future grave provision in key locations.
- Aging workforce leading to increased sickness.
- Loss of skills base due to recruitment and retention challenges.
- Unmanageable public expectations on service provision.
- Lack of resources to increase capital funding availability and miss grant funding opportunities.
- Change in political priorities due to an uncertain regional local government environment and national general election.
- Future uncertain statutory obligations to Climate change, Biodiversity and Carbon NET Zero targets.
- Non availability of external funding such as lottery funds specific to parks and open spaces.
- Economic downturn leading to increased visitor numbers to freely accessible facilities.
- Climate change will increase flooding, storms etc impacting service provision and facilities.
- Lack of investment in social support provision impacts our facilities and increases vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

3. Strategic Objectives and Collaboration

In our new Corporate Plan 2024-2028 we have a vision of A Sustainable Borough. One where Economic, Environmental and Social Wellbeing are linked and in which we, as a Council, make decisions about policies, services, investments and resources that balance the demands of each. By doing so we can positively impact the people and the assets in our Borough and play a part in addressing some of the world's most pressing problems e.g. poverty, inequality, depletion of natural resources, climate change, economic growth etc. In brief, A Sustainable Borough is one where we make

sure that we think about economic, social and environmental impacts when we make decisions.

The three priorities we will be delivering against are:

- **ECONOMIC** - increasing economic growth by attracting more jobs and businesses
- **ENVIRONMENTAL** - reducing carbon emissions as we transition to net zero
- **SOCIAL** - improving wellbeing through social inclusion and reduced inequality

These priorities align with the three pillars of sustainable development. They are ambitious, and we will need to work in partnership and collaborate to achieve them.

The diagram below summarises our three Corporate Priorities and shows how they all link together. As you will see at the heart of the diagram is our commitment to address the key issue of our financial sustainability – as without that, we will be less able to deliver on all our ambitions

We have also identified seven outcomes that we want to achieve to meet our priorities. They are (not in order of priority):

1. An engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have opportunities to influence the delivery of services, plans and investment
2. An environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough meeting our net zero carbon targets
3. A thriving and sustainable economy
4. A vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors, businesses and investors
5. Safe, welcoming and inclusive communities that are flourishing
6. Opportunities for people to be active and healthy
7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation

The Parks & Cemeteries Service Vision is: “Creating an environment for communities to flourish”. This vision was agreed in 2022 and reflects a move away from a service fixated with processes, to a more people-based service that is delivering corporate and community outcomes and building trust with our stakeholders.

Our Service Delivery Framework

1. **A Fit for Purpose Structure:** that promotes innovation, flexibility, and responsiveness: the new structure is flatter, the merging of posts will give clearer responsibility lines and promote greater independent working. The new development team has been created to focus on developing and providing a better service. The structure also removes structural silos with clearer management roles with significantly less units which means less depots saving on resources. Standard Operating Procedures strengthens governance and ensures the most effective distribution of resources among the various units.
2. **Developing the Future Workforce:** The merging of posts will give greater responsibilities to staff at all levels and encourage cultural change that embraces shared authority and decision-making. The use of Task & Finish

groups has not only identified saving and improved service but given confidence to our team to know that all voices are heard and listened too. Management is committed to improving sustainability knowledge training and is rolling out actions that will complement the Councils wider Appraisal system. It is acknowledged that work is required to promote opportunities for development both internally and externally. Retention strategies and clear career pathways are required to ensure staff morale is high, creating an environment where staff can reach their full potential. Apprenticeships within the service will continue to grow and an intensive training programme will ensure the workforce is future proofed.

3. An Active Role in Climate Recovery, Biodiversity Gain & Sustainability:

The service will play an essential role in both climate mitigation (meeting our net zero obligations) and climate adaptation. By changes in our operations through reduced carbon emission of fleet, plant and equipment we are reducing levels of CO2 created by our service. This is and will continue to be achieved through electrification of equipment, more efficient plant and machinery, use of renewables, staff training, or simple changes to how often we mow – all will contribute towards the service meeting the Northern Ireland wide target of net zero by 2050.

Parks and other green spaces can sequester carbon contributing directly to a reduction in atmospheric CO2 concentrations. Through our strategies such as the Tree & Woodland Strategy, and its target for tree planting, and the Grassland Management Strategy and its ambitious rewilding targets, we can ensure we maximise the amount of carbon we can absorb from the atmosphere. Data has already been gathered for our tree stock for the quantity of carbon that can be removed and stored from the atmosphere.

The 'peat free' campaign also ensures we and our stakeholders are leaving peat in the ground to continue to further absorb carbon. Green spaces also play a crucial role in climate adaptation by mitigating the impacts of extreme weather events like heatwaves and flooding, regulating temperatures through shade, improving air quality and managing stormwater runoff, essential for making places more resilient to climate change. We will continue to manage and increase our Green Space provision to protect the borough from these ever increasingly frequent and extreme weather scenarios. The Council Climate Adaptation has several actions within our Service area to support in the contribution to adaptation and resilience.

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan key focus areas are Education and Awareness, Research and Monitoring, Land Management and Building Partnerships. The objectives are to conserve, protect and enhance habitats and species, raise awareness and work with our communities and key stakeholders to improve biodiversity. Many of our habitats are at severe risk, mostly by human activity. Only by working with communities can we instil the

behaviours and take the action needed to create and enhance biodiversity and achieve Biodiversity Net Gain.

- 4. Embrace Changes in Environmental Law & Good Practice:** Our Service is driven by both legislative requirements and an ambition to go beyond just compliance but to deliver best practice. Northern Ireland's first Environmental Improvement Plan was published in September 2024 and forms the basis for an effective set of interventions to deliver real improvements for the environment whilst making social and economic gains as well. This high-level plan with six strategic outcomes sets a direction of travel for all future actions, plans, targets and strategies that this council and our service will support and contribute towards.

Changes on chemical usage, emissions and invasive species will challenge how services are delivered, and this will involve discussions with stakeholders and promoting new ways of maintaining the infrastructure. A focus in 2025/6 will be legislation on the ban on micro-plastics and its future impacts on 3G pitches, play parks and other recreational facilities. Our pesticide reduction strategy is assisting the Service to significantly decrease glyphosate application and finding innovative ways to remove weeds when appropriate to do so.

- 5. Stakeholder Engagement, Embracing Citizenship & Volunteers:** increasing stakeholder involvement, collaboration and partnership with communities, volunteers, businesses, external organisations in government and the third sector. A 'Friends of' policy is being implemented, and the Service has recently employed an Engagement Officer to expand this and ensure our stakeholders have a part to play in managing our local parks. Volunteering has been successfully implemented in the Bangor Walled Garden with twelve volunteers in place assisting our horticultural team. Consistent engagement needs to be the key to maintain our relationship with our stakeholders and always building trust in how we management important community assets.
- 6. Bringing the Parks back to life with Events and Activities:** the development team are in a strong position to deliver quality events and activities that encourages active use of our spaces. The provision of quality infrastructure such as improved trails and play facilities will also enable recreation activities to occur passively. In 2025, our delivery of events and activities will be expanded and upon previous years of community involvement. Significant investing in our open spaces is underway in multiple projects including Greenways, Play Parks and the successful delivery and completion of the desilting works at Ward Park is allowing progress to the next phase.
- 7. Embracing Digital Efficiencies:** digital solutions such as PlotBox have already made marked service performance and customer service improvements. PSS Ultimate will also be introduced in 2025, and this will improve monitoring of service provision. In 2025 we will introduce robotic and remote-control equipment to redirect staff to other duties, this will also

complement our move towards electrification. The use of GIS has ensured efficiencies within many areas of our service including bin collections, invasive species management etc. Council is using software such as Treeconomics to better understand the value of all council owned/maintained trees and produced a Tree Asset Valuation that quantifies and highlights the ecosystem services provided by our trees. Having an evidence-based understanding of our trees can help council to make informed and strategic management decisions.

8. **Actively Pursuing Income Generation & Commercialization:** The Parks & Cemeteries Service introduced a roundabout sponsorship policy in October 2022, and this and other income generating initiatives will continue to assist our move towards reducing our Gross to NET budget ratio and in turn reduce the burden on ratepayers. A wider Sponsorship Policy was agreed by Council in 2024. Other initiatives will be progressed in 2025/6 including expanding our sponsorship opportunities beyond roundabouts, vendor contracts, licencing, paid events and expanding our cemetery memorial income opportunities.

On completion of the structural review and new corporate plan the Service intends to review the above vision and service delivery framework in 2025.



Strategic Objectives and Collaboration

Strategic Objective	Collaboration Required	Corporate Plan Priority	Corporate Plan Outcome
A Fit for Purpose Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR • Transformation • Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic • Environmental • Social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 7
Developing the Future Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic • Social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 6 • 7
An Active Role in Climate Recovery, Biodiversity Gain & Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Planning • Transformation • Assets & Property 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic • Environmental • Social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 2 • 4 • 5 • 7
Embrace Changes in Environmental Law & Good Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal • Leisure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 2
Stakeholder Engagement, Embracing Citizenship & Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Planning • Communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic • Environmental • Social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 5 • 6
Bringing the Parks back to life with Events and Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism • Administration • Leisure • Communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental • Social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 • 5 • 6

<p>Embracing Digital Efficiencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Services • Transformation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7
<p>Actively Pursuing Income Generation & Commercialization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 7
<p>Create a trial Social Value initiative within the Community & Wellbeing Development and in association with Queen University</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and Culture • Leisure Services • Environmental Health • Community Planning • Transformation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic • Environmental • Social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 4 • 6 • 7
<p>Embedding the 5 Steps to Wellbeing into all aspects of our Service and collaborating with other departments to ensure widespread uptake of the initiative internal and externally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community and Culture • Leisure Services • Environmental Health • Community Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic • Environmental • Social 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7

4. Service Improvement

In the table below, service improvement activities are included in this section and are detailed in Section 6 of this document.

Service Development/ Improvement 2025/26	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
Implement and embed the Parks and Cemeteries Transformation and Restructuring Business Case	Efficiency	Following agreement by Council for the transformation of Parks and Cemeteries Service, embedding a new structure is vital to ensure the transformation objectives are met.	Head of Service	HR Finance Transformation
Report annually on progress towards the 'Benchmark Standard for Community Growing and Allotment Provision': that Council aims to complete by 2028, in collaboration with other public bodies, to provide 1250sqm (0.3 acres) of community growing space per 1,000 households.	Sustainability	The 'Benchmark Standard for Community Growing and Allotment Provision' is a key Corporate Plan requirement and a wider Northern Ireland initiative that complements the Councils own strategies such as 'Let's Grow Together' (a sustainable community food growing strategy for the Borough), 'Roadmap to Sustainability'.	Development Manager	Lands Community Planning Departments
Report annually on progress towards building on our Service being Climate Change Ready with actions and	Sustainability Innovation	Our parks and other greenspaces will become a 'Climate Change Ready' enabler. Our climate change adaptation actions and policies will ensure our Service assists the Council in being prepared for a changing	Head of Service	Corporate

Service Development/ Improvement 2025/26	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
policies in place to assist wider Corporate Strategies.		climate by taking action to reduce the potential impacts of climate change to our staff, our users/customers, the green infrastructure we manage and the natural environment.		
Create a trial Social Value initiative within the Community & Wellbeing Development and in association with Queen University	Service Improvement Innovation Service Quality	Using the principles of social value to create a platform to deliver long term societal impact and creating a greater understanding about the structural features in our management systems and structures that can be used to normalise and de-risk the process of creating more inclusive parks and similar spaces.	Head of Service	Community & Wellbeing Development Queens University Local Communities
Continue to develop new revenue generation initiatives that improves and expands our services whilst reducing ratepayer burden. Including rolling out mobile sauna placements.	Efficiency Service Improvement	Following agreement by Council for the transformation of Parks and Cemeteries Service, there was a commitment to reduce Service costs, and this is being met with improved income targets that reduces the cost burden on ratepayers. However, this is also an opportunity to improve services within our facilities.	Head of Service	Corporate Business Community Communications
Create an innovative programme that delivers over 70 events and activities within our Parks and open spaces that	Service Improvement Innovation	The importance of Parks and Open Spaces as a place for people to enjoy active lifestyles and increase their health and wellbeing and to increase biodiversity is	Development Manager	Communications Assets and Property Tourism

Service Development/ Improvement 2025/26	Which of the specified aspects will this improve?	Rationale	Responsible Officer(s)	Who do we need to help us? (Internal and/ or External partners) Please specify
delivers internal strategies and the broader corporate strategic objectives.	Service Quality	ever increasing and the Service can play an active role in facilitating these activities.		External providers/facilitators
Report to Committee on the Embedding of the 5 Steps to Wellbeing into all aspects of our Service and collaborating with other departments to ensure widespread uptake of the initiative internal and externally.	Service Improvement Innovation Service Quality	Council is committed to the PHA's 5 Steps to Wellbeing (Take Notice, Keep Learning, Connect, Keep Active & Give) initiative. Internally: organisations perform better when their staff are healthy, motivated and focused. Externally: through initiatives, activities and programmes our Service with our partners can deliver achievable community and corporate goals.	Head of Service	Community & Wellbeing Development Corporate

5. Service Risks Register

The Service Risk Register is aligned with the Corporate Risk Management Strategy. When completing our Service Plan we reviewed and considered our current Service Risk Register and can confirm this has been completed. **Yes**

6. Key Activities (KPIs) for 2025/26

When completing our Service Plan we have ensured that the Service development/ improvements detailed above are included as KPIs.

Performance Measures <small>Should include improvement actions outlined above and relevant measures both existing and new.</small>	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	2025/26 Reporting						
					2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporting end of Q2	Reporting end of Q4	Cumulative or Fixed
Spend against budget within 5% of total	Mandatory	Year-End	7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation	Economic – Economic growth to focus on attracting more businesses and jobs	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
% Staff attendance (94% Target)	Mandatory	Year-End	7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation	Economic – Economic growth to focus on attracting more businesses and jobs	94%	94%	94%	94%	94%	94%	94%
% of completed Employee Appraisals in the period September 2023 to March 2025	Mandatory	Year-End	7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation	Social – Social inclusion and reduced inequalities	100%	100%	100%	100%	0	100%	100%

Performance Measures <small>Should include improvement actions outlined above and relevant measures both existing and new.</small>	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	2025/26 Reporting						
					2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporting end of Q2	Reporting end of Q4	Cumulative or Fixed
Implement and embed the new Parks and Cemeteries Structures	Service Led	Year-End	7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation	Economic – Economic growth to focus on attracting more businesses and jobs	n/a	Project under way	Project under way	100%	100%	100%	100%
Seven Green Flag Awards Obtained	Service Led	Year-End	2. We are an environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough	Environmental – Reduction of carbon emissions to net zero	5	5	7	7	7	7	7
Establish five 'Friends of Groups	Service Led	Year-End	5. We have socially sustainable communities that are safe and welcoming	Social – Social inclusion and reduced inequalities	2	2	2	5	0	5	5
Investment of £26,000 in funding for In Bloom Projects	Service Led	Year-End	4. We have a vibrant, attractive, sustainable Borough for citizens, visitors,	Social – Social inclusion and reduced inequalities	18,500	18,494	21,000	26,000	26,000	26,000	26,000
100% of available allotments utilised	Service Led	Year-End	6. We have active and healthy people	Social – Social inclusion and reduced inequalities	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Providing annual report of progressing corporate action of 1,250sqm (0.125ha) of community growing space per 10,000 households by 2028	Service Led	Year-End	5. We have socially sustainable communities that are safe and welcoming	Social – Social inclusion and reduced inequalities	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%	0	100%	100%

Performance Measures <small>Should include improvement actions outlined above and relevant measures both existing and new.</small>	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	2025/26 Reporting						
					2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporting end of Q2	Reporting end of Q4	Cumulative or Fixed
Achieve four Bloom/ Best Kept Awards	Service Led	Year-End	1. We have an engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have	Social – Social inclusion and reduced inequalities	4	4	4	4	3	1	4
Maintain 130,000m2 of rewilded council land	Service Led	Year-End	2. We are an environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough	Environmental – Reduction of carbon emissions to net zero	90,000	90,000	120,000	130,000	130,000	130,000	130,000
Plant 15,000 trees as part of the STAND4TREES Initiative	Service Led	Year-End	2. We are an environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough	Environmental – Reduction of carbon emissions to net zero	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	0	15,000	15,000
70 Community Projects Organised	Service Led	Year-End	5. We have socially sustainable communities that are safe and welcoming	Social – Social inclusion and reduced inequalities	30	30	40	70	40	30	70
Amount of herbicide used (litres)	Service Led	Year-End	2. We are an environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough	Environmental – Reduction of carbon emissions to net zero	170	150	140	130	80	50	130
Annual Business Planning Day organised.	Service Led	Year-End	7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation	Economic – Economic growth to focus on attracting more businesses and jobs	100%	100%	100%	100%	0	100%	100%

Performance Measures <small>Should include improvement actions outlined above and relevant measures both existing and new.</small>	Is the KPI Mandatory/ Statutory/ Service led	Reporting frequency (6 Monthly/ Year-end)	Outcome	Corporate Priority	2025/26 Reporting						
					2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2024/25 YTD End of Q3	2025/26 Target	Reporting end of Q2	Reporting end of Q4	Cumulative or Fixed
Monthly Staff Performance Improvement Meetings organised	Service Led	Year-End	7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation	Economic – Economic growth to focus on attracting more businesses and jobs	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Continue to develop new revenue generation initiatives including rolling out mobile sauna business placements.	Service Led	Year-End	7. Ards and North Down Borough Council is a high performing organisation	Economic – Economic growth to focus on attracting more businesses and jobs	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%	0	100%	100%
Report annually on progress towards building on our Service being Climate Change Ready with actions and policies in place to assist wider Corporate Strategies.	Service Led	Year-End	2. We are an environmentally sustainable and resilient Council and Borough	Environmental – Reduction of carbon emissions to net zero	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%	0	100%	100%
Create a trail Social Value initiative and report to Council Committee.	Service Led	Year-End	1. We have an engaged Borough with citizens and businesses who have	Social – Social inclusion and reduced inequalities	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%	0	100%	100%
Embed 5 Steps to Wellbeing into all aspects of our Service with 5 (internal & 15 externally focussed) information sessions, activities and programmes delivered.	Service Led	Year-End	6. We have active and healthy people	Social – Social inclusion and reduced inequalities	n/a	n/a	n/a	100%	8	12	20

7. What Services/ Activities will be stopped

Detail of KPI's that have previously been monitored that will no longer be reported on for 2025/26 are detailed below.

What service/ activities will we be stopping/ changing in 2024/2025	Reason for stopping / changing activity	Savings	Impact on Performance	Impact on the Public	Impact on staffing
Report on progress towards the 'Benchmark Standard for Community Growing and Allotment Provision'	Benchmark agreed and in Corporate Plan	£0	Benchmark now in Corporate Plan, clear guide to progress.	More Community Growing and Allotment Provision planned	No additional impacts

8. Reporting, Monitoring and Review

Below is how this Service Plan will be monitored and reviewed.

Monitoring Method	Frequency	Responsible Officer
Team Meeting	Monthly	HoS/ SUMs/ Line Managers
Staff Business Planning Day	Annual	All Staff
HoST	Quarterly	HoS
Standing Committee	6 Monthly	HoS
Performance Improvement Plan	Annually (June)	Transformation Manager
Self-Assessment Report	Annually (September)	Transformation Manager

Unclassified

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ITEM 15**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks & Cemeteries
Date of Report	27 February 2025
File Reference	PCA4
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Commemorative Tree Planting Request - Portaferry WI
Attachments	n/a

Members will be aware that Council have facilitated the planting of commemorative trees on Council land in conjunction with local groups and organisations in line with the Commemorative Tree Planting Policy.

The policy aims to provide a consistent and fair approach to the decision-making process on whether or not to approve any request to plant a commemorative tree on Council property. It is critical that all tree planting contributes to the Councils overall Tree and Woodland Strategy. Members are advised that the Commemorative Tree Planting Policy does not apply to or replace the memorial tree planting which takes place in Council cemeteries.

Council has received a request for commemorative tree planting as detailed below:

- Portaferry Women's Institute (Portaferry WI) – 90th Anniversary tree. 9 sizeable Deciduous Trees, (one for each decade) within Portaferry district. Species include Acer Autumn Blaze, Fagus Purpurea/Copper Beech, Fagus

Not Applicable

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Sylvatica/Green Beech, Betulus Pendula/Silver Birch, Quercus Robur/English Oak and Castanea Salvia/Sweet Chestnut. Location of planting will take place on a unused grassland behind Explores Aquarium, Portaferry.

Officers can confirm that this request complies with the criteria in the policy.

Location of Tree Planting - Exploris Aquarium, Portaferry



RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the Commemorative Tree Planting request as outlined in the report.

Unclassified

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ITEM 16**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks and Cemeteries
Date of Report	17 February 2025
File Reference	PCA5
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Display Bed Applications - Ards F.C
Attachments	

Members will be aware that Council has an agreed policy for the use of Display Beds in the Borough, which requires applications received by external organisations to be reported to Council.

The Council has received an application from Ards F.C for use of the display beds, Officers have assessed the application and determined it meets the criteria in the policy and is recommended for approval. The application was deemed by Officers to not require equality screening.

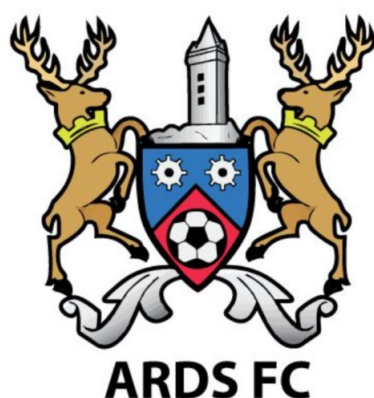
The application is as outlined below and the proposed design of the display is to include the Ards F.C. logo below. The Parks team will endeavour to facilitate the design requested as far as possible; however, detail design may alter in order to facilitate installation. If necessary officers will liaise with the applicant if the installation may have to be significantly different from that proposed.

Not Applicable

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Name of Group / Organisation	Display Bed applied for	Proposed dates of display	Reason for the display
Ards FC	Court Square, Newtownards	20.10.25 – 28.11.25	To celebrate 125 th Anniversary of Ards F.C. and are planning a number of events to mark this significant milestone, including hosting an exhibition at the Townhall in Newtownards.

Ards F.C. logo to be included in the design



RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approve the proposed display bed application.

Unclassified

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ITEM 17**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure
Date of Report	26 February 2025
File Reference	CW 173
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	Ards FC Consultation Response
Attachments	Proposed response to the consultation

Introduction

Ards Football Club's appointed consultants S3Solutions recently met with Council Officers to update Council on the clubs proposed development to create a community sport stadium at their Portaferry Road site.

The consultants provided a brief overview of the proposed project as summarised below:

"The preferred development option is to build a community stadium on the site which meets the highest standards of IFA criteria. This would include 3G Pitch, pavilion and main grandstand @ 380 seats and 360 standing. Away stand @260 seats. Energy Efficient Floodlighting. PV Solar Panels to Pavillion. Within the main stand, there will be a multi-purpose community space and function room. Good storage facilities and a room divider will enable the space to be flexibly arranged for community use. The stadium will have hospitality provision in place. The proposal

Not Applicable

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has sustainability at the heart of design with active travel considerations , rain water harvesting, natural energy utilisation and recycling management across the site.

Equality and Inclusion Impacts:

Inclusion is one of the core values of Ards FC and the facilities have been designed to foster diversity on the pitch and within the attendance. Wheelchair accessible viewing provision is ample and in prime locations in the stadium. Other amenities include: accessible listening provision, wheelchair accessible gates, lifts, W/Cs, disability parking for supporters and again in the staff/official's car park. The accessibility specification is of the highest standard throughout the stadium.

Ards FC have an award-winning Inclusion team – this was only established in 2020 but has been a huge success. The Inclusion team have members aged 15-52, male and female with a diverse range of disabilities. They have 36 members who play in four competitive teams. Unfortunately, they are now at capacity and have a waiting list as they cannot expand further. They train on Wednesday nights, sharing a single pitch with the Ards FC reserve team due to the lack of available space. In reality this means they have 36 members with special needs on one-half of a pitch in Londonderry Park. There are four competitive Inclusion teams so they subdivide the half pitch into four. The maximum membership they can accommodate is therefore capped at 36. They would like to be able to train more nights and take on more members but cannot get space, they therefore supplement the training nights with two social nights during the week (bowling etc). Many members live in supported accommodation and have day activities but little to do on the evenings. Lots of friendships have been forged in this group and the positive outcomes span way beyond the football field. Any issues with the schedule or the block bookings are very disruptive for the Inclusion team as they have many neurodivergent members who are isolated and depend heavily on their routine remaining the same. The new stadium would mean they could open again to new membership and train on additional nights during the week. The Ards FC Inclusion Team won the annual IFA Football for All award in Autumn 2024, national recognition of the work they do to support inclusion in grassroots football .

Community Impacts:

It is also worth noting that as well as the senior team and reserves team, Ards FC are extremely active at grassroots level in the local community. Their academy have 270 members aged from 4 to 17. They train at hockey pitches at Regent House School and multi-use games area at the Dome in Blair Maine although neither venue fully meets their needs. They also use a local gym. The academy works with 6 local schools providing afterschool and in-school physical activity sessions. They train two nights per week and provide a broad range of experience (yoga, mindfulness), social interaction and football skills training across the 24 academy teams. They run popular football camps during holiday periods such as Easter. They are also at capacity, they need a third night to train in order to expand but cannot currently secure a space.”

Not Applicable

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The consultants provided Council Officers with a consultation questionnaire for Council to complete. A proposed response to the consultation request is included in Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approve the submission as outlined in Appendix 1.



Ards FC

Consultation Questionnaire for Ards and North Down Borough Council

January 2025

ARDS FOOTBALL CLUB
CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

FOR CONSIDERATION BY ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

1.	<p>Do you support the principle of the Ards FC proposal to establish a new Community Stadium on the Portaferry Road?</p> <p>Yes.</p>
2.	<p>What are your views on the need for additional football training facilities in Newtownards and/or in the wider Ards and North Down Borough Council area?</p> <p>There is a current shortage of quality floodlit training facilities to meet the growing demand within the area.</p>
3.	<p>What are your views on the need for additional football match facilities in Newtownards and/or in the wider Ards and North Down Borough Council area?</p> <p>There is increasing pressure due to the growth of the sport on the limited number of quality grass match facilities within the area.</p>
4.	<p>What are your views on the community impact associated with the development of the proposed community stadium on the Portaferry Road in Newtownards?</p> <p>The proposed development will bring additional benefits to the local and wider Community.</p>
5.	<p>What are your views on the economic impact associated with the development of the proposed community stadium on the Portaferry Road in Newtownards?</p> <p>There will be an economic benefit to the surrounding area if the stadium development is realised. The facility will attract significant evening and weekend usage which will enhance visitor numbers to the local area. The ability to stage major events at the venue may also provide a significant benefit to the area in terms of overnight stays and day visitors.</p>
6.	<p>What are your views on the impact associated with the development of the proposed community stadium in terms of active participation in sport and the quality of that participation?</p> <p>A new accessible facility that is open to the wider community will enhance active participation and will contribute to the delivery of the Leisure strategy.</p>
7.	<p>What aspects of the stadium facility should Ards FC prioritise in the development of a new community stadium to maximise its use by the local community on non-match days? Please detail any amenity you would particularly like to see installed e.g. booking system, lighting, 3G playing surface.</p> <p>The facility needs to be available to the wider local community. There needs to be a floodlit artificial surface that facilitates significant evening and weekend usage outside the Clubs own requirements. The use of community space as meeting rooms would also be a benefit. A serviced booking system for both aspects would be essential.</p>

8.	<p>What aspects of the stadium facility should Ards FC prioritise in the development of a new community stadium to support inclusivity for females, families and marginalised groups? Please detail any amenity you would particularly like to see installed e.g. quality toilets and welfare facilities.</p> <p>The welfare facilities need to be designed to meet the needs of all potential participants both in terms of match fixtures and training needs. Access to the pitch and community spaces needs to be considered in line with any specific sport development plan the Club may develop which may focus on positive encouragement for target groups such as women in sport and/or people with disabilities.</p>
9.	<p>What aspects of the stadium facility should Ards FC prioritise in the development of a new community stadium to support environmental sustainability? Please detail any amenity you would particularly like to see installed e.g. EV chargers, bicycle parking.</p> <p>The facility should be developed in line with modern sustainability considerations. Electric charging points, solar panels, bicycle storage, recycling points are all critical elements at design stage.</p>
10.	<p>What are your views on the development of the proposed new home stadium in terms of its impact on Ards Football Club and its supporters?</p> <p>The development of this facility in Ards will finally facilitate the local team being able to play their matches and develop their community support base after many years of having to base themselves away from their community.</p>
11.	<p>Do you have evidence that would be useful to the development of the business case for this proposal? If so, please detail and provide a copy.</p> <p>The Councils corporate strategy, pitch strategy and imminent leisure strategy would all support this potential development.</p>
12.	<p>Are there any other comments the council would like to have considered as part of the consultation?</p> <p>The Council fully supports this proposal and looks forward to continuing to engage with the Club as this project is further developed.</p>

In the event of any issues using or responding to this questionnaire, please contact sarah.johnston@s3solutions.co.uk

Unclassified

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ITEM 18**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Environmental Health, Protection and Development
Date of Report	20 February 2025
File Reference	EHPD11
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 The Local Government (Community Planning Partners) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Dementia Friendly Update
Attachments	Appendix 1-Final SEHST Dementia Friendly Partnership Action Plan Appendix 2 -"Worried about your memory?" Dementia Booklet

As part of Council's work on a "Dementia Friendly Borough", a Dementia Friendly Partnership has been established through the Community Planning process to engage with stakeholders in the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) area, which includes Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council, the Down part of Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and all of Ards and North Down Borough Council. The purpose of this report is to update Elected members to on the ongoing work in relation to Dementia across the Borough.

Background to Workstream:

The SE Dementia Friendly Partnership was established to provide opportunities for statutory and community organisations to work together to help make communities in

Not Applicable

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SEHSCT area dementia friendly. A dementia friendly community focuses on reducing the stigma of dementia and is inclusive of those living with dementia diagnosis. The partnership is overseen and chaired by the SEHSCT.

Workstream Update:

As part of our Age Friendly work, Ards and North Down Borough Council has committed to be a welcoming Borough for all. This includes striving to be a Dementia Friendly Council and Borough. Becoming 'Dementia Friendly' is a key commitment of the Council and is incorporated within the Community Plan and Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan. Previous work included

- the nomination of the two Dementia Champions, Alderman McIlveen and Adele Faulkner, Head of EHPD;
- the delivery of dementia awareness sessions to staff;
- collaborative work between the PSNI and Dementia NI to launch the Herbert Protocol in the Borough. The Herbert Protocol is an initiative that helps locate a person with dementia if they go missing. Information is collated and stored and will greatly assist with searching for the missing person with a view to locating them quickly and safely.

Thirteen Key developments:

1. The Age Friendly Coordinator and Community Planning Officer continue to attend the meetings of the SE Dementia Friendly Partnership on a quarterly basis and as and when required. The SE Dementia Friendly Partnership engaged with those living with dementia and their carers, using a focus group approach, to gain a better understanding of the issues important to them. Carers of loved ones and family members or friends living with dementia completed a survey to provide feedback on issues that are important regarding their caring role. The purpose of the survey and the focus groups is to develop an action plan for the SEHSCT area to support people living with dementia and their carers.

The key findings of the survey are;

- More support needed for people living with dementia
- More information needed both pre and post diagnosis
- Easier path to diagnosis – GP's access
- Signposting guide / who to go to for help
- Financial advice / support
- Lack of support for carers
- Education for retail staff important (awareness raising / training)

The key findings of the Focus Group are;

- Transport issues / access to wheelchair friendly transport
- Accessibility (physical and to services)
- Awareness raising / Business education / training
- Better communication required between services
- Support for those living with dementia and their carers
- More information needed on where to go for help / support (Signposting)

Not Applicable

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It was recommended that the main themes identified by both the online survey and focus group were used to create and develop an Action plan for the Dementia Friendly Partnership (attached). These themes are:

- Awareness raising and Information Sharing
 - Training and Education
 - Community Participation
 - Dementia Friendly Partnership
2. The development of promotional materials which included pull ups stands, information hubs and tabletop stands that will help to promote and raise awareness of the SE Dementia Friendly Partnership and support services available for carers and people living with dementia.
 3. A planning workshop with SE Dementia Friendly Partners on 28 February to look at priority planning areas.
 4. Age Friendly took the lead in the development of an information booklet (“Worried about your memory?”) with helpful tips and guidance to help signpost people who are worried about their memory to relevant support organisations. The booklet has further since been shared with the SEHSCT to replicate for the wider trust area.
 5. The SE Dementia Friendly Partnership ran an awareness raising campaign across the SEHSCT area for Dementia Action Week (13- 19 May 2024). The Partnership provided
 - 54 information packs to businesses across the SEHSCT area
 - Engaged with 54 business.
 - Held an information session in Bow Street Mall Shopping Centre, Lisburn.
 6. Age Friendly took the lead in the plans for the Borough which included the distribution of 30 packs to businesses in Newtownards, engagement with the 30 businesses and an information session was held at Ards Arts Centre with 15 exhibitors and 30 people in attendance. In addition, ANDBC developed a dementia awareness module within the e-learning portal that approximately 100 staff have accessed and facilitated two Dementia Awareness Sessions for 30 front line staff.
 7. The SE Dementia Friendly Partnership held a workshop on the 30 July 2024 to develop a draft action plan. It is envisaged that a final copy will be available by October 2024.
 8. The SE Dementia Friendly Partnership in collaboration with Ards and North Down Borough Council has launched seven active Information Hubs for people living with dementia and their carers across Ards and North Down. Each hub contains leaflets in dementia related services; Dementia Navigator service, Alzheimer’s Society Service as well as an Information Booklet with helpful tips and guidance to signpost people who are worried about their

Not Applicable

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memory to relevant support organisations. The Information Hubs will be located within each of the six local libraries across Ards and North Down and Peninsula Healthy Living, Kircubbin.

9. ANDBC in collaboration with SE Dementia Friendly Partnership facilitated two information sessions at Ards Shopping Centre and Bloomfield Shopping Centre, Bangor to mark World Alzheimer's Day, 21 September. In addition, ANDBC with SE Dementia partners developed a What's On Guide, promoting support services for carers and people living with dementia.
www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/World-Alzheimers-Month
10. The creation of a Dementia Action Plan 2024- 2027 for the SEHSCT area, a copy attached.
11. Facilitation of Demetia Awareness Sessions for front line Ards and North Down Borough Council staff and Age Friendly Alliance partners,
12. Council recently secured £155,000 in funding from the UK Prosperity Fund to deliver the new Dementia Friendly Sensory Garden. The garden is currently being constructed in the space outside Carnegie Library which was the old play park site. The area is to be transformed into the new community space by the end of March this year. The project is fully funded by the Department for Communities Shared Prosperity Fund 'Community & Place' Project, with our Parks team leading on the transformation work.

To ensure this garden was created to meet the specific needs of those it is designed for, Council engaged with the following organisations, as well as people with dementia, their carers and representatives:

Dementia NI

Alzheimer's Society

Making Connections

South Eastern HSCT Dementia Friendly Partnership

During a series of meetings, the partners discussed and reviewed the experience of a user in a garden, what aids and challenges their experience, what they enjoy seeing, hearing and smelling. The findings formed the basis for the overall design, planting scheme, layout and features. Once built, it is envisaged the Garden will host workshops for people living with Dementia and their carers to provide time and activity in a tranquil outdoor setting.

13. Community Planning leading the development of a Dementia Safeguarding Scheme, which will see smart wristbands and hand tags for people living with dementia launched during Dementia Action Week, 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes the ongoing work in relation to a Dementia Friendly Borough.



SEHST Dementia Friendly Partnership

Action Plan

April 2024- March 2027

SEHSCT Dementia Friendly Partnership Action Plan

Theme: Awareness Raising and Information Sharing

Target Audience: People living with dementia, carers, general public and businesses

Objective	Actions	Lead/Name	Quarter	Outcome
1. To raise awareness of dementia and support services	1. The development of SE Dementia Friendly Partnership promotional materials	SEHSCT/SG	Q1 (2024-2025)	# of pull up stands # of information hubs # of tabletop stands
	2. Social Media Campaign		Annually- Q1	# of people reached
2. To engage with people living with dementia and their carers	1. To facilitate engagement sessions across SEHSCT area	SEHSCT DF Partnership	Q1 (2024- 2025)	# of engagement session # of survey responses
	2. To develop a carers survey across the SEHSCT area.	SEHSCT DF Partnership		
3. To raise awareness of dementia and support services available during Dementia Action Week 2024	1. The development of an information pack that can be given to local businesses to raise awareness with customers and staff.	SEHSCT DF Partnership	Annually- Q1	# of information packs distributed # of businesses engaged with
	2. To engage with local businesses.	SEHSCT DF Partnership	Annually- Q1	# of information stands facilitated # of organisations who reported an increased referrals to their services because of engagement

	3. To deliver information stands across the SEHSCT area.	SEHSCT DF Partnership		# of business who reported that the leaflets were taken by customers # of businesses who would take part in future activities
4. To help signpost people living with dementia and their carers to relevant support organisations	1. The development of an information booklet.	ANDBC	Q2 (2024-2025)	# of information booklets distributed # of new referrals
	2. Online directory of services	SEHSCT DF Partnership	Q4 (2025-2026)	
5. To raise awareness of dementia and support services available on World Alzheimer's Day.	1. Facilitation of information stands.	SEHSCT DF Partnership	Q2 Annually	# of information stands facilitated # of organisations who reported increased referrals to their services as a result of the information stands # of people reached
	2. Promotion of what support services are available locally, inclusive of social media	SEHSCT DF Partnership	Q2 Annually	
6. To raise awareness of dementia and support services available within workplaces, organisations and schools.	1. Development of an e-learning portal on dementia awareness for staff.	ANDBC	Q1 (2024-2025)	E-learning portal developed
	2. Development of two dementia awareness sessions with Council staff.	ANDBC	Q1 Annually	# of dementia awareness sessions provided to Council staff # and % of attendees reporting an increased knowledge of dementia and support services.
	3. Build community capacity by increasing the number of people receiving Dementia Friends i.e. Age	LCCC / Praxis Care		# of Dementia Friends training sessions

	<p>Friendly Forum, Seniors Information Network Group and residents through organised dates in partnership with Praxis Care</p> <p>4. Train Dementia Friend Ambassadors within the partnership to enable members to offer Dementia Friends training sessions within their organisation and the wider community</p>	<p>Alzheimer’s Society SEHST DF Partnership</p>	<p>Q4 Annually</p>	<p># of Dementia Friend Champions # and % of attendees reporting an increased knowledge of dementia and support services.</p> <p># of Dementia Friend Champions # of Dementia Friends training sessions # and % of attendees reporting an increased knowledge of dementia and support services.</p>
<p>7. To raise awareness of the Dementia Friendly Community Partnership</p>	<p>1. Develop a Dementia Friendly Communities Partnership leaflet 2. Develop Dementia Friendly Communities information for members websites</p>	<p>SEHST DF Partnership</p>	<p>Q4 (2024-2025) pilot</p>	<p># of leaflets distributed # of organisations with DFCP information on their organisations website</p>

Theme: Training and Education

Target Audience: People living with dementia, carers, general public and businesses

Objective	Actions	Lead	Quarter	Outcome
1. Development of dementia training to GP's and Practice Staff.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To develop a relevant toolkit that includes signposting to relevant support organisations (to include Jam Card and Sunflower Lanyard). To deliver the training to x 1 GP practice across the SE area. 	SESHST DF Partnership	Q1 (2025-2026) pilot	<p># of training sessions delivered # of toolkits distributed</p> <p># of attendees at training # of GP Practices engaged with # and % of attendees reporting an increased knowledge of dementia and support services.</p>
2. To increase knowledge and understanding of dementia with transport providers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To deliver x 1 awareness session to transport provider on a local Council area base. 	SESHST DF Partnership	Q4 (2024-2025) ANDBC	<p># of sessions delivered # of people engaged # and % of attendees reporting an increased knowledge of dementia.</p>
3. To raise awareness of dementia and support services available for the business community.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To engage with x 1 local Chamber of Trade and Commerce to explore training for local business members. 	SESHST DF Partnership	Q3 (2024-2025) ANDBC	<p># of chambers engaged with # of training sessions delivered # and % of attendees reporting an increased knowledge of dementia.</p>
4. To increase number of Dementia Friend Champions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To facilitate a dementia friend training session with representations from the SE Dementia Friendly Partnership organisations. 	SESHST DF Partnership	Q3 (2024-2025)	# of Dementia Friends Champions

Theme: Community Participation

Target Audience: People living with dementia and carers

Objective	Actions	Lead	Quarter	Outcome
1. To increase participation within the local community areas for people living with dementia and for their carers.	1. To facilitate x 1 drop in session/ dementia friendly cafe that incorporate relevant signposting and social activities.	SESHST DF Partnership	Q4 2025-2026 ANDBC	# of sessions/ cafés delivered # of people engaged with # and % of people reported an increase participation to community resources
	2. To facilitate social events for carers and people living with dementia across the DEA areas	SEHSCT Carer Support Service	Q4	# of social events organised # Number of carers and people living with dementia that attended
	3. To facilitate x 12 music sessions with people living with dementia across the DEA areas	NDBC DEA Officers	Q4	# of music sessions delivered # number of people attended

<p>2. To increase awareness and knowledge of existing community support.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promotion of Carer Support Groups available within the SE area. 2. Promotion of Memory Lane Church Service. 3. Promotion of Dementia Friendly Exercise Class- Bangor Aurora 	<p>SEHSCT Carer Support Group</p> <p>SEHSCT DF Partnership</p> <p>ANDBC</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Q2 (2024-2025)</p>	<p># of new people attending groups and services</p>
<p>3. Establish x 3 Dementia Friendly Community Groups</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decide the key stakeholders for each community group 2. Invite a range of key stakeholders onto x 3 community groups in Lisburn & Castlereagh, Ards and North Down and Down area 3. Chair and provide administration for each community group 	<p>Dementia Service Improvement Lead</p> <p>SEHSCT DF Partnership</p>	<p>Q4 (2024-2025)</p>	
<p>4. The implementation of a Dementia Safeguarding Scheme within Ards and North Down.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development of wristbands and hangtags for people living with dementia. 	<p>ANDBC</p>	<p>Q4 2024-2025</p>	<p># of people engaged</p> <p># of wristbands/ hangtags distributed</p>

5. The development of a dementia friendly garden at Ward Park, Bangor.	1. Two Consultation sessions with people living with dementia and or carers in relation to design concepts.	ANDBC	Q4 2024-2025	# of people engaged
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Theme: Dementia Friendly Partnership

Target Audience: People living with dementia, carers, public and local community

Objective	Actions	Lead	Quarter	Outcome
1. Review Dementia Friendly Partnership	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review TOR, what is the purpose and desired outcomes? Review and agree identity of partnership Review membership 	SEHSCT DF Partnership	Q4 (2024-2025)	<p>TOR confirmed by partnership members</p> <p>Identity of the partnership confirmed</p> <p># of new representatives on the partnership</p>
2. To develop a mechanism for people living with dementia and their carers to voice their lived experiences.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a carer and a person living with dementia to join the DF partnership. 	SEHSCT DF Partnership	Q4 (2024-2025)	Carer of person living with dementia and person living with dementia represented on the partnership

Worried about your memory?

Helpful tips and guidance
to point you in the right
direction.



What is dementia?

The World Health Organisation describes dementia as an umbrella term for several diseases that affect the brain's functions such as memory, thinking, and the ability to perform daily activities.

The most common forms of dementia are Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia, dementia with Lewy bodies and frontotemporal dementia.

Five things you should know

Dementia is not a natural part of ageing – it's not called getting old, it's called getting ill

Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain and no two types of dementia are the same

Dementia is not just about memory loss, there is so much more to it

People with dementia can still stay active and be involved in their communities

There is support available to help you

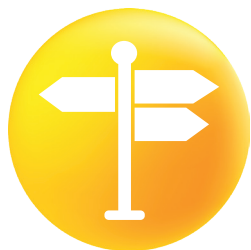
Worried about your memory?

Becoming forgetful **doesn't** mean you have dementia. Memory loss can be caused by physical or mental health problems, and sometimes it's just a normal sign of ageing. But it's always better to know.

If you are worried about your memory or think you may have dementia, speaking to your GP is the starting point.

Your GP will ask questions about the symptoms and carry out a physical examination. In advance of the appointment you can use the Alzheimer's Society symptoms checklist online at alzheimers.org.uk

Finding the reason for any changes you're experiencing can help you to get the right treatment and support. Your GP may refer you to a consultant to carry out a more detailed assessment.



I am awaiting a diagnosis or have just been diagnosed with dementia, what can I do?

You're not alone. There are lots of ways to connect with people who understand what you're going through.

Alzheimer's Society

You can get advice and information, whether you are worried about your memory, waiting for a referral or already diagnosed. If you need to talk to someone about dementia, you can contact your local Alzheimer's Society Dementia Advisor.

North Down and Ards area

☎ 07484 089 628

✉ northdownandards@alzheimers.org.uk

🌐 alzheimers.org.uk

South Eastern HSC Trust (SEHSCT) Dementia Navigator Service

Following a diagnosis, the Dementia Navigator will signpost to services and support available for those living with dementia, and their carers. Navigators receive referrals from the person living with dementia, carers, GP's and other professionals.

☎ 028 9598 8098, option 1/option 3

🌐 Setrust.hscni.net

SEHSCT Safe and Well Service

For people with early stage dementia and aged 65 and over. Services include connections with new people – telephone befriending, Good Morning Call; access to health services; keeping active and healthy; safe and secure homes; benefit advice; emotional support; and access to information and advice.

☎ 028 9756 6934

✉ SafeandWell@setrust.hscni.net

🌐 Setrust.hscni.net



Stay healthy and keep active

- ✓ Eat healthily and maintain a healthy weight
- ✓ Be socially active and be more physically active
- ✓ Drink less alcohol
- ✓ Stop smoking
- ✓ Keep warm enough
- ✓ Get enough sleep
- ✓ If you often feel low or irritable, you may be depressed – speak to your GP if it continues or gets worse
- ✓ Get your hearing checked regularly
- ✓ Get your eyes tested regularly
- ✓ Pay attention to foot care and make sure your shoes and slippers fit well
- ✓ Ask your GP about vaccines
- ✓ Control diabetes and high blood pressure



Make your home dementia friendly

- ✓ Improve home lighting
- ✓ Remove any trips or hazards
- ✓ Use colours and contrast to help things stand out
- ✓ Install smoke alarms and a carbon monoxide detector, if you don't already have them
- ✓ At night, consider leaving a light on in the bathroom and keep a low energy light bulb switched on in the hall landing
- ✓ Ask your local fire service about a FREE home safety visit
 - ☎ **028 9266 4221**
 - 🌐 **Nifrs.org**
- ✓ Are you over 65? If yes, then you are at greatest risk of a home accident. Contact the Home Safety Team for a FREE visit
 - ☎ **0300 013 3333 ext 40336**
 - ✉ **homesafety@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk**




Plan ahead

Make sure your finances and affairs (such as wills, powers of attorney and advance decisions) are in good order.

 alzheimers.org.uk

Check if you are entitled to any financial support. **Make the Call**, a free government helpline, can check eligibility.

 **0800 232 1271**

If you drive, you must tell the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency about your diagnosis.



If you're still working, you may be able to carry on doing so. It's important to talk to your employer.



Accessing social care

If you think you need help and support from your local Health and Social Care Trust, the first step is to ask for a needs assessment.

To arrange, contact your local Health and Social Services directly. Your GP or other professional involved in your care may also refer you.

- For someone who is under 65 and no diagnosis of dementia their first point of contact is their GP.
- For someone who is under 65 and has a diagnosis of dementia they should contact Mental Health Outpatients.
 -  **028 9151 0107**
- For someone who is over 65 contact the Short-Term Assessment Team.
 -  **028 9598 8098, option 2**

Support Organisations

Alzheimer's Society

Dementia Advisors provide information and practical guidance to help people understand dementia, cope with day-to-day challenges and prepare for the future.

North Down and Ards area

☎ 07484 089 628

✉ northdownandards@alzheimers.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society, Carer Information and Support Programme (CrISP)

A structured programme for carers who support someone with a dementia diagnosis. Sessions are offered online and face to face.

☎ 07522 712 764

✉ crispсени@alzheimers.org.uk

SEHSC T Carers Support Service

Information, advice, signposting and support for family carers.

☎ 028 4372 1807

✉ carer.support@setrust.hscni.net

🌐 Setrust.hscni.net

Praxis Care, Dementia Carer Coordinator

Available to advise on community and statutory resources for individuals and families affected by dementia.

☎ 07811 585 823

✉ tracysmyth@praxiscare.org.uk

SEHSC T Dementia Navigators

Offer advice, guidance and support to the person with the diagnosis and their carers.

☎ 028 9598 8098, Opt 1/Opt3

🌐 Setrust.hscni.net

Make the Call

Free government helpline to check eligibility for any benefits and support.

☎ 0800 232 1271

🌐 nidirect.gov.uk

SEHSC T Safe and Well Service

Offers individuals aged 65+ services including connections with new people – telephone befriending, Good Morning Call; access to health services; keeping active and healthy; safe and secure homes; benefit advice; emotional support; and access to information and advice.

☎ 028 9756 6934

✉ SafeandWell@setrust.hscni.net

🌐 Setrust.hscni.net



Unclassified

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ITEM 19**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks and Cemeteries
Date of Report	21 February 2025
File Reference	CW4
Legislation	Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Play Refurbishments 2025 - 2026
Attachments	None

Background

Ards and North Down Borough Council produced a Play Strategy for the period 2021 to 2032 which recommended that the Play Park refurbishment budget be increased to enable more Play Parks to be updated each year. Those Play Parks scoring the lowest within the Annual Independent Inspectors Report would be prioritised for refurbishment. Also, within the Play Strategy it was recommended that budget be made available for the delivery of older children provision (Skate Parks, Pumps Tracks, Parkour, Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA)) based on a settlement hierarchy approach.

As previously reported, Council has now procured contractors to deliver designs complying with modern standards ensuring minimum levels of equipment for each Tier of play park, appropriate age specific equipment ratios and a minimum of 30% inclusive equipment etc, this is also consistent with the design guidance as outlined in the Play Strategy. They also comply with the relevant British and European industry Safety Standards.

Not Applicable

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In 2024/2025 the following play parks have been completed or are nearing completion:

- The Green/Shore Kircubbin - Completed
- Multi Use Games Area, Kircubbin - Completed
- New Harbour Road, Portavogie - Completed
- Londonderry Park, Newtownards – due for completion March 2025
- Ward Park, Bangor – due for completion March 2025
- Seapark, Hollywood – due for completion March 2025
- Millisle Outdoor Gym – due for completion March 2025
- The Commons Outdoor Gym – due for completion March 2025

It should be noted that the refurbishment of Ward Park has benefitted from £76,000 of funding from the UKSPF Levelling Up Fund, Seapark has received £250,000 and The Commons Outdoor Gym in Donaghadee has received £45,000.

The additional consultation for the Older Children Provision in Holywood has now been completed and reported to Members in February 2025 with the preferred location being Seapark and facility type a MUGA. This facility will be delivered in 2025/2026 subject to planning etc (cost approx. £150,000). It should be noted that the budget for the older children provision is separate from that of the play park refurbishments.

There may also be the opportunity to deliver an older children facility at Moss Road, Ballygowan as part of a wider project that is taking place there. A consultation will be carried out locally to ascertain what type of older children facility is preferred (cost approx. £150,000).

Below is a list of play parks that were identified for prioritisation for refurbishment by the annual Independent Inspectors Report for the incoming year. It should be noted that the budget available for play park refurbishments for the 2025/2026 Financial Year is £500,000, a business case was submitted for additional budget to cover the inflationary costs and cover the additional costs of refurbishing play parks that will now not be closed, but this additional budget was not agreed. The budget going forward will be reevaluated upon the review of the Play Strategy, which will be completed this year and brought back to Members for consideration.

It was reported in June 2024 that due to inflationary costs (40% increase in costs per play park) more budget is required to deliver the same quality of play park that Council was able to provide prior to the covid/cost of living crisis. To that end and to ensure consistency across the play park portfolio the higher level of spend relevant to Tier has been applied.

Parsonage Road, Kircubbin

Parsonage Road (Tier 2) was first identified for refurbishment in a report that went to Council in February 2023. The outcome of a public consultation exercise in September 2023 was that The Green/Shore was to be upgraded (from a Tier 2 to a Tier 1) and Parsonage Road Play Park was to be closed and converted into a

Not Applicable

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Sensory Garden, subject to community consultation. However, this decision was then put on hold, following a decision agreed at the March 2024 Council meeting.

Following a Members Workshop and subsequent report, it was agreed by Council in June 2024 that the Tier 1 upgrade of The Green/Shore was to continue and the MUGA was to be installed adjacent to it. It therefore remains that Parsonage Road is still amongst the lowest scoring play parks in the Borough and in need of refurbishment. However, given the level of investment in Kircubbin recently in relation to play, it may be prudent to prioritise another play park in a different location, to help ensure more areas/settlements have access to a recently refurbished facility.

Shorefront and Springwell (Crescent) Groomsport

In the March 2024 report, both play parks at the Shorefront and Springwell (Crescent) were identified as being low scoring in the Inspectors Report, both are classified as Tier 2 play parks.

The Play Strategy (and the report in March 2024) proposed closing Springwell (Crescent) and upgrading the one at the Shorefront to a Tier 1, which would serve the settlement of Groomsport. It also recommended that potentially a Multi-Use Games Area could be located on one of the existing tennis courts. However, it is now proposed that a separate area of land be used, and the tennis courts retained as they have recently been refurbished. Given the Council decision taken in June 2024 not to close any play parks (at this time), nor conduct any consultations in relation to closures etc, neither play park was refurbished nor was a consultation carried out to establish which type of older children provision Groomsport preferred.

Given the more prominent location it is considered that the play park at the Shorefront be prioritised for refurbishment as a Tier 2 (cost approx. £165,000). It may be necessary to moderately relocate the play park to the grass area to the west to accommodate a larger footprint to be able to deliver a more modern sized play park. It is also proposed to conduct a consultation to establish which type of older children provision would be preferred in a location adjacent to the play park at the Shorefront. This could then be delivered later when budget allows.

Northfield and Beechfield (Donaghadee)

In the March 2024 report both the play parks at Northfield and Beechfield were identified as being amongst the lower scoring parks in the Inspectors Report. Again, given the decision taken by Council in June 2024 not to close any play parks (at this time), nor undertake consultations, neither play park was refurbished. Both are Tier 2 play parks, and it is considered that Northfield, given its proximity to the surrounding open space, should be prioritised for refurbishment (cost approx. £165,000).

North Street and Island View, Greyabbey

Both play parks are Tier 2 and are low scoring. Given the more central location of Island View it is proposed to prioritise it for refurbishment (cost approx. £165,000).

Not Applicable

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While the above list represents the play parks that can be delivered within the available budget of £500k, if any funding opportunities present themselves, other play parks may be able to be refurbished, such as Bangor Sportsplex, The Commons, Breezemount, Conlig, Bowtown, Skipperstone & Ballyhalbert which are all amongst the next lowest scoring. As decided through a Notice of Motion in February, a more detailed report on Bowtown will be brought forward to inform its upgrade.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

Unclassified

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ITEM 20**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure
Date of Report	27 February 2025
File Reference	CW 55
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	Donaghadee Sports Facilities
Attachments	Appendix 1 Letter from Donaghadee Rugby Club Appendix 2 Letter from Donaghadee Football Club

Introduction

The following report is in response to a recent Notice of Motion as approved by Council following it being tabled at Community and Wellbeing Committee on 15th January 2025 as follows:

“That this Council recognises the considerable delays and frustration experienced by Donaghadee FC, Donaghadee Rugby Club, Ards and Donaghadee Cricket Club and Donaghadee Ladies Hockey Club in relation to the long-awaited upgrade to their playing surface and facilities. Alongside this Officers shall engage meaningfully with all Sport Clubs in Donaghadee around facilities to ensure the development and investment to improve sports provision and facilities. Further to this Council Officers will bring back a report exploring external funding opportunities, or in the absence of external funding, options for direct funding for upgrades to Donaghadee Sport facilities.”

Not Applicable

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Members will be aware that the Donaghadee Sports Project has been ongoing for well over 10 years. The project was first proposed by representatives from the town when they raised the need for quality sports/leisure facilities in Donaghadee. These discussions led to the Council awarding a grant to the Donaghadee Sports Hub committee to fund a scoping document to identify what was needed to bring the facilities in the town up to a standard befitting the needs of the various sporting clubs that were identified through this work. The clubs identified at this time were the Rugby, Hockey, Football and Cricket Clubs with options to add other sports/clubs if a need could be identified.

In 2017 Strategic Leisure who undertook the scoping exercise presented a feasibility study that proposed a single hub site where Rugby, Hockey, Cricket and Football sharing one site that would create sporting synergy in the town. The site was to include a substantial pavilion that would incorporate a bar/social area, a fitness suite as well as the usual changing and toilet facilities that would meet the needs of the four identified Clubs. These were ambitious plans that also included the possibility of adding facilities for running, tennis and bowls if a suitable site could be procured/developed and if those Clubs were minded to utilise the developed facilities.

A Business Case was then developed based on the feasibility study recommending that the single site hub be developed and Officers began discussions with Clubs and other stakeholders to fully understand what they would want from this development.

A design team was appointed, and plans were prepared showing all four Clubs sharing a single site with a clubhouse and social and fitness facilities to be a focal point for the town. At this time the project was estimated to cost in the region of £7.6 million. This was very much in line with Sport NI proposals, at that time, for single hub sites in strategic locations around Northern Ireland and Council Officers were working very hard at that time to secure funding from Sport N.I. towards the cost of developing this "shared site" project. It was anticipated that if secured this funding would be in the region £1 million.

At the time it was recognised that none of the existing Club sites had sufficient space to fully support this ambitious project and Officers began talks with a local land owner to see if a suitable site relatively close to Donaghadee town centre could be acquired but this was curtailed by advice from Planners who advised that such a development in a designated Green Space would be unlikely to get approval. Further explorations of potential sites led to a consideration of an expansion to Donaldson Park and the potential purchase of adjoining land to facilitate all four sports being delivered on the one site and the significant advantages that would bring. Work continued on this model over a period of years.

It was around this time that Council introduced a revised business case development process for Capital projects. Council had also undertaken a review of all "live" capital projects and this review concluded that the original brief, developing a central one site facility for this project had a very narrow options base and that the process would benefit from a new business case that would identify further options rather than just the single hub site of the previous business case.

Not Applicable

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The new business case was completed in May 2022. This new business case highlighted that the Cricket, Rugby and Football Clubs were all relatively happy with their existing locations, they just needed the facilities to be substantially improved, the Hockey club, who were playing and training in Bangor were keen to move to their hometown and different options for this were explored.

The new Business Case delivered by S3 Solutions in May 2022 identified a number of different options ranging in cost, at the time, from £7 million to £10.5 Million and noted how the potential new facilities might look and be configured. S3 Solutions also considered several alternative management options for the facilities. Internal discussions and discussions with the clubs and stakeholders determined that two of the developed options be taken forward for consideration by Council with the estimated costs detailed and submitted to the Council for approval for the scheme to be placed on the Councils Capital list of projects. Briefly, these propose that Cricket stays at a minimal developed site at Northfield, Soccer remain at a significantly developed site at Crommelin Park and Rugby would have a significantly enhanced facility at Donaldson Park. The only main difference between the two options being the location of Hockey that would either be developed at an extended Donaldson Park or on the current site at Crommelin Park.

Officers have continued engagement with the four Clubs and stakeholders on a number of occasions to explore what the clubs and other stakeholders want/expect in terms of facilities and more importantly how each of the sites might be managed in the future. The facilities options were pretty straightforward in terms of pitches, floodlights and changing rooms but the Rugby club has always expressed their desire/need for a bar to help offset their running costs. This is based on their current operating model where a bar is an essential element of how the club operate.

Taking this into account all the Clubs have now expressed their desire to explore the potential to lease the facilities, either in a developed format or undeveloped format, depending on the various cost estimates associated with the options. This would mean that they have total control over how the site operates, as well as full responsibility for maintaining the site, including all costs associated with operating the site and keeping the site to an acceptable standard during the period of the lease. Recent correspondence from both the Soccer and Rugby Club is included as appendix 1 and 2 attached.

It should be noted that the Donaghadee Cricket Club have recently merged with Ards Cricket Club who, Members will recall benefitted from a significant investment at Londonderry Park in 2015. This new Cricket Club has also recently applied for a lease for the Cricket site in Northfields, Donaghadee and it is the understanding of Officers that given that they now play out of two locations in the Borough they no longer need Council assistance as part of this facility development process. Officers are liaising with Club Officials in seeking to understand their future needs at Londonderry Park as considerable costs are incurred in maintaining cricket facilities at the site that may no longer be needed by this new "joint" Club.

It should be further noted that whilst this project has been developing the Council has continued to invest in and maintain leisure facilities in the town. For example Crommelin Park had approximately £80,000 invested in a new drainage system for

Not Applicable

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the existing grass pitches and in previous years Council has carried out significant work to the changing pavilions at the site.

Council Officers are continuing to work with the three remaining Clubs to determine their preferred way forward. Recent meetings between the Chief Executive, Council Officers and Rugby Club Officials have been extremely helpful in progressing the Clubs desire to seek improvements to the facilities at Donaldson Park and to extend the current lease to facilitate the Club carrying out further significant upgrades by applying for grants in the future.

Council Officers continue to engage with the Soccer Club to develop facilities at Crommelin Park and in the interim, as detailed above have spent considerable funds on upgrading both the changing facilities and the playing surfaces at the site.

Council Officers have also held recent discussions with the Ladies Hockey Club to seek their intentions following the proposal from the Rugby Club and once this is confirmed by the Club, the Council can progress plans for both sites.

A further report on the Clubs preferences (Rugby, Football and Hockey) and costs associated with these will be brought to Council for consideration and approval when a potential way forward has been provisionally agreed.

Council Officers will continue to assist all sport Clubs to identify any potential funding opportunities through the work of our Sports Development team and the Boroughs Sport Forum.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

Clubhouse and Grounds

Donaldson Park
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BT21 0DY

**President**

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VAT Number 311 2615 13

20th January 2025

RE: Donaghadee RFC – Sports Facility Development / Sports Hub at Donaldson Park

We refer to our meeting at Bangor Castle on the 5th December 2024. We welcomed the open and frank discussions led by Council Chief Executive, Susie McCullough, supported by Graeme Bannister and Ian O'Neill. The proposals for the Rugby Club were put forward by Peter Walker, Stephen Quinn and Mark Poole.

You will recall that we produced an Agenda for the meeting that set out the various options for discussion including a short review of the history of the Sports Hub that had been proposed for Donaldson Park. The Agenda included, inter alia, the previous proposed plans for a Sports Hub and the various options available to include soccer, cricket and ladies' hockey at one site based around Donaldson Park. We also discussed alternative plans for a scaled down version of the Sports Hub and highlighted the Rugby Club's favoured option at paragraph 4 of the Agenda that summarises a plan that may satisfy both parties given the current financial burdens on local government. A copy of the Agenda is attached to this letter at Appendix A, but we also feel it important to set out paragraph 4 in full.

4. *Refurbish the Clubhouse as it stands to bring it up to modern specification to include disabled access and all facilities within current Health & Safety Specifications. Attend to all exterior works including resurfacing broken areas of the car park, repairing exterior walls and fences and creating safe pathways without tripping hazards around the Clubhouse. A lift for disabled members and visitors should be incorporated within this new design.*
- *In this plan, Donaghadee would be provided with a new long lease of at least 125 years to allow it to obtain grants, loans and other financial benefits as appropriate. Under the current agreement, given that the Council have retained full control of all of Donaldson Park apart from the upstairs bar area and the Hillis Room, we cannot apply for grants or any form of funding as we don't have control of the grounds or car park.*
 - *Under proposal four, the Rugby Club retain possession of all of Donaldson Park under a new Lease Agreement from the Borough Council and this would be on the basis of a "peppercorn rent" as the Club take on the expense of running and maintaining*

Donaldson Park and all buildings thereon. As part of this Lease Agreement we would maintain all of the facilities thereby saving the Council approximately £55,000 per annum in running costs. We currently maintain all of the grounds to include drainage, grass cutting, pitch marking, erection and dismantling of posts, erection and maintenance of all flood lighting, erection and maintenance of all fences, spectator accommodation together with fulfilling all of our leasehold duties in relation to maintenance and repair of the first floor bar area. At all times it must be remembered that the Rugby Club hold full possession of the ground floor gymnasium and Hillis Room that are attached to the Clubhouse by way of a ground and first floor extension on the town side of the Club.

Given the current state of local government finances, we are very keen to move forward with a scaled down option that should be much more attractive, approachable and affordable. We also see benefits in this plan to the wider Donaghadee locality, in that it provides an updated sports ground and sports club for the use of the community.

To recap, we see the main advantages of this much more compact and affordable scheme as follows:

1. A very much reduced financial outlay for the Council in comparison to any of the proposed schemes for a Sports Hub even in its revised two-sports plan (rugby and hockey). This must be a much more attractive option to Council funding rather than the ultra-expensive Sports Hub in any of the forms that were proposed and planned.
2. It represents a speedy resolution to the community problem of limited sports facilities in Donaghadee given that the Council has a duty to provide sports facilities in the locality. The Sports Hub would have been a very suitable approach but this now seems years away and, further, soccer and cricket seem to have made alternative arrangements regarding their own facilities. This proposal represents a 1 – 3 year plan and not a 10 – 12 year plan.
3. It represents a massive saving in planning, surveying, scoping reports, design, architecture, governance, costings and future costs. There has already been a considerable amount of money spent on Sports Hub planning and this scheme avoids all of that future cost and planning of a multi-sports scheme.
4. There are benefits of a very much less complicated lease for Donaghadee RFC. The Rugby Club would take on the maintenance, governance, legal issues, insurance and safekeeping of the grounds and clubhouse in the proposed 125 year lease for the whole of Donaldson Park and clubhouse. This club has been in existence for nearly 140 years, it has an excellent reputation within the rugby community in Ulster and the fact that the club has been in existence since 1886 clearly demonstrates that it is efficiently run by responsible trustees and club council members elected from members based in the local community. The advantages of such a lease for both parties is:

(a) The Rugby Club would be free to apply for grants on the basis that we now have a long and secure lease for all of the grounds and facilities at Donaldson Park. We currently cannot attract grant funding as we don't have a lease for the rugby pitches and training area. This remains within the ownership of the Council.

(b) It clarifies the responsibility for maintenance and upkeep of the rugby pitches and training area. The current position is that, even though the Rugby Club have no

responsibility whatsoever for the rugby grounds, we carry out all maintenance, drainage works, grass cutting and any other works ancillary to the safety of spectators and flood lighting of the area. A new lease will formalise the responsibilities of both parties.

Appendix 1 - meeting with ANDSC on Thursday 5th
December at 11am

- (c) This option relieves the Council of all future liabilities for Donaghadee Rugby Football Club in Donaldson Park. It allows rugby to continue in Donaghadee for another 125 years and there can be no dispute that it is in the best interests of the community as a whole at a fraction of the cost of the proposed Sports Hub.

Regards

Mark Poole
Hon Secretary
Donaghadee RFC

MEETING OF DONAGHADEE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB
AND NORTH DOWN & ARDS BOROUGH COUNCIL

Appendix A – Copy of Agenda of meeting with ANDBC on Thursday 5th December at 11am

AGENDA

1. Discuss "Preferred Option" letters from the Rugby Club (Mark Poole) and the Hockey Club regarding the Council's proposal for a Sports Hub Option.
 - Discuss Alan Johnston's input and emails.
 - Discuss Alan Johnston's offer.
 - Discuss various options available under the Sports Hub Scheme and whether or not it is still viable.
2. Alternative options regarding the development of Donaldson Park on a shorter timescale and a more cost-effective option.
 - Purchase land from the Dejacheros Estate to the countryside of the Rugby Club.
 - Develop one 4G hockey pitch for ladies Hockey Club with lights.
 - Develop rugby grounds as they currently stand with revised drainage of the rugby pitches and, in particular, the 2nd XV pitch and training area.
 - Redevelop the Clubhouse as it currently stands with extension to provide revised plan for ladies' and gents' changing areas and extend the building to provide a larger and better equipped gymnasium and a storage area incorporated into the Clubhouse to allow us to dispose of the storage containers at the side of the Club.
 - Develop the upstairs bar into one large room with dividing shelters and relocate the bar to allow the room to be used to facilitate larger function groups and club lunches. New roof required. The roof is not fit for purpose. Either it needs to be totally replaced or, alternatively, the design could be amended to provide for a more cost-effective option that increases the dimensions of the Club Room and includes better disabled access to all areas. It is essential to provide some sort of stair-lift or lift attached to the outside of the building for wheelchair / disabled use.
 - Repave and realign the car park as appropriate including the use of some of the land purchased from Dejacheros Estate to extend the car park to the countryside of the Rugby Club and provide better disabled access to all areas including designated paths for wheelchair use around the clubhouse which is currently very rough and rutted.
3. Renew the Club's current lease on the basis of the above development to include a 125 year lease that includes all of the area of Donaldson Park (not just the first floor bar) and / or the new grounds to include the ladies' hockey pitch. The Borough Council to retain overall control (apart from the first floor kitchen and bar area) and in this plan the Council to take on all of the maintenance, repair, upkeep and staffing of the Clubhouse and all of the grounds.
4. Relaunch the Clubhouse as it stands to bring it up to modern specification to include disabled access and all facilities within current Health & Safety Regulations. Attached to

MEETING OF DONAGHADEE RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB
AND NORTH DOWN & ARDS BOROUGH COUNCIL

Thursday 5th December at 11am

AGENDA

1. Discuss "Preferred Option" letters from the Rugby Club (Mark Poole) and the Hockey Club regarding the Council's proposals for a Sports Hub Options.
 - Discuss Alan Johnston's input and emails.
 - Discuss Alan Johnston's offer.
 - Discuss various options available under the Sports Hub Scheme and whether or not it is still viable.
2. Alternative options regarding the development of Donaldson Park on a shorter timescale and a more cost-effective option.
 - Purchase land from the Delacherois Estate to the countryside of the Rugby Club.
 - Develop one 4G hockey pitch for ladies Hockey Club with lights.
 - Develop rugby grounds as they currently stand with revised drainage of the rugby pitches and, in particular, the 2nd XV pitch and training area.
 - Redevelop the Clubhouse as it currently stands with extension to provide revised plan for ladies' and gents' changing areas and extend the building to provide a larger and better equipped gymnasium and a storage area incorporated into the Clubhouse to allow us to dispose of the storage containers at the side of the Club.
 - Develop the upstairs bar into one large room with dividing shutters and relocate the bar to allow the room to be used to facilitate larger function groups and club lunches. New roof required. The roof is not fit for purpose. Either it needs to be totally replaced or, alternatively, the design could be amended to provide for a more cost-effective option that increases the dimensions of the Club Room and includes better disabled access to all areas. It is essential to provide some sort of stair-lift or lift attached to the outside of the building for wheelchair / disabled use.
 - Resurface and realign the car park as appropriate including the use of some of the land purchased from Delacherois Estate to extend the car park to the countryside of the Rugby Club and provide better disabled access to all areas including designated paths for wheelchair use around the clubhouse which is currently very rough and rutted.
3. Renew the Club's current lease on the basis of the above development to include a 125 year lease that includes all of the area of Donaldson Park (not just the first floor bar) and / or the new grounds to include the ladies' hockey pitch. The Borough Council to retain overall control (apart from the first floor kitchen and bar area) and in this plan the Council to take on all of the maintenance, repair, upkeep and staffing of the Clubhouse and all of the grounds.
4. Refurbish the Clubhouse as it stands to bring it up to modern specification to include disabled access and all facilities within current Health & Safety Specifications. Attend to

all exterior works including resurfacing broken areas of the car park, repairing exterior walls and fences and creating safe pathways without tripping hazards around the Clubhouse. A lift for disabled members and visitors should be incorporated within this new design.

- In this plan, Donaghadee would be provided with a new long lease of at least 125 years to allow it to obtain grants, loans and other financial benefits as appropriate. Under the current agreement, given that the Council have retained full control of all of Donaldson Park apart from the upstairs bar area and the Hillis Room, we cannot apply for grants or any form of funding as we don't have control of the grounds or car park.
 - Under proposal four, the Rugby Club retain possession of all of Donaldson Park under a new Lease Agreement from the Borough Council and this would be on the basis of a "peppercorn rent" as the Club take on the expense of running and maintaining Donaldson Park and all buildings thereon. As part of this Lease Agreement we would maintain all of the facilities thereby saving the Council approximately £55,000 per annum in running costs. We currently maintain all of the grounds to include drainage, grass cutting, pitch marking, erection and dismantling of posts, erection and maintenance of all flood lighting, erection and maintenance of all fences, spectator accommodation together with fulfilling all of our leasehold duties in relation to maintenance and repair of the first floor bar area. At all times it must be remembered that the Rugby Club hold full possession of the ground floor gymnasium and Hillis Room that are attached to the Clubhouse by way of a ground and first floor extension on the town side of the Club.
5. Discuss the current complicated leasehold set-up and lack of facilities in the town and surrounding area;
- (a) The ground floor gymnasium and first floor Hillis Room were paid for and are owned by DRFC. How does this investment by the Club fit with any proposed development?
 - (b) The benefits of a less complicated lease - the Rugby Club would take on the maintenance, governance, legal issues (insurance, etc.) in an option to lease the whole of Donaldson Park and Clubhouse to DRFC under 125 year lease.
 - (c) A much reduced cost to Council on any of the proposed schemes to date. Much more attractive to Council funding than the ultra-expensive Sports Hub.
 - (d) Speedy resolution to community problem of no sports facilities in Donaghadee. The plans that the Rugby Club propose represent a 2 to 3 year plan and not a 10 to 12 year plan.
 - (e) Massive saving in planning, surveying, scoping reports, design, architecture, governance, costings and future costs.
 - (f) Community "feel good" effect. Getting something done reasonably quickly that fulfils the Borough Council's duty under the current legislation regarding the provision of sports and leisure facilities.

Proposed Operating Model

New Facility Cromellin Park Donaghadee

Please find the first draft regarding the proposed operating model in relation to the new facility at Cromellin Park, Donaghadee.

1. Facility to be initially run by the council for the first three years with an option of the lease being taken over by the football club after the period.
2. Donaghadee FC would require priority of training and match day bookings which would involve a discounted rate. As you can appreciate we have been working on this project for over 16 years and deserve financial assistance on that basis. We have club members who would be available to assist the council in the day to day running of the facility if required.
3. The facility/pitch has to be at intermediate standard as previously agreed. We hope as a club to be at intermediate level in the next 3 to 4 years. A stand was discussed and built into the cost of the project. This will encourage the local community to use the facility both as paying customers and spectators. Any events can be organised and manned by our members.
4. The facility plans include a refreshments/viewing area. We would require this area to be used by the club to entertain on match days, fundraising events etc.
5. Donaghadee FC would require a leasing agreement which would encompass the 3g pitch, grass pitch, car parking, facility areas etc.

We have been working on this facility for over 16 years now and the club, indeed the community deserve something considering the poor conditions we have had to endure for decades. Other towns and sports clubs in the surrounding area and further afield have state of the art facilities while we suffer with dilapidated pitches/changing areas/car parking etc. this has had a detrimental effect on our club as a whole.

The community, schools, sporting organisations will all benefit greatly from this facility. Additionally it will transform the area which at present is in a terrible state which at present is used for gangs of underage drinkers/drug users, joy riders, vandals.

I look forward to your response.

Regards

Donaghadee FC Committee

Unclassified

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ITEM 21**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure Services
Date of Report	24 February 2025
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: N/A For information only
Subject	Bi Monthly Update on Portavogie 3G and Peninsula 3G pitches and Portaferry Sport Centre floor
Attachments	12.1 Appendix 1 Portavogie 3G Update February 2025 12.2 Appendix 2 Peninsula 3G Update February 2025 12.3 Appendix 3 Status Update on Portaferry Sports Centre Floor Repair

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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This report provides the three updates requested on a bi-monthly basis, and for the two capital projects, in a 'RAG' format as further requested by the proposer in May 2024.

1. The update report for the Portavogie 3G project is attached at appendix 1.
2. The update report for the Peninsula 3G project is attached at appendix 2.
3. The status update for the defective floor at Portaferry Sports Centre is attached at appendix 3.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes the three update reports.

Portavogie 3G Project. Update 14.
Information up to date as of 10th February 2025

This report has been prepared for information purposes and is issued to interested parties to update them on the most pressing of work streams currently being undertaken.

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

For Information – RAG status

Green	Amber	Red
Good progress is being made, with no significant issues.	Progress is being made with some issues needing to be worked through.	Issues exist that could put elements or the whole project at risk.

Background

A planning application was submitted 4 years and 5 months ago in September 2020. All consultation responses were received one year later, in September 2021, except NI Water (NIW) consultation response.

NIW have issued reports and maps that indicate the underinvestment and lack of capacity over significant areas of Northern Ireland, which is stifling, delaying, and preventing a large amount of capital development projects throughout Northern Ireland. Portavogie is one of the areas affected.

With regards to Portavogie, NIW responded to the planner in November 2021 objecting to the scheme and started a process that resulted in them requesting additional design works related to their infrastructure in the vicinity of the site. The design was to be carried out and developed to Stage 2 (as outlined in their solutions report) to allow NIW’s sign off on the proposal and issue of their final consultation response to Planning.

In September 2023, the EU Commission adopted the EU REACH restriction on intentionally added microplastics. Once entered into force, the restriction will apply in the EU and Northern Ireland. A sales ban on granular infill materials will apply after eight years so that affected stakeholders have time to develop and switch to alternative materials.

In the interim and in light of the science underpinning the restriction, SES requested robust evidence of appropriate mitigation for artificial surfaces with linkages to designated sites, stating that the most effective control is avoidance of infill materials entering the aquatic environment. ANDBC were re-consulted through the planning process in May 2024 and asked to demonstrate that effective mitigation is in place for the Portavogie 3G Pitch.

Portavogie 3G Project. Update 14.
Information up to date as of 10th February 2025

In October 2024, DfI Roads withdrew their original consultation response to the proposed redevelopment and reconsulted with PlanningNI, advising that they now consider the proposal unacceptable, as submitted.

1. Programme

Green	Amber	Red
	The programme for the delivery of the project cannot be determined until planning is granted.	

The project programme will be updated when we have assurance that Planning approval will be granted and a realistic timeframe for securing same has been provided.

2. NI Water: Offsetting

Green	Amber	Red
A solution has been agreed with NIW who have confirmed their conditional approval to the proposed scheme.		

Following re-consultation through the formal planning process, NIW responded in July 2024 to confirm their conditional approval of the submitted drainage offsetting proposal. The proposed solution will free up capacity within the existing, adjacent combined sewer by redirecting drainage from Portavogie Primary School, to facilitate a foul drainage connection from the development site into the adjacent combined public sewer.

It should be noted that legal permission from the Education Authority (EA), is required to carry out the drainage works within the grounds of Portavogie Primary School (PPS). EA approval is conditional to planning approval, therefore it is not required in advance of receiving planning approval but must be required thereafter, to proceed with the development.

The EA has repeatedly advised that they have a number of priority projects which currently require input from their appointed solicitor. The EA will seek Committee approval upon receipt of their solicitor's opinion. We are continuing to work with the EA and as a proactive step are currently preparing project information for their report to Committee.

3. NI Water: Requisition

Green	Amber	Red
NIW has provided a conditional response to the resubmitted requisition application (received on 11.06.24)		

Portavogie 3G Project. Update 14.
Information up to date as of 10th February 2025

and detailed design development by NIW is underway.		
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The development of the detailed design for the requisition sewer is still in progress, following ANDBC’s payment of a £10K deposit. The proposed requisition/ sewer extension is required to drain surface run off from the proposed site and facilitate a connection for the re-routed PPS storm drainage (subject to receipt of the EA’s legal permission). This aspect of the drainage proposal has received NIW’s conditional approval through the formal planning process, will be constructed by NIW and will be a key consideration in the construction programming for the new facility. NIW will issue the detailed design solution and programme for installation.

4. Planning: Statutory Consultation – Shared Environmental Services

Green	Amber	Red
Planning consulted with NIEA Water Management Unit, Marine & Fisheries and SES, following our submission of an updated HRA		

In response to the EU future ban of use of microplastics in artificial pitches, SES reconsulted on all live planning applications affected by this decision, including this proposal in Portavogie. SES requested an updated HRA, to either i) confirm that natural infill will be used and evidence that it is not harmful to the environment or ii) or provide appropriate measures in the design to infiltrate rubber infill crumb before it is discharged out to the storm sewer.

Planning consulted with NIEA Water Management Unit, Marine & Fisheries and SES, following our submission of an updated HRA confirming that ANDBC will use natural infill in the 3G pitch, in accordance with mitigation option i), listed above.

SES - A positive consultation response was received from SES who confirmed they have no reason to disagree with the findings of the HRA published on 10/10/2024. SES considers that the Council has fulfilled its obligations under the assessment requirements of Regulation 43 (1) of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended).

DEARA Marine & Fisheries – a positive consultation response was received from NIEA Marine & Fisheries division on 14/11/2024 advising that they welcome the mitigation measures outlined in the updated HRA.

DEARA Water Management Unit (WMU) - responded to the updated HRA submission on 14/11/2024 to advise that they were unable to determine if development would have an adverse impact on the surface water environment. Our consultants liaised directly with WMU to discuss appropriate mitigation within the drainage design. A minor modification was introduced into the drainage design, in line with WMU

Portavogie 3G Project. Update 14.
Information up to date as of 10th February 2025

requirements and this has been submitted via the formal planning process for WMU approval and sign off.

5. Planning: Statutory Consultation – Dfl Roads

Green	Amber	Red
		Dfl original consultation response withdrawn and additional information requested with significant impact on current access design.

In October 2024, Dfl Roads withdrew their original consultation response to the proposed redevelopment and reconsulted with PlanningNI, advising that they now consider the proposal unacceptable, as submitted because of access to the site.

Council can confirm that Dfl Roads has requested an updated site access design with visibility splays. Further internal meetings were held to agree a strategy on how to deal with the requirements that DFI Roads have now asked for. Council officers continue in the process of developing the potential solutions and subject to the outcome of a further meeting early February will be able respond to Dfl Roads in due course.

A meeting took place at the site on 7th February 2025 when a number of options were discussed regarding potential solutions. These options are to be proposed in writing for consideration and a follow up meeting will then be arranged to see if any further progress can be made on the DFIs objection.

6. Planning Update: General

Green	Amber	Red
	All requests from consultees have been addressed with the exception Dfl Roads which is in progress.	

The planning consultation process remains live until engagement with Dfl Roads and NIEA Water Management Unit concludes.

We therefore await a planning decision once the further access information requested has been submitted and DFI further consulted.

This report has been prepared for information purposes only and is issued to members to update them on the main workstreams currently being undertaken.

Planning application: Not yet submitted

Proposal: A full-size GAA 3G pitch with multi-use design to assist a range of GAA clubs and Soccer clubs in the area, for competitive GAA matches and multi sports training. Set close to St Columba’s College with the intention that the school will make full use of the pitch during school hours.

Location: Cloughey Road Portaferry, behind the sports centre

For Information – RAG status

Green	Amber	Red
Good progress is being made, with no significant issues.	Progress is being made with some issues needing to be worked through.	Issues exist that could put elements or the whole project at risk.

Background

1. Design consultants appointed
2. Establishment of and site surveys in progress and nearing completion.
3. Preferred layout established and agreed in principles with the clubs.
4. Updated Capital Costs by consultant exceed the current Project Budget, Project Board instructed capital team to continue with the full scheme through to the planning process while the cost shortfall will be addressed via an updated Business Case.

1. Programme

Amber
The programme for the delivery of the project cannot be determined until planning is granted as there are too many variables to accurately predict a date as to when the planning application will be submitted and or determined at this stage. Currently at RIBA Stage 2 Feasibility and Concept Design, with elements of RIBA Stage 3 starting to enable consultation with planning in the coming months.

2. Key Risks

Amber
There have been several risks identified with particularly relevance to the stage, the top five are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funding allocated £2.3m within the current project prioritisation current estimated cost in excess of £6m, this is currently not included in budget profiles or in the project prioritisation. A report to include an update to the business case for members consideration will need to be presented at the appropriate time. 2. Water based habitat system over a large element of the site, cost of mitigation currently being established, but will not be insignificant. 3. NIWater, required mitigation measures which will add cost but are not believed to be major at his stage, currently being costed.

4. Entrance off the public road required widening, this will add cost and this is currently being established.
5. Close out of statutory consultees including NIEA through PAD process

3. Costs

Red

The estimated cost has risen since the OBC from c£2.2m in 2017 to in excess of c£6m. This is due to:

- The original OBC was produced 2016/17 and at this stage the costs were established at 2017 rates. We have now predicted the cost at the potential midpoint of construction, that is more likely to be 2027. Therefore 10 years increase of costs.
- Construction inflation has risen significantly in recent years and although has settled it has not reduced.

In the original OBC:

- The pavilion was smaller
- New electrical supply to the site was not taken for
- Preliminaries were a far lower percentage, a more realistic percentage based on recent experience has now been used
- A smaller car park was proposed
- No optimism bias allowance
- No allowance for earth works
- No allowance for fencing
- No allowance for drainage
- No allowance for new organic infill

The site investigation surveys carried out as part of the RIBA stages 1&2 have indicated that the following through consultation with statutory authorities will add costs.

- Major relocation of a wet land habituate
- Widened entrance off the main road
- NIWater upgrade works external to the site
- Disposal of potentially hazardous materials from old landfill

4. Environmental Issues

Amber

- A full set of surveys instructed are reaching completion and engagement with relevant statutory consultees have taken place.
- A water-based habitat system that NIEA will require relocating. The proposed new location is between the new 3G pitch and the councils soccer grass pitch, this will require some re-routing of the water course that exists in the area to ensure a wet area is maintained. The earth works and cost of these works is currently being established and will reported in the Stage 2 report to be presented to council with the next couple of months.

5. Lands

Green

Discussion with the Education Authority and Diocese regarding a lease are going well with good dialogue established. The Education Authority and Diocese confirmed that the rent of the land required for the project will be at peppercorn rate rent rate.

APPENDIX 3

Status update on the Portaferry Sports Centre Sports Hall Floor repairs

The hall remains only partly usable, with no funding yet confirmed forthcoming from the responsible organisation to carrying out the remaining repairs.

A meeting took place with the Diocesan Trustees, St MacNissi's Educational Trust, the Department of Education, the school, elected members and senior Community and Wellbeing Officers on Friday 8th November 2024 in an attempt to progress the issue. It was confirmed at that meeting that the Trust were responsible for the upkeep of the building and as such that the school principal would forward an application for works to be carried out on the floor to the Department of Education. It was explained by the Department representative that this would then be the responsibility of the Education Authority to scope out and that any works to be carried out would be subject to budgetary approvals.

The application was submitted by the school principal on 11th November 2024 and the Minister for Education has responded as follows.

I can confirm that the unavoidable minor works application submitted by the school on 11 November 2024 has been issued to the Education Authority (EA) for scoping and assessment. Subject to the necessary approvals, the project will be considered in line with available budget and against competing priorities. Officials from the Department's Estate Operations Team will ensure you are kept informed on progress of your application.

You will appreciate that the Department is currently having to make very difficult decisions about how best to target investment and any available capital budget has been directed to provide education access to the most vulnerable and to those inescapable emergency works that, if not completed, would force the closure of schools.

Following this, the principle was contacted by the Education Authority in January and site visit appointment with the EAs estate operations team locality manager was secured for a date in February.

The Department of Education visited the Portaferry Sports Centre on Tuesday 18th February 2025 and inspected the floor of the main hall along with the Principal and the Buildings Supervisor.

The outcome of the visit is that the Department Representative will contact the Education Authority regarding the matter and attempt to move things forward. The Dept representative also indicated at the meeting that she will provide an update directly to officers in the Council.

Unclassified

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ITEM 22**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure Services
Date of Report	26 February 2025
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 February 2025)
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Successful Goldcard Report 2024/25 for Noting Appendix 2 - Successful Individual Travel Accommodation Report 2024/25 for Noting Appendix 3 - Successful Event Report 2025/26 for Noting Appendix 4 - Successful Individual Travel Accommodation Report 2025/26 for Noting

The Ards and North Down Sports Forum administers grants for sporting purposes on behalf of Council under the Councils Grants Policy agreed in 2024. £45,000 had been allocated within the 2024/2025 revenue budget for this purpose. In October 2024, Officers advised Members that an additional sum of circa £11,000 could be required above the £45,000 budget agreed for 2024/25 to meet the expected level of applications based on current trends of the grants scheme year to date and subsequently, Council approved the allocation of funding to facilitate all eligible

Not Applicable

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requests for the remainder of the year with the surplus being sourced from the success at ABMWLC in surpassing income targets.

During January 2025, the Forum received a total of 23 applications: **21 applications for 2024/25** (12 Goldcard and 9 Individual Travel/Accommodation), and **2 applications for 2025/26** (1 Event and 1 Individual Travel/Accommodation). A summary of the **23** successful applications are detailed in the attached Successful Goldcard 2024/25, Successful Individual Travel/Accommodation 2024/25, Successful Event 2025/26 and Successful Individual Travel/Accommodation 2025/26 Appendices.

2024/25 Budget £45,000	Annual Budget	Proposed Funding Awarded January 2024	Remaining Budget
Anniversary	£1,000	£0	-£1,999.90
Coach Education	£3,000	£0	£1,195.00
Equipment	£14,000	£0	*-£4,874.80
Events	£6,000	£0	£869.46
Seeding	£500	£0	£500
Travel and Accommodation	£14,500	*£1,340	*-£7,075.07
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	£1,000
Schools/Sports Club Pathway	£5,000	£0	£4,570
12 Goldcards Awarded in January (58 Goldcards in total during 2024/25)			

*The proposed remaining budget for Equipment of **-£4,874.80** is based on withdrawn/reclaimed costs of **£137.61**.

*The proposed remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of **-£7,075.07** is based on a proposed award this month of **£1,340**.

The proposed remaining budget for 2024/25 is **-£5,815.31** (113% of the 2024/25 budget spent).

2025/26 Budget £75,000	Annual Budget	Proposed Funding Awarded January 2024	Remaining Budget
Anniversary	£1,500	£0	£1,500
Coaching	£3,500	£0	£3,500
Equipment	£25,000	£0	£25,000
Events	£10,000	*£1,000	£9,000
Seeding	£2,000	£0	£2,000
Travel and Accommodation	£30,000	*£150	£29,850
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	£1,000
Schools/Sports Club Pathway	£2,000	£0	£2,000

Not Applicable

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council note the attached report detailing grants that have been administrated and approved by the Ards and North Down Sports Forum relating to applications in January 2025.

APPENDIX 1 - SUCCESSFUL GOLDCARD REPORT FOR NOTING 2024/25

APPLICANT	SPORT	EVENT	DATES	GOLDCARD	REPRESENTING	PROPOSED	NOTES
Alex Eadie (1703)	Sailing	Irish Youth National Championships / Topper World Championships / RYA NI Youth Championships	24-27 April 2025 / 21-25 July 2025 / 13-14 September 2025	ABMWLC - Gym, Health Suite and Pool	Northern Ireland	Yes	Alex has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at various events, this has been confirmed by a selection letter from the RYA NI. The final event is the RYA NI Youth Championships which takes place from 13-14 September 2025. Goldcard recommended until 15 September 2025.
James Eadie (1704)	Sailing	Irish Youth National Championships / Topper World Championships / RYA NI Youth Championships	24-27 April 2025 / 21-25 July 2025 / 13-14 September 2025	ABMWLC - Gym, Health Suite and Pool	Northern Ireland	Yes	James has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at various events, this has been confirmed by a selection letter from the RYA NI. The final event is the RYA NI Youth Championships which takes place from 13-14 September 2025. Goldcard recommended until 15 September 2025.

Anna Reilly (1706)	Water Polo	Home Nations	October, 2025	ABMWLC & BA - Gym, Health Suite and Pool	Ireland	Yes	Anna has been selected to be part of the Irish Senior Ladies Squad, this has been confirmed by a selection letter from Swim Ireland. She will be competing at the Home Nations in Scotland during October 2025. Goldcard recommended until 31 October 2025.
Edward Kelly (1707)	Walking Football	World Championships / WF Tournament	3-7 July 2025 / 20-25 October 2025	ABMWLC - Gym, Health Suite and Pool	Northern Ireland (70+)	Yes	Edward has been selected to represent Northern Ireland 70+ squad. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the IFA. Goldcard recommended by sports forum under Discretionary Funding Category, until 26 October 2025.

Karen Keery (1708)	Athletics	World Transplant Games	17-24 August 2025	BA & SP - Gym, Pool and Track	Northern Ireland	Yes	A letter from Transplant Sport confirms Karen has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at the World Transplant Games in Germany in August 2025. They are not a recognised NGB, however the Sports Forum previously recommended a GoldCard for the same event, under the Discretionary Funding Category. This decision was supported by Management. Goldcard recommended until 24 August 2025.
Megan Markwell (1709)	Water Polo	ASA Inter Regional Championships 2025 / European Championships in 2026 / National Training Camp	17-Aug-25	BA - Gym and Pool	Ireland	Yes	Megan has been selected to be part of the Irish 2011 Girls Water Polo Squad, this has been confirmed by a selection letter from Swim Ireland. She will be competing at the ASA Inter Regional Championships during 2025 and the National Training Camp in Limerick. Goldcard recommended until 17 August 2025.

Mia Hehir (1713)	Water Polo	Interprovincial Tournament	15-16 February 2025	AMB, BA & SP - Gym, Pool, Health Suite	Ulster	Yes	Mia has been selected to be part of the Ulster U15 Girls Water Polo Squad, she will be competing at the Interprovincial Tournament in Dublin, from 15-16 February 2025. Goldcard recommended until 31 March 2025 "subject to" an updated selection letter which includes Mia's name stating that she has been selected.
Rosa McCloskey (1714)	Netball	World Youth Netball Cup	19-28 September 2025	AMB, CLC - Gym and Pool	Northern Ireland	Yes	Rosa has been selected to represent the U21 Netball Squad for Northern Ireland. She will be competing at the World Youth Cup in Gibraltar which is due to take place from 19-28 September 2025. Goldcard recommended until 29 September 2025.
Charlie Haslett (1715)	Sailing	ISA Youth Nationals Irsih Nationals Worlds Championships RYA Youth Championships	24-27 April 4-6 July 21-25 July 13-14 September	AMB, CLC - Gym, Pool and Health Suite	Northern Ireland	Yes	Charlie has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at various events in 2025, this has been confirmed by a selection letter from the RYA NI. The final event is the RYA NI Youth Championships which takes place from 13-14 September 2025. Goldcard recommended until 15 September 2025.

Zoe West-Hurst (1719)	Sailing	ISA Youth Nationals Irish Nationals Worlds Championships RYA Youth Championships	24-27 April 4-6 July 21-25 July 13-14 September	Bangor Aurora Gym & Pool	Northern Ireland	Yes	Zoe is part of the Topper NI Sailing Team and has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at various events in 2025, this has been confirmed by a selection letter from the RYA NI. Goldcard recommended until 15 September 2025.
Emma West-Hurst (1720)	Sailing	ISA Youth Nationals Irish Nationals Worlds Championships RYA Youth Championships	24-27 April 4-6 July 21-25 July 13-14 September	Bangor Aurora Gym & Pool	Northern Ireland	Yes	Emma is part of the Topper NI Sailing Team and has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at various events in 2025, this has been confirmed by a selection letter from the RYA NI. Goldcard recommended until 15 September 2025.
Leo West-Hurst (1721)	Sailing	ISA Youth Nationals Irish Nationals Worlds Championships RYA Youth Championships	24-27 April 4-6 July 21-25 July 13-14 September	Bangor Aurora Gym & Pool	Northern Ireland	Yes	Leo is part of the Topper NI Sailing Team and has been selected to represent Northern Ireland at various events in 2025, this has been confirmed by a selection letter from the RYA NI. Goldcard recommended until 15 September 2025.
						12	

APPENDIX 2 - SUCCESSFUL INDIVIDUAL TRAVEL/ACCOMMODATION REPORT FOR NOTING 2024/25

APPLICANT	SPORT	EVENT	DATES	LOCATION	REPRESENTING2	REQUESTED	PROPOSED	NOTES
Alison Morris (1699)	Bowls	BIIBC International Series	7-9 March 2025	Llanelli, Wales	Ireland	£150.00	£150.00	Alison has been selected to compete at the BIIBC International Series taking place in Llanelli, Wales from 7-9 March 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the Irish Women's Indoor Bowling Association. Recommend funding of £150.
Alison Morris (1700)	Bowls	BIIBC British Championships	10-12 March 2025	Llanelli, Wales	Ireland	£150.00	£150.00	Alison has been selected to compete at the BIIBC British Championships taking place in Llanelli, Wales from 10-12 March 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the Irish Women's Indoor Bowling Association. Recommend funding of £150.
Sandra Bailie (1701)	Bowls	BIIBC International Series	7-9 March 2025	Llanelli, Wales	Ireland	£150.00	£150.00	Sandra has been selected to compete at the BIIBC International Series taking place in Llanelli, Wales from 7-9 March 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the Irish Women's Indoor Bowling Association. Recommend funding of £150.

Sandra Bailie (1702)	Bowls	BIIBC British Championships	10-12 March 2025	Llanelli, Wales	Ireland	£150.00	£150.00	Sandra has been selected to compete at the BIIBC British Championships taking place in Llanelli, Wales from 10-12 March 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the Irish Women's Indoor Bowling Association. Recommend funding of £150.
Peter Vauls (1705)	Powerlifting	Small Nations Classic Powerlifting Tournament	27/02/2025 - 02/03/2025	Hamm, Luxembourg	Northern Ireland	£170.00	£170.00	Peter has been selected to attend the Small Nations Classic Powerlifting Tournament from 27 February to 2 March 2025 in Luxembourg, representing Northern Ireland. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from British Powerlifting. Recommend funding of £170.
Cassidy Ogle (1710)	Fencing	European Fencing Confederation Cadet Circuit	25-26 January 2025	Riga, Latvia	Ireland	£170.00	£170.00	Cassidy has been selected to attend the European Fencing Confederation Cadet Circuit in Riga, Latvia from 25-26 January 2025, representing Ireland. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from Fencing Ireland. Recommend funding of £170.

Alex Cree (1711)	Archery	Youth Compound Development Squad Training	19 January, 2025	Lilleshall National Sport Centre, Telford	Great Britain	£50.00	£50.00	Alex has been selected to attend the Youth Compound Development Squad Training taking place at Lilleshall National Sports Centre on 19 January 2025. This has been confirmed by a selection email from Archery GB. Recommend funding of £50.
Riley Greaves (1712)	Ice Hockey	Sedmha Minor Hockey Tournament	27/03/25 - 01/04/2025	Halifax, Canada	Ireland	£200.00	£200.00	Riley has been selected for the Irish U15 Ice Hockey Team for the SEDMHA Honda Minor Hockey Tournament from 26 March to 2 April 2025 in Halifax, Canada. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the Irish Ice Hockey Association. Recommend funding of £200.
Sarah McMillan (1716)	Roller Derby	Training Game Weekend	1 & 2 March 2025	Castle Leisure Centre, Bolton Street, Bury BL9 0EZ	Ireland	£150.00	£150.00	Sarah has been selected for the Training Game Weekend against Rainy City Roller Derby and Team West Indies, on 1 & 2 March 2025 in Bury. This has been confirmed by a selection letter from the British Roller Sports Federation. Recommend funding of £150.
TOTALS							£1,340.00	

APPENDIX 3 - SUCCESSFUL EVENT REPORT FOR NOTING 2025-26

NAME	EVENT	DETAILS	BENEFIT	COSTS	REQUESTED	PROPOSED	NOTES
Ards Amateur Swimming Club (1718)	Swimming	Ards Open Gala Saturday 26 April 2025 A competitive swimming gala giving swimmers from all over Ulster the chance to compete in a Level 1 & Level 3 gala. Approximately 600 entries from other clubs.	Encouraging swimmers aged 7 from other clubs to take part for a commemorative medal. This gives them an opportunity to take part in a gala in preparation for competing for competing in a Level 1 Gala.	Venue costs £1,098 + Medals £500 + Officials £900 = £2,498	£1,000	£1,000	Ards Amateur Swimming Club have requested £1,000 towards the Ards Open Gala on 26 April, for venue costs. Recommend funding of £1,000, "subject to" an Event specific Risk Assessment rather than the generic 2023 Risk Assessment provided.
TOTAL						£1,000.00	

APPENDIX 4 - SUCCESSFUL INDIVIDUAL TRAVEL/ACCOMMODATION REPORT FOR NOTING 2025/26

APPLICANT	SPORT	EVENT	DATES	LOCATION	REPRESENTING2	REQUESTED	PROPOSED	NOTES
Gary Wylie (1717)	Blackball Pool	Nation's Cup 2025	5 - 11 April 2025	Bridlington Spa, Bridlington	Northern Ireland (Master B Team)	£150	£150	Letter from the Northern Ireland Pool Association advises Gary has been selected to represent Team NI at the 2025 EBA Nations Cup of Pool, held in Bridlington, England, from 5 - 11 April. Recommend funding of £150.
TOTALS							£150.00	

Unclassified

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ITEM 23**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure Services
Date of Report	27 February 2025
File Reference	SD151
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: Equality screening completed and pending approval
Subject	Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants and Capital Grants Review
Attachments	None

Members will be aware that Council approved an updated Corporate Grants Policy in September 2024. Following this, Leisure Officers undertook a review of both grants schemes administered by Council's Sports Development Section, the Sports Forum Grants and Capital Grants schemes, and have subsequently determined that several amendments to these moving forward in 2025/26 would be beneficial. These changes are outlined below.

Sports Forum Grants Scheme updates

As part of the 2025/26 rate setting process, Council approved an increase in budget for Sports forum Grants from £45,000 to £75,000, reflecting the ever-increasing financial burden on sports clubs and individuals and the subsequent increase in volume of grant aid requests received by the Sports Development Unit.

Not Applicable

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Based on the increased budget in 2025/26 financial year, Leisure Officers propose to update the profile of the Sports Forum Grants budget as stipulated in the table below:

Grant category	Annual funding by category 2024/25	Proposed funding by category 2025/26
Anniversary	£1,000	£2,000
Coach Education	£3,000	£3,000
Equipment	£14,000	£25,000
Events	£6,000	£10,000
Seeding	£500	£2,000
Travel and Accommodation	£14,500	£30,000
Discretionary	£1,000	£1,000
Schools/Sports Club Pathway	£5,000	£2,000
	£45,000	£75,000

In addition to the reprofiling of the budget allocations for each of the funding streams Officers propose to make several other minor changes to the Sports Forum Grants scheme, as noted below:

Grant Category	2024/25	2025/26
Seeding	Maximum grant amount £250	Maximum grant amount increased to £1,000
	Grant can be utilised for purchase of sports equipment and/or towards the cost of facility hire	Proposed to include an option for a new club/section to avail of a maximum amount of £200 within their grant application for the purposes of promoting the new club/section.
Equipment	Maximum grant amount £1,000	Maximum grant amount increased to £1,500
	Grant open year round on a monthly rolling basis	Grant to be opened for tranche three times per year to facilitate inclusion of scoring criteria/matrix and post funding evaluation.
Events	Maximum grant amount £1,000	Maximum grant amount increased to £1,500
	Grant open year round on a monthly rolling basis	Grant to be opened for tranche three times per year to facilitate inclusion of scoring criteria/matrix and post funding evaluation.
Travel and Accommodation	Grant open year round on a monthly rolling basis	Applicants may submit a maximum of two applications per year, with multiple events permitted in each application.

Not Applicable

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		This is to improve efficiency of grant administration.
		Proposed increase of grant awards according to location of event. Please see table below for breakdown of awards.

Location of Event	Max. claim amount 2024/25	Max. claim amount 2025/26
N. Ireland//Squad training	£50	£50
Ireland -	£100	£150
Great Britain -	£150	£200
Mainland Europe	£170	£250
Outside of Europe	£200	£300

Capital Grants Scheme Updates

As part of the 2025/26 rate setting process, Council also approved an increase in budget for Capital Grants from £45,000 to £75,000.

Based on the increased budget in 2025/26 financial year, Leisure Officers proposed a minor change to the maximum value of grant aid available to applicants and minor change to the percentage funding available for any particular application.

Under the previous scheme, applicants could avail of a maximum grant amount of £5,000 with a maximum of 50% of the project cost to be met by ANDBC grant contribution. In 2025/26, Officers propose that the maximum grant available to any applicant is increased to £6,000, with a maximum of 60% of the total project cost to be met by ANDBC funding.

Conclusion

The changes as outlined are in line with the Council's approved Corporate Grants Policy and will be put into place for the 2025/26 Sports Forum Grants and Capital Grants Schemes.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes the report.