

**ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

27 March 2025

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a hybrid meeting (in person and via Zoom) of the Place and Prosperity Committee of the Ards and North Down Borough Council which will be held in the Council Chamber, 2 Church Street, Newtownards, on **Thursday 3 April 2025** commencing at **7.00pm**.

Yours faithfully

Susie McCullough  
Chief Executive  
Ards and North Down Borough Council

**A G E N D A**

- 1. Apologies
- 2. Declarations of Interest

**Reports for Approval**

- 3. Ards Peninsula Business Awards 2025 (report attached)
- 4. PEACEPLUS Digi Mini Hubs Project Update (report attached)

**Reports for Noting**

- 5. City and Town Advisory Group Minutes (copies attached)
- 6. Any Other Notified Business

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

**Reports for Approval (In Confidence)**

- 7. Pickie Funpark Agreement – Request to sub-contract (Report attached)

**MEMBERSHIP OF PLACE AND PROSPERITY COMMITTEE (16 MEMBERS)**

Alderman Adair	Councillor Hollywood
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Alderman Armstrong-Cotter	Councillor Kennedy
Alderman McDowell	Councillor McCollum
Councillor Ashe (Vice Chair)	Councillor McCracken
Councillor Blaney	Councillor McKimm
Councillor Edmund	Councillor McLaren
Councillor Gilmour (Chair)	Councillor Smart
Councillor Hennessy	Councillor Thompson

Unclassified

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## Item 3

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	03 April 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Economic Development (Interim)
Date of Report	18 March 2025
File Reference	160094
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Ards Peninsula Business Awards 2025
Attachments	

### Background

Following a report to Council in February 2025, the Council approved the nomination of four members to attend the Ards Peninsula Business Awards taking place on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

The members nominated were:

- **The Mayor (Councillor Cathcart) or his nominee**
- **Councillor Thompson**
- **Councillor Smart**
- **Alderman McDowell**

Council Officers have now been informed that the date of the awards ceremony has changed to Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025 at the Clandeboye Lodge Hotel, Bangor.

All four nominated members have been informed of the change of date and three

Not Applicable

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members are available to attend, leaving one ticket available for a further nomination in lieu of Councillor Smart.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council approves one replacement nomination for Councillor Smart to attend the Ards Peninsula Business Awards on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2025 at the Clandeboye Lodge Hotel, Bangor.

Unclassified

ITEM 4

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	03 April 2025
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Economic Development (Interim)
Date of Report	20 March 2025
File Reference	DEV23
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Mini Digi Hub Project - update
Attachments	N/A

Members will be aware from the previous reports submitted to November Council 2024 that the Mini Digi Hubs Project, a cross-border project, was submitted to Peace Plus in March 2024. As part of the Mini Digi Hubs Project, the Comber Community Centre will benefit from funding under the project in terms of its refurbishment.

The SEUPB steering committee has confirmed via the lead partner, the East Border Region, that Council will be eligible for the full application budget of €552,858 (Euro). The Letter of Offer (LoO) was received by Council on 12 March 2025 and the partnership agreement is expected imminently.

An element of the application was to fully fund a part time Project Officer at SO2 grade to deliver the project. In total, €83,457 (Euros) is budgeted to cover the officer working 2 days a week over 42 months.

Before any expenses can be claimed back, all the project partners must sign the partnership agreement.

Not Applicable

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that:

- (a) Council notes receipt of the Letter of Offer, and following the appropriate legal scrutiny, approves the signing of the partnership agreement which is expected imminently.
- (b) Council Officers proceed to begin the recruitment process for a part time Project Officer to deliver the project.

<b>Minutes of the Bangor City Advisory Meeting</b>	
<b>Date: 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024</b> <b>Time: 4pm</b> <b>Location: Craig Room, Bangor City Hall</b>	
<b>Attendees</b>	<p>(Chair) Councillor Craig Blaney - Ards and North Down Borough Council  Mayor, Councillor Alastair Cathcart - Ards and North Down Borough Council  Councillor Wesley Irvine - Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Anton Cozzo – Head of Regeneration, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Carly McMullan – Rural Development Manager, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Sonia Logan – Assistant Regeneration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Calum Symington – Administration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Jacqueline Harte – Communications Manager, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Jonny Bettes – Parks and Cemeteries Development Manager, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Ciara McKenna – Business Client Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Stephen Gardiner – Section Engineer, Department for Infrastructure</p> <p>Marianne Kennerly – Boom Studios  Frank Shivers – Bangor Chamber of Trade  Jim Russell – Kilcooley Community Forum  Julie-Ann Skinner – Youth Representative  Phillip McMillan – Faith Representative</p>
<b>Item 1</b>	<b>Welcome</b>
	Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
<b>Item 2</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
	Apologies were received from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Councillor Alex Harbinson, Ards and North Down Borough Council</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Councillor Chris McCracken, Ards and North Down Borough Council</li><li>- Niall McVitty, Department for Infrastructure</li><li>- Alison Blayney, Bangor Chamber of Trade</li></ul>																					
Item 3	Declarations of Interest																					
	No Declarations of Interest were received at this time.																					
Item 4	Minutes and Actions from the previous meeting, 05 August 2024 (Please refer to Appendix 001)																					
	<p>The minutes of the previous meeting, 05 August 2024, were agreed as an accurate account of the meeting content.</p> <p>Chair read out the actions from the previous minutes:</p> <table><tr><th>Action</th><th>Lead</th><th>Outcome</th></tr><tr><td>Feedback on Sunday Trading Hours to be sent to Regeneration by 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024</td><td>CAG Members</td><td>Actioned, Completed</td></tr><tr><td>John McConnell to be invited to attend the next meeting of the Advisory Group to provide an update on Ward Park</td><td>Regeneration</td><td>Actioned, On Agenda</td></tr><tr><td>Regeneration Communications Manager to be invited to the next meeting of the Advisory Group to provide an update on the Bangor Waterfront Scheme.</td><td>Regeneration</td><td>Actioned, On Agenda</td></tr><tr><td>Regular updates to be provided to the group during the forming of the Local Action Group</td><td>Regeneration</td><td>Actioned, On Agenda</td></tr><tr><td>F Shivers to liaise with businesses regarding loading bays outside shops and their usage</td><td>F Shivers</td><td>To update at meeting</td></tr><tr><td>Chamber to submit letter of support to change of</td><td>Chamber</td><td>To update at meeting</td></tr></table>	Action	Lead	Outcome	Feedback on Sunday Trading Hours to be sent to Regeneration by 19 <sup>th</sup> August 2024	CAG Members	Actioned, Completed	John McConnell to be invited to attend the next meeting of the Advisory Group to provide an update on Ward Park	Regeneration	Actioned, On Agenda	Regeneration Communications Manager to be invited to the next meeting of the Advisory Group to provide an update on the Bangor Waterfront Scheme.	Regeneration	Actioned, On Agenda	Regular updates to be provided to the group during the forming of the Local Action Group	Regeneration	Actioned, On Agenda	F Shivers to liaise with businesses regarding loading bays outside shops and their usage	F Shivers	To update at meeting	Chamber to submit letter of support to change of	Chamber	To update at meeting
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	on-street parking restrictions		
	<p><b>Action 5</b> F Shivers advised that conversations were ongoing and he would update the group at the next meeting</p> <p><b>Action 6</b> F Shivers advised he had submitted a letter to A Cozzo in support of the change of on street parking restrictions</p>		
<b>Item 5</b>	<b>Information Sharing – Ards and North Down Borough Council</b>		
	<p><b>Ward Park Scheme</b> J Bettes provided an update to the group on the Ward Park Environmental Improvement Scheme-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- £5.5M has been allocated to restore Ward Park</li> <li>- Appointment of contractor – in progress</li> <li>- Consultation has been carried out with users of the park- 100 surveys had been received from a consultation held at the library</li> <li>- Citizen Space is also being used for feedback</li> <li>- Scheme includes upgrades to pathways, waterways</li> <li>- Play Park is being moved to tennis court area</li> <li>- £550k of funding is coming from Place and Prosperity funding</li> <li>- £160,000 to install dementia friendly garden in place of park</li> <li>- Small building at the park is becoming a community hub</li> <li>- There is a submission for bandstand area - this will improve lighting, pathways and install electric outlets in the band stand</li> <li>- Scheme is progressing well with the play park and garden expected completion before March 2025</li> </ul> <p>Mayor A Cathcart asked how the lighting system at the bandstand will be managed. J Bettes replied that the lights will tie into the entire park lighting system which can be dimmed manually or on a schedule.</p> <p>F Shivers asked how long the bandstand work will carry on for, specifically if works would continue through to Summer 2025. J Bettes replied that the work will be phased and may go on until winter 2025 but it won't affect any planned music/events.</p> <p>F Shivers asked since events can't be held in Queen's Parade next year due to works, could events be held in Ward Park.</p>		

	<p>J Bettes replied that none of the works planned affect the gravel/football pitch areas so they will still be available.</p> <p><b>Bangor Waterfront Project</b></p> <p>J Harte provided an update to the group on the Bangor Waterfront Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 10 year project</li> <li>- 5 key areas – Pickie Family Fun Park, Marina, Public Realm, Court House Part 2 and Ballyholme Yacht Club.</li> <li>- WH Stevens have been appointed for the design of Ballyholme Yacht Club (BYC)</li> <li>- McCanns have been appointed for the design for Pickie Family Fun Park</li> <li>- Five design teams need appointed, each set of documents require approval by CPD</li> <li>- The next two tenders are due out early next year, 2025</li> <li>- Council is hoping to see the design for BYC and Pickie soon</li> <li>- Information e-zine is issued bi-monthly</li> <li>- Bangor Marine are expected onsite in Queen's Parade in January 2025 – this is separate to the Bangor Waterfront Project</li> <li>- Vinyls are to be installed at TK Maxx site and the hoarding at Queen's Parade for key messaging</li> <li>- Bangor Marine may take a unit on Main Street as an info hub for the project</li> <li>- Regeneration Team are looking at the possibility of a future vacancy/ dereliction scheme similar to Belfast City Council Vacant to Vibrant scheme</li> <li>- Want to lift the vacant look from Bangor as a whole</li> <li>- A proposal is to install permanent interpretation signage</li> </ul> <p>Six interpretive signs are to be installed in the six areas of the project. The signs will include metal work that can withstand the elements. A brief is being worked up for design consultation. The artwork will include changeable information panel. It is hoped it will create a walking trail throughout the project area.</p> <p>F Shivers noted that no communications had been received from Bangor Marine yet and none of the traders know anything.</p> <p>J Harte advised there is a team from Bangor Marine to carry out engagement.</p> <p>C McMullan advised a press release was issued from Bangor Marine last week, a copy was sent to all members of the Advisory Group early this week.</p> <p>F Shivers noted some issues around car parking information.</p> <p>J Harte replied that communications are being prepared for issue in December, this will inform of alternative car parking.</p>
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	<p>F Shivers enquired if Council had approached Flagship centre for parking and noted that the Chamber had approached the owner regarding renting the car park. J Harte stated she was not sure if the car park was structurally sound.</p> <p>F Shivers asked if there was an expression of interest to develop the Court House and noted there was a building attached which was to be included in the renovations.</p> <p>J Harte replied that the Council are examining alternatives as the owner doesn't want to sell the building. F Shivers queried if Council are planning to vest the property. J Harte advised this may be a potential option as this was part of the Court House development.</p> <p>F Shivers noted that Wolsey's Bar had open space available, why could they not apply to get funding. J Harte explained that Court House was part of BRCD as it brings in arts and culture to Bangor.</p> <p>Mayor A Cathcart stated that the Council needs to make sure communication is good with the businesses and that it is worthwhile checking on the flagship options. DfC need to be pushed to ensure support for businesses and that the messaging is that the city is open. The history and information signs are interesting to inform about the waterfront.</p> <p>Mayor A Cathcart asked how to get signage for car parks. J Harte advised that new signage has been installed in the town centre car parks which directs users to the next available car park. A flyer with map will also be produced. C McMullan added that the initiative is being supported by DfC</p> <p>A Cozzo noted that the Council had explored the possibility of digital signage, however the cost benefit analysis was not favourable and the cost could not be met from any existing budgets.</p> <p>J Russell enquired what was happening in the closed car park at Pickie. J Harte advised that Bangor Marine are installing ornamental gardens.</p> <p>F Shivers asked what was holding Bangor Marine back. J Harte replied it was the final legal agreement.</p> <p>J Russell stated he believed Queen's Parade was the landside.</p>
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	<p>J Harte clarified Queen's Parade locations and Bangor Waterfront locations and noted that Marine Gardens will be handed back to Council once complete, at this stage Bangor Marine will then move to the landside section of the project.</p> <p>F Shivers enquired if the contractor has a time stipulation with penalties for slippage. J Harte replied that they do have a time constraint and there is already background work ongoing to ensure success.</p> <p>Mayor A Cathcart stated that we need to animate the area as much as possible. F Shivers noted that he thought the design process would include animation.</p> <p>A Cozzo advised that a planning application had been submitted for a temporary car park at the former Project 24 site.</p> <p>Chair stated that the number one priority is that traders are supported, there will be a lot of building work and mess so people may avoid the area. The Council need to work with businesses and the Chamber to determine branding. The new car park is great, but we need communications to push that Bangor is still open. Potential for a shop/support local scheme.</p> <p>M Kennerly enquired if there were any discussions around a shop front grant scheme. C McMullan replied that the former shopfront scheme was part of a revitalisation programme funded by the DfC, stating that DfC are providing support city wide under the Urban Regeneration Scheme.</p> <p>F Shivers asked what happens if Bangor Marine don't carry out communications. J Harte stated that Council can only do so much but happy to put business updates in the e-zine for shop local etc.</p> <p><b>Action: J Harte to follow up with Bangor Marine Communications team.</b></p> <p><b>Go Succeed Programme</b> C McKenna provided an update to the group on the Go Succeed Programme (<i>Appendix A</i>)</p> <p>Mayor A Cathcart stated that there are many good stories about Bangor businesses.</p> <p>C McKenna provided an update to the group on the Labour Market Partnership on behalf of Nicola Webster-Pickett (<i>Appendix B</i>)</p>
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	<p>Mayor A Cathcart asked if any of the information provided could go in the e-zine. J Harte replied that it is mainly waterfront communication, but a note could be added.</p> <p>C McKenna advised that Economic Development also have an e-zine, a central grant website and are trying to get more businesses on the e-zine mailing list.</p> <p>F Shivers advised he was happy to pass the e-zine to all members.</p> <p><b>J Harte, J Bettes and C McKenna left 17:06</b></p>
<b>Item 6</b>	<b>Information Sharing – Department for Infrastructure</b>
	<p>S Gardiner advised that there was an additional £40M allocated to DfI of which he is hoping to get £1M, it will likely be used in rural areas because they are quicker to deliver than urban areas.</p> <p>Discussion was raised around a planted area that had been damaged by cars several times on the Donaghadee Road.</p> <p>S Gardiner advised that there was new “reflectakerb” which could help increase visibility of the area.</p> <p>Mayor A Cathcart complimented DfI on their recent work at Castle Park, stating that it was vital.</p> <p>Mayor A Cathcart noted an issue with public realm works being dug up and not sufficiently repaired.</p> <p>F Shivers advised that NIE had dug up outside the old bank on Main Street.</p> <p>S Gardiner advised that public realm paving materials were being transported to DfI Balloo depot. NIE had been told they have to source the materials to replace. The granite can be removed in one piece and then replaced and DfI need to be enforcing the repairs more thoroughly. A Cozzo advised he had been made aware of some similar issues raised by Elected Members and had raised this with S Gardiner directly who had been helpful in providing a response.</p> <p>A Cathcart thanked DfI for cutting street trees back as requested but noted that some of them are missing.</p> <p>S Gardiner replied that it was down to constraints in budget but that he was working with J Bettes to replace them with suitable trees.</p>

<b>Item 7</b>	<b>Bangor Local Action Group Proposal (Please refer to Appendix 002)</b>
	<p>Local Action Group proposal circulated to group (Appendix 002)</p> <p>Chair asked what way the budget will be split as it needs to be pro-rata per population which is fair.</p> <p>A Cozzo stated that after careful consideration, and with the assistance of each LAG Regeneration Officer, and the Support Unit, a Capital Budget for each LAG could empower the group to progress with existing or future projects. Any budget for the LAG is subject to approval as part of the rate setting process to be confirmed in February / March 2025.</p> <p>Regeneration have tendered for the Stakeholder Mapping exercise suggested in the proposal. This exercise is aimed at ensuring the appropriate representation of various demographics within each LAG and therefore maximising its potential beneficial impact.</p> <p>Mayor A Cathcart noted that he liked the support structure to give more accountability, Ballyholme and Rathmore both have commercial area which DfC funding does not cover.</p> <p>F Shivers suggested that budget is required otherwise the group will remain the same as present.</p> <p>Chair thanked the regeneration team for their hard work.</p> <p>A Cozzo stated that if the LAG proposals were approved by the C/TAGs a report would be brought to Committee seeking approval to launch the LAGs in Spring/Summer 2025</p>
<b>Item 8</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>
	<p><b>City Signage Proposal (Please refer to Appendix 003)</b> Agreed: To include "By the Sea" on signage</p> <p><b>Action: Wayfinding strategy to be sent to J Russell</b></p> <p>J Russell suggested replacing "Town Centre" with "City Centre" on any signage. S Gardiner replied that they are being replaced as and when it is required.</p> <p><b>Nomination of Representative for Coastal Path Working Group (Please refer to Appendix 004)</b> F Shivers is already on the group and will report back to CAG.</p>

	<p><b>Nomination of Representative for Neighbourhood Tourism Group (Please refer to Appendix 005)</b> Bangor Chamber of Trade is putting forward representation.</p> <p><b>Lamp Post Banners</b> C McMullan advised funding had been secured by DfC under the Urban Regeneration Programme for lamp post banners. It is hoped the banners will be in situ April 2025. Due to the timing of the next meeting, it is proposed the design is circulated to the group via email for feedback</p> <p><b>Action: Regeneration to provide lamp post banner design to group via email when available for feedback</b></p>
<b>Item 9</b>	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>
	<p><b>To be confirmed</b></p> <p><b>Meeting finished 17:39</b></p>

# Appendices



Minutes of the Bangor City Advisory Meeting	
<p><b>Date: 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024</b>  <b>Time: 4pm</b>  <b>Location: Craig Room, Bangor City Hall</b></p>	
<b>Attendees</b>	<p>Chair, Councillor Craig Blaney - Ards and North Down Borough Council  Mayor, Councillor Alistair Cathcart - Ards and North Down Borough Council  Councillor Chris McCracken - Ards and North Down Borough Council  Councillor Wesley Irvine - Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Susie McCullough – Chief Executive, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Anton Cozzo – Head of Regeneration, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Carly McMullan – Rural Development Manager, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Sonia Logan – Assistant Regeneration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Calum Symington – Administration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Richard McCracken – Head of Regulatory Services, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Nicola Dorrian – Head of Community and Culture, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Niall McVitty – Deputy Director, Department for Communities</p> <p>Stephen Gardiner – Section Engineer, Department for Infrastructure</p> <p>Marianne Kennerly – Boom Studios  Alison Blayney – Bangor Chamber of Trade  Frank Shivers – Bangor Chamber of Trade  Jim Russell – Kilcooley Community Forum</p> <p>Robby Milhench – Bangor Marine  Warren Wright – Bangor Marine</p> <p>Chief Inspector Hutchinson – PSNI</p>

<b>Item 1</b>	<b>Welcome</b>
	Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
<b>Item 2</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
	Apologies were received from: Julie-Ann Skinner – Youth Representative Phillip McMillan – Faith Representative
<b>Item 3</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
	No Declarations of Interest were received at this time.
<b>Item 4</b>	<b>Update on recent incidents in Bangor city centre – Chief Inspector Hutchinson, PSNI *IN CONFIDENCE*</b>
	<p>Chief Inspector Hutchinson provided an update to the group on recent incidents in Bangor City Centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PSNI received suggestion of a protest being organised via WhatsApp</li> <li>- Resourcing was put in place</li> <li>- PSNI conducting community and business liaison</li> <li>- Protest started at Brunswick Road &amp; Abbey Street junction</li> <li>- Diversions were put in place for traffic</li> <li>- At 12:40pm the protest moved spontaneously towards the Marine Court Hotel</li> <li>- PSNI continue engagement with the Hotel and the Home Office</li> <li>- Protest involved approximately 200 people</li> <li>- Protest remained in place for approx. 5 minutes outside the hotel</li> <li>- No further violence or damage</li> <li>- Suggestion of a further protest, expected on Friday 09 August</li> <li>- Awareness of other peaceful protests in Belfast</li> <li>- The situation is subject to investigation</li> <li>- Additional patrolling has been organised around sites</li> <li>- Some incidents of graffiti have been noted in Bangor</li> <li>- PSNI are supporting victims</li> <li>- The protests are very spontaneous, no clear leadership</li> <li>- May be increased numbers</li> </ul>

	<p>Mayor, Councillor A Cathcart asked who the leadership of the protests were and who gave the speech outside the Marine Court Hotel. Chief Inspector Hutchinson replied that it appeared to be those involved in the regular weekly protest. The speech was short and was currently being reviewed to ensure there were no offences committed.</p> <p>Mayor, Councillor A Cathcart queried if there were any banners of concern. Chief Inspector Hutchinson replied that the banners were similar to the weekly protest banners and that there was a high threshold for criminal offences.</p> <p>Mayor, Councillor A Cathcart advised that it was a difficult balance, commenting that everyone has a right to protest but it needs to be notified correctly. Chief Inspector Hutchinson added that the procession needs to be notified to allow for road closures etc.</p> <p>Mayor, Councillor A Cathcart wished to pass on his thanks to the officers on the ground for their work.</p> <p>Councillor W Irvine thanked Chief Inspector Hutchinson for the update and asked if the PSNI would make the public aware if they are committing an offence. Chief Inspector Hutchinson replied that the PSNI work with organisers but on this occasion the protest was spontaneous, and it was not clear if there was an organiser.</p> <p>Councillor W Irvine stated that there was genuine concern in the community about immigration and asked if there had been any issues with cars being stopped. Chief Inspector Hutchinson replied that diversions were put in place once the road was blocked, the junction was blocked for a short time.</p> <p>Councillor W Irvine advised that the speech has been broadcasted and it appeared peaceful.</p> <p>Councillor C McCracken raised concern regarding the attacks on asylum seekers and asked what actions are being taken to protect the hotel users and businesses. Chief Inspector Hutchinson stated there was advice in place for the hotel staff and residents and the PSNI continue liaison. Chief Inspector Hutchinson advised if any businesses are aware of threat they are advised to contact the PSNI.</p> <p>Chair asked if the PSNI are in contact with UK police forces. Chief Inspector Hutchinson replied that they are sharing information with the UK which filters down to local level. There is representation from the PSNI at national level and PSNI are very aware of business, hotel and mosque attacks.</p>
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	<p>Chair enquired if UK police forces are expecting these protests to be ongoing. Chief Inspector Hutchinson advised that they were looking at tactics of groups which are moving across towns and cities.</p> <p>M Kennerley asked if the town centre CCTV is active. Chief Inspector Hutchinson replied that the council operated CCTV is working, additionally businesses own CCTV and social media is being monitored.</p> <p><b>Chief Inspector Hutchinson left 16:25</b></p>
<b>Item 5</b>	<p><b>Update on Queen's Parade Development – Robby Milhench, Bangor Marine *IN CONFIDENCE*</b></p>
	<p>R Milhench provided an update to the group on behalf of Bangor Marine regarding the Queen's Parade Development.</p> <p>R Milhench advised the development will be delivered in 4no Phases. Phase 1 is Marine Gardens and is expected to commence onsite early October 2024 (subject to outstanding issues – Crown Estates and Planning Consultee replies). All pre-planning conditions have been submitted to planning.</p> <p>Phase 1 is a 56-week programme with estimated completion in November 2025.</p> <p>R Milhench provided an overview of Phase 1 and informed of amendments to the design – 1. Natural play park replaced with Tier 1 playpark, and 2. Water feature replaced by Colin Davidson art installation. R Milhench informed it should be noted the play park will form a separate planning application.</p> <p>R Milhench informed a Marketing and Communications Strategy is being developed to ensure effective stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>F Shivers enquired how the additional Levelling Up funding had been allocated, requesting detail on the changes from the initial design to the current design. S McCullough explained that a tier one play park had been added instead of the natural play area, W Wright added the additional funding made the scheme affordable and possible due to increased interest rates and inflation costs.</p> <p>F Shivers stated that Bangor Marine tendered for the gardens at a cost but now it is costing an additional £9.8m which is significantly higher.</p>

	<p>R Milhench explained that design and detail plus increased specification of seating and play park all increased the cost.</p> <p>Mayor, Councillor A Cathcart asked what the plans were for the pavilions, would they be leased or Council owned. S McCullough informed Marine Gardens will be returned to Council excluding the pods and pavilions (these will be leased by Bangor Marine).</p> <p>Chair enquired the expected clientele. R Milhench advised that he sees it as family-oriented which could include higher end restaurants with all day and late evening dining.</p> <p>Mayor, Councillor A Cathcart asked if any planting was included. R Milhench replied that the Council and Bangor Marine have worked a design that enhances the view of the marina and enhances the overall area, including significant planting.</p> <p>Mayor, Councillor A Cathcart noted that the Bangor public realm scheme is hard to keep clean and asked would it be an easily maintained material. R Milhench replied that proposals have/ will be agreed with Council in this regard.</p> <p>Councillor C McCracken stated there was a loss of confidence, the project was due to start in September 2023 and now it is expected more than a year later and asked if there was more insight into the marketing and communication strategies. R Milhench advised he is aware of the public opinion and advised Bangor Marine hope to be on site in October 2024 and are doing everything possible to ensure this happens with a number of hurdles to work through.</p> <p>F Shivers stated that while there may be disruption, clear concise information would help people work around it. R Milhench added that the Bangor Marine are working up a public communications plan which will explain what is going to happen and when. This will include a number of communication tools including 90m of hoarding which is to be erected and they are expecting to engage with local artists to develop a consistent message.</p> <p>Chair enquired why the proposed July start date was missed. R Milhench replied that there were several reasons including discharge of planning conditions but that he was happy to stand up and explain if any slippage to dates does occur.</p> <p>W Wright added that Bangor Marine did underestimate what had to be done but they are now down to one or two items to sort, and they are close to finalising these, including the pre-planning conditions.</p>
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	<p>N McVitty noted that the NIEA consultation is due to complete on 22<sup>nd</sup> August</p> <p>Chair asked if Bangor Marine could communicate with elected members if there were any delays. Elected members will be kept up to date via Bangor Marine and Council communications.</p> <p>J Russell noted that a few years ago a consultant came over and talked to the group about explore and engage, the use of the building being under Bangor Marine is a cause for worry that it becomes commercial instead of a new centre. Chair advised that the Council still own the land for events etc. S McCullough added that it includes two areas of gardens that will be handed back to Council.</p> <p>F Shivers asked if Council would lease the area from the developer. S McCullough replied that Council leases the land from Crown Estates and are giving a license to the developer to undertake the works, following which the land will pass back to the Council.</p> <p><b>R Milhench and W Wright left 17:13</b></p>
<b>Item 6</b>	<p><b>Update on Civic Office Rationalisation Project - Susie McCullough, Chief Executive, ANDBC *IN CONFIDENCE*</b></p>
	<p>S McCullough provided an update to the group on the Civic Office Rationalisation Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Currently there is 400 office-based staff in ANDBC</li> <li>- 13 buildings included in estate</li> <li>- 1 building will house all staff</li> <li>- Seven sites had been agreed to be assessed across Bangor and Newtownards</li> <li>- Bangor was recommended as there was no suitable site in Newtownards</li> <li>- South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust may wish to purchase the Church Street offices</li> <li>- The Signal Centre is likely to be sold</li> <li>- A consultant will be appointed to look at options for the future use of the City Hall</li> <li>- A consultant will be appointed to look at where the museum should be, if it should be included in the new building or separate</li> <li>- Additionally where should Visitor Information Centres be situated</li> <li>- Newtownards Citizen Hub is still ongoing</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Queen's Hall is to be demolished for new theatre / arts space including a new library</li> <li>- SIB have been procured to look at financial modelling of sites in Bangor</li> <li>- Civic building to house public sector partners in addition to Council staffing</li> </ul> <p>Projected Timeline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Financial modelling to be carried out this year</li> <li>- Early 2025 to procure ICT team, appointment late 2025</li> <li>- Planning submission in 2026</li> <li>- Contractor appointment 2027</li> <li>- Move into building 2028/29</li> </ul> <p>Chair enquired if a location had been decided yet. S McCullough replied that two preferred sites were currently being reviewed. The former Flagship Centre or Queen's Parade.</p> <p>J Russell stated that this was very good news for Bangor.</p> <p>F Shivers noted that timescales involved may exclude the former Flagship Centre as it is currently up for sale. S McCullough replied that the Council are looking at it with LPS and SIB. It is hoped that if someone buys it then they will work with the Council.</p> <p>S McCullough added a car park study is also being completed currently which will look at the existing car park, the interim parking (during Queen's Parade development) and future parking.</p> <p>A Blayney asked if there were any caveats on disposing of the City Hall. S McCullough replied that Council owns the City Hall, but it is a Grade 1 Listed Building.</p> <p><b>S McCullough left 17:29</b></p>
<b>Item 7</b>	<b>Sunday Opening Proposal (<i>copy circulated</i>) - Richard McCracken, Head of Regulatory Services, ANDBC *IN CONFIDENCE*</b>
	R McCracken shared an update on a proposal to designate Bangor and Newtownards as seasonal towns to allow an increase in Sunday opening hours (please refer to Appendix 1)

	<p>R McCracken advised that he was inviting feedback to allow him to put a report to the Environment Committee. It is an opportunity to increase turnover and the legislation change would apply until it was removed.</p> <p>F Shivers stated that the Chamber had looked at this 7/8 years ago, small independents were not interested, however from a business and tourist perspective there were no objections. F Shivers commented he was hopeful that it would bring an uptick in trading but queried if it would preclude shops from applying for any funding.</p> <p>R McCracken replied that he was not aware of any funding it would affect.</p> <p>Mayor, Councillor A Cathcart stated his main concern is that it was only one retailer requesting it.</p> <p>F Shivers stated that in Ballyholme the Co-Op already opens early, and the proposal would pull people away.</p> <p>The Chamber will consult its members for feedback.</p> <p>R McCracken thanked F Shivers and stated that it would not be all Sundays. Retailers would need to specify which Sundays they thought were appropriate. Liaison with the unions will also be required to look at the effect on staff.</p> <p>Chair noted that he was worried smaller shops would feel pressured to open but it is worthwhile asking the question.</p> <p>Mayor, Councillor A Cathcart stated that Council had relaxed the rules during COVID and he does not remember there being any issues.</p> <p>M Kennerly asked if the legislation would also apply to markets.</p> <p>R McCracken replied that the legislation only affects shops under 280 sq. ft and markets would not be affected.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Feedback to be sent to regeneration by 19 August 2024</b></p> <p><b>R McCracken left 17:40</b></p>
<b>Item 8</b>	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting 7 March 2024 (<i>copy circulated</i>)</b>
	<p>The minutes of the previous meeting, 07 March 2024 were agreed as an accurate reflection.</p> <p>Proposed by Frank Shivers, seconded by Councillor W Irvine.</p>
<b>Item 9</b>	<b>Review of Actions from previous meeting</b>
	S Logan provided an update on the actions from the previous meeting:



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. John McConnell to be invited to attend the next meeting of the Advisory Group to provide an update on Ward Park Due to the full agenda, it is proposed that this is delayed to the next meeting.</li> <li>2. Mayor, Councillor A Cathcart to provide S Gardiner with the issue locations re bins being left in situ</li> <li>3. Regeneration Communications Manager to be invited to the next meeting of the Advisory Group to provide an update on the Bangor Waterfront Scheme. Due to the full agenda, it is proposed that this is delayed to the next meeting.</li> <li>4. Parking to be added to future agendas. NOTED.</li> </ol>
<b>Item 10</b>	<b>Update and Information from Dfl – Stephen Gardiner, Section Engineer, Dfl</b>
	<p>S Gardiner stated that budgets had now been released and were as expected. £3.1M for the Borough with £1.9M for re-surfacing. Two schemes were to be completed in Bangor, Clandeboye Road and Castle Park Road. This represents a spend of £730,000 for Bangor out of the £1.9 million while also completing other tasks including weed spraying and gully cleaning.</p> <p>S Gardiner advised a bid was submitted last week for an additional £400,000 for pot hole repair. Additionally, a paper has been submitted to the Minister for Infrastructure to return to full pothole repair policy within a year, to include a 6-month reporting period.</p> <p>Councillor C McCracken asked if the twice yearly gully cleaning is to return. S Gardiner invited councillors to write to the Minister to support.</p> <p>Mayor, Councillor A Cathcart queried if gulleys are cleaned when cars are parked above them. S Gardiner replied that the gully cleaning teams work early, over lunch, Saturdays and Sundays to try and avoid the majority of cars being parked over gulleys but it is a common problem across the country.</p> <p>Mayor, Councillor A Cathcart queried if smaller vehicles may be of more use. S Gardiner replied that they are not ideal as they cannot hold an appropriate amount of water to allow the team to work for longer periods of time before having to refill.</p>

	<p>Mayor, Councillor A Cathcart commended S Gardiner on his work and stated he had been very helpful.</p> <p>J Russell also commended the contractors on the ground for being helpful and accommodating.</p>
<b>Item 11</b>	<b>Local Action Group Proposal</b>
	<p>A Cozzo introduced himself and thanked everyone for help in completing the review of the Advisory Group.</p> <p>A Cozzo advised a draft report had been received from the Consultants which Council Officers were currently reviewing. A Cozzo provided a summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advisory Group to become a Local Action Group</li> <li>- The main aim is to maximise the benefit of the group</li> <li>- There is a real appetite for more input</li> <li>- Want to see more action</li> <li>- Budget required for the delivery of the masterplan (Regeneration will support a budget request to Council)</li> <li>- Local Action Group to be supported by a Support Unit comprising of representation from all Actions Groups across the towns and city</li> <li>- Next step is a group mapping exercise in each of the towns and city to identify key stakeholders and ensure the correct representation for each group</li> </ul> <p>Chair stated there was no point re-inventing the wheel, the group need guidance on what the action group would do.</p> <p>A Cozzo stated that the proposal would be presented to Council in early 2025 with the aim of the group commencing in April 2025.</p> <p>Chair asked how projects for the group would be determined.</p> <p>C McMullan replied that the main focus of the group is the delivery of the Masterplan.</p> <p>J Russell advised that his main concern was that by becoming an action group it would be taking over someone else's job.</p> <p>Chair agreed stating that we cannot take budget off parks then spend money to plant flowers, it needs to be new money. However, it is a good idea to give the group some "teeth" and asked if the group can roll the budget to build up a larger pot.</p>

	<p>F Shivers advised that the budget would have to be in the hundreds of thousands to be able to do anything with it.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Regular updates to be provided to the group during the forming of the Local Action Group.</b></p>
<b>Item 12</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>
	<p><b>Urban Regeneration Programme 2024-2025</b></p> <p>A Cozzo explained that the DfC informed the Council of a potential funding opportunity. The Council submitted an application for a range of urban regeneration projects at a total value of £373K (£335,700 funding and £37,200 Council contribution)</p> <p>N McVitty advised that the application has been approved and a Contract for Funding would be released to Council in the coming days.</p> <p>A Cozzo stated that there were three main elements included in the application.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Animation</li> <li>2. Connectivity</li> <li>3. Place Making</li> </ol> <p>A range of projects were proposed for Bangor to include lamppost banners, signage, window dressing of vacant business units, upgrade to car park at the Vennel, footfall counters etc.</p> <p>Mayor, Councillor A Cathcart stated that it was good Regeneration had acquired this funding, Chair congratulated the Regeneration Team.</p> <p>Mayor, Councillor A Cathcart also thanked N McVitty and DfC for their efforts.</p> <p>C McMullan explained that budget was to be spent across the borough.</p> <p>Councillor C McCracken queried if there was any smart technology included that could track dwell time. A Cozzo explained that we were working with the supplier who can provide real time cloud-based updates. N McVitty explained that this would allow Regeneration to build a pattern of movement.</p> <p><b>City Centre On-street Parking Restrictions</b></p>

	<p>A Cozzo asked the group for feedback on moving from 1-hour on-street parking restrictions to 2-hour.</p> <p>F Shivers explained that the five chambers have consulted and had all agreed this was wanted.</p> <p>S Gardiner asked what the chambers thoughts were around loading bays.</p> <p>S Gardiner advised a change to legislation can take approx. 6-8months.</p> <p><b>ACTION: F Shivers to liaise with businesses regarding loading bays outside shops and their usage.</b></p> <p><b>ACTION: Chamber to submit letter of support to change of on-street parking restrictions</b></p> <p><b>Parklets</b></p> <p>A Cozzo explained that planning permission for the parklets expires next year and requested feedback on locations and use. Chair asked what the default position was, A Cozzo replied that it would be to leave them as they currently are.</p> <p>Mayor, Councillor A Cathcart stated that they were working well but questioned who was responsible for cleaning them.</p> <p>C McMullan stated that they are deep cleaned 2/3 times a year by an external contractor and maintained by the Property and Assets Department.</p> <p>F Shivers stated that he had spoken to Stephen Daye and had encouraged businesses to maintain them.</p> <p><b>Agreed: Parklets to remain in current locations</b></p> <p>Councillor A Cathcart noted that the planting in the parklets was not great. F Shivers noted that the chamber was speaking to the Parks Department about the chamber planting and maintaining them.</p> <p><b>Wayfinding Strategy (<i>copy circulated</i>)</b></p> <p>A Cozzo asked for the group's thoughts on the proposed Wayfinding Strategy.</p> <p>Councillor C McCracken thought it reflected the city well and likes the colour coding.</p>
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	<p>F Shivers asked if any of the DfC funding was to be allocated to wayfinding. A Cozzo replied that it would not be at this stage.</p> <p>F Shivers stated that it should be integrated with the new Queen's Parade development signage.</p> <p>J Russell advised that The Wild Atlantic Way uses one symbol for clarity and continuity.</p> <p><b>Dereliction/ Vacancy Scheme</b></p> <p>A Blayney raised a query regarding a scheme like 'Vacant to Vibrant'. A Cozzo explained that Lisburn had created an 'Empty to Occupied' and officers have been engaging on further detail/ learning. A Cozzo advised there is currently no available budget but the team continue to look at this scheme.</p> <p>Chair asked about a timeline. C McMullan replied that it will not be this fiscal year.</p> <p>Mayor, Councillor A Cathcart stated that he felt it was best to make bigger units into more smaller units.</p> <p><b>Lower Main Street Appearance</b></p> <p>J Russell raised an issue with barriers outside the former Flagship Centre and former B&amp;M entrances which are filled with litter, additionally Queen's Parade was untidy where Project 24 had been removed.</p> <p>N McVitty advised that the former B&amp;M store was DfC owned, and he was not aware, but he will look into this alongside Queen's Parade.</p> <p>F Shivers suggested using it as a car park. N McVitty noted that it was already part of the proposal from Regeneration. C McMullan clarified that this referred to the unofficial car park at Queen's Parade.</p>
<b>Item 13</b>	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>
	<p>The date of the next meeting will be issued (October/November)</p> <p>Meeting finished 18:35</p>



# Local Action Groups



## Background

In 2023 Ards and North Down Borough Council appointed consultants, The Paul Hogarth Company, and Place Solutions, to undertake a review of the existing City/Town Advisory Groups. The review aimed to assess the effectiveness, composition, structure, and function of the Advisory Groups in order to identify areas for improvement and provide recommendations for enhancing their overall performance and impact.

The review process was carried out in five stages:

1. Review of NI and Local Policy and Strategic Context
2. Research into other approaches and best practice in the UK and Ireland
3. Online Survey
4. Workshop with Council Officers and Advisory Groups
5. Recommendations

The independent review of the Advisory Groups has identified the need for change. Through a series of focused amendments to the Advisory Group structure and processes, the groupings could become increasingly effective and play a greater role in the respective settlement.

The following 5 principles summarise the proposed role of the groups going forward:

1. A **positive** force for our city or town
2. A **two-way communication** hub for all things in relation to our city or town, so that information can be shared and disseminated.
3. City/ town **specific thinking** – strategy development and advice drawn on local knowledge and experience.
4. **Positive** change – advancing actions.
5. **Championing** our town or city – speaking up for our place and its people, promoting its attributes and potential for investment.

## Key Recommendations

- ✓ Advisory Groups to transform to **Local Action Groups**.
- ✓ **Local Action Group Support Unit** to be established.



**Proposed Local Action Group Structure**



A **Town/ City Local Action Group** will be established for each city/town with an overarching **Local Action Group Support Unit**.

**Local Action Group Support Unit**

1. The Local Action Group Support Unit will be made up of key departments within Council including Regeneration, Community Planning, Economic Development and Tourism, key NI Executive Departments, and the Chair of each Local Action Group.
2. The Local Action Group Support Unit has a collective responsibility for the delivery of Actions Plans established by each City/Town Local Action Group in relation to Masterplanning, community planning, placemaking and other localised issues.
3. The purpose of the Local Action Group Support Unit is to bring together representation from each City/Town to work together to promote positive change, share knowledge and expertise, and advocate for policy changes to benefit the community across the Borough.
4. The Local Action Group Support Unit will be consulted on and help to develop proposals and objectives relating to the work of the various council departments.



## City/Town Local Action Group

1. The City/Town Local Action Groups will progress/assist work in collaboration with Council officers developing a local approach to Masterplanning, community planning, placemaking and other localised issues.
2. The City/Town Local Action Groups is responsible for:
  - A clear audit of the existing masterplans/ strategies for the towns and city for all sectors
  - Key stakeholders for consulting and reporting on short-, medium-, and long-term plans and strategies which currently impact or relate to the town.
  - Mapping of current priorities, plans, programmes, and funding to address issues in the town.
  - Information and best practice sharing.
  - Disseminate discussions and actions to the groups each member represents
  - Being sustainable - social, environmental, and economic, and considering sustainability in all aspects of the work of the group.
3. The purpose of the City/Town Local Action Groups is to bring together all stakeholders to identify and work together to solve problems, promote positive change, share knowledge and expertise, and advocate for policy changes to benefit the community.
4. The City/Town Local Action Groups will be consulted on and help to develop proposals and objectives relating to the work of the various council departments.
5. The City/Town Local Action Groups structure will be determined following the delivery of a local stakeholder mapping exercise. It will include wider representation from all sectors and wider geographical coverage (extended to the boundary of the 30mph zone for each city/town).
6. The City/Town Local Action Groups will align to the recommendations set out in the Living High Street Framework, a set of guidelines and best practices for revitalising and improving High Streets. By doing so, the groups will be empowered to leverage the framework's expertise and guidance to inform their strategies and actions, ensuring that their efforts are effective, co-ordinated, and aligned with local priorities.
7. A strengthened Terms of Reference will be developed, this will provide a clear framework for the group members to work within and will reaffirm their purpose to ensure they are effective, efficient, and focused on achieving their objectives, with a focus on placemaking, investment, city/town specific vision and thinking.

In addition to the above:

1. The groups will have an annual schedule of meetings that will be on a quarterly basis. This will ensure that each group will have a set schedule, providing a structure for their activities. This will enable the group to stay focused, make progress, and maintain momentum.
2. The groups will have a dedicated webpage on the Council's website as a mechanism for enhanced communication. This will provide a platform for the public to stay informed about the group's activities, progress, and achievements. The webpage will foster transparency, engagement, collaboration, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of the Local Action Groups.
3. The Council will facilitate an Annual Conference with invited speakers on policy and best practice. This event would provide a platform for members to come together, share knowledge, and learn from one another, as well as stay updated on the latest developments in policy and practice. It would also offer an opportunity for networking, building relationships and fostering partnership working.
4. Each Group will be assigned a dedicated Council Regeneration Officer as their primary point of contact, providing a single person to communicate with and facilitating efficient communication and collaboration. This dedicated officer can help ensure that the groups needs are understood, concerns are addressed, and feedback is heard, ultimately leading to a more effective and responsive council-action group relationship.
5. Each Group will provide an Annual Report which will serve as a comprehensive overview of their activities, outputs, and outcomes from the previous year. The report will also outline the group's priorities for the upcoming year, highlighting their alignment with local and council policies. This will enable the group to track progress, monitor performance, and make informed decisions, while also ensuring accountability and transparency.
6. A Chair and Vice Chair for each group will be nominated annually, with a preference for selecting an independent chair.
7. Regeneration Officers will be responsible for reporting to the Place and Prosperity Committee of Ards and North Down Borough Council.
8. Regeneration Officers will facilitate, provide administration function, and support the independent Chair.

## Appendix 003

### Bangor City Entrance Signs: Consideration of use of 'by the Sea'

- Elected Members agreed that the Bangor 'Welcome Signs' should be updated to reflect city status. **Budget has been made available for this to be completed in the 2024-25 financial year.**
- Bangor has five entrance signs, which are in keeping with all other town gateways signs in the Borough and were funded by DfC. They reflect the brand identities for the towns that were developed with funding from DfC in 2017.
- Elected Members have agreed that new Bangor City signage design should include the updated City of Bangor logo and reference to the Platinum Jubilee.
- Two logo options have been developed –  
Option A) without the 'by the Sea' brand strapline, and  
Option B) with it.

### Option A



**Existing sign type - to be replaced**  
2 perspex panels with coloured vinyl and clear sections

**Proposed replacement sign type**  
Solid opaque panel - no transparent sections  
New city title moves up and all logos increase in size  
Repaint fixing locators and posts

## Option B



**Existing sign type - to be replaced**  
2 perspex panels with coloured vinyl and clear sections

**Proposed replacement sign type**  
Solid opaque panel - no transparent sections  
New city title moves up and all logos increase in size  
Repaint fixing locators and posts



- The 'by the Sea' strapline was agreed with the Bangor stakeholder group as part a branding exercise in 2017. At Council there were differing views on whether this should still be included, with some members thinking it was a valuable marketing tool for Bangor and enhanced the place's individuality, and others considering it to be too 'folksy' and not in keeping with a city identity; as well as being a little cluttered looking on the signs.
- It should be noted that 'by the Sea' can continue to be used as part of the overall Bangor identify, even if it is not included on the entrance signs.
- It was agreed that feedback from city representatives would be garnered on whether the entrance signs could be produced without 'by the Sea'.
- This was discussed at a meeting on the CAG, 25 March 2025 – but no specific feedback on 'by the Sea' was provided.

**OUTCOME: Group to feedback their preferred option.**

**APPENDIX 004****North Down Coastal Path Task and Finish Working Group (NDCPWG)**

In January 2023 Elected Members agreed to withdraw the planning application for the proposed Kinnegar to Donaghadee Greenway Scheme and instead to set up a Task & Finish Working Group to address issues of connectivity, access and maintenance along the North Down Coastal Path.

In September 2023, the Council agreed a Terms of Reference for this group, that included the requirement to “invite interested groups, and those with specific expertise to be represented on the Working Group”.

At the first North Down Coastal Path Task & Finish Working Group (NDCPWG) meeting in January, Officers presented proposals for external membership.

It was agreed that representative would be invited from the 3 x Town/City Advisory Groups i.e. Holywood, Bangor and Donaghadee.

The 3 representatives would regularly attend meetings on behalf of their Advisory Group and would be expected to update the Advisory Group on the work of the North Down Coastal Path Task & Finish Working Group.

The following meetings have been scheduled for the NDCPWG in 2025:

- 6 January
- 31 March
- 30 June
- October meeting (tbc)

All above meetings have been scheduled for 6pm to 9pm at the Council Chamber, Church Street Offices, Newtownards.

**Action: Nomination of a representative from the City Advisory Group**

## APPENDIX 005

### Neighbourhood Tourism Group

The Council's Tourism Team would like to work with local groups and representatives across the Borough to develop new and assist existing Neighbourhood Tourism initiatives.

Council recognises there is a huge amount of work being done by local groups in this area, with Neighbourhood Tourism integral in developing relationships between people and place, and in addition benefitting local communities economically through the involvement of the people that live there.

There have been some fantastic success stories of passionate, local groups sharing their time, skills, stories and enthusiasm with tourists visiting the place they call home. Three such examples are:

- The Kings Award winning - Friends of Grey Abbey – providing access and tours of Grey Abbey.
- Discover Groomsport – providing guided summer tours of the village and running seasonal events.
- The Sir Samuel Kelly Project – keeping the story of the historic lifeboat alive.

We wish to host a focus group on **Tuesday 3 December in Donaghadee Community Centre at 10am**, for interested representatives of such organisations to look at what practical support can be delivered by the tourism section in this area to aid such great work.

**Action: If your group would be interested, please email Judith Hammond the contact information for one representative, email [judith.hammond@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:judith.hammond@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)**

## Go Succeed update

### Service provides 3 areas of support:

- 1 Masterclasses
- 2 Mentoring
- 3 Grants

Enrolment is through go-succeed.com

There are 4 pillars a client can be assigned to:

**Engage** - 4.5 hours mentoring with a basic business plan

**Foundation** -11 hours mentoring with a more comprehensive business plan

**Growth** – 10,15 or 21 hours mentoring support to help address barriers to growth

**Scaling** – up to 28 hours mentoring and potential Signposting to Invest NI

### Clients

- Can progress through the different pillars
- LEA deliver under Engage & Foundation
- External contractor, Full Circle deliver under Growth & Scaling

### Go Succeed Participation

Go Succeed Pillar	YTD Actual
Engage	235
Foundation	46
Growth	268
Scaling	2

### Approx 42% of engage clients are BT19 and BT20 postcodes.

Approx 55% of engage clients didn't proceed past initial registration. This is due to clients not proceeding with support, putting mentoring on hold or being assigned to other pillars.

### Approx. 37% of Foundation clients are BT19 and BT20 postcodes.

### Approx. 43% of Growth clients are BT19 and BT20 postcodes

### Go Succeed Grants

The Go Succeed Grant can provide funding of up to 70% of costs for capital and/or revenue items up to a maximum grant of £4,000 and minimum of £1,000. Grants are available under the Foundation and Growth pillars and clients are eligible when they have completed at least 50% of mentoring.

Go Succeed Pillar	YTD Awarded
Engage	-
Foundation	3
Growth	50
Scaling	-





## Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership:

Nicola sends her apologies that she can't be here today but her son has an orthodontist appointment that she has waited months for- (happy if you need to let them know)

## Current Projects:

All of these academies are for residents within the borough who are unemployed, at risk of redundancy or underemployed:

**Classroom Assistant Upskilling Academy:** this has commenced with 24 participants recruited, working towards the CACHE Level 3 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning. This is due to be completed at the end of June 2025.

**Academy for People with Disabilities:** Recruitment for this academy is currently underway.

**Transport Academy:** Recruitment for this academy is currently underway.

**Employer Led Upskilling Programme-** Grants for upskilling employees up to £500 per employee up to a max of 4 employees.

**LMP Collaboration:** Working with Belfast City Council to pay for places for residents to attend academies that we are currently not providing.

## Upcoming Academies:

In the new year we will commencing the following academies:

**Work Ready Programme:** Supporting economically inactive people to develop work relevant soft skills.

**Admin Academy:** Supporting people to gain work relevant skills specifically for general admin roles.

All of these academies offer mentoring opportunities, support with interview skills, CV writing and overall support.

## Upcoming events:

**Disability Employment and Support Day- 27<sup>th</sup> November 10am-1pm. Comber Leisure Centre,** this event offers support and employment opportunities for people with a disability. Employers are welcome to come along and find out what support is available for them.

Flyers and Posters are available if anyone wants any- I have attached a copy of each one.

**Skills and Employment Support Clinic: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025 10am-1pm- Comber Leisure Centre.** This event is aimed at those who are economically inactive or on benefits and want to find out what their training and employment options are.

Flyers and Posters are available if anyone wants any- I have attached a copy of each one.

**Disability Employment and Support Day- 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025- 1pm-4pm. Aurora Aquatic and Leisure Complex,** this event offers support and employment opportunities for people with a disability. Employers are welcome to come along and find out what support is available for them

**Job Fair- March 2025.** Ards Blair Mayne Leisure Centre: The date of this event will be confirmed within the next month. This event is aimed at those looking employment opportunities as well as support and training.

Any help/ assistance in disseminating this information especially about the events would be gratefully appreciated. Please let me know how best to do this??

**Employability and Skills Registers:**

AND LMP have produced two Employability and Skills Registers – one for Employers and one for Individuals - these contain all the help and support available within the borough.

These are available to download from our website:

<https://www.andbusiness.co.uk/andlmp>

Hard copies are available and if you need any please just let me know.

T: 0300 013 3333 ext 40958

Direct Dial Number: 028 9127 8062

Mobile: 07760 373 436

[Lmp@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:Lmp@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

<b>Minutes of the Comber Town Advisory Meeting</b>	
<b>Date: 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024</b> <b>Time: 4pm</b> <b>Location: Comber Leisure Centre, Comber</b>	
<b>Attendees</b>	(Chair) Alderman Trevor Cummings – Ards and North Down Borough Council Councillor Libby Douglas – Ards and North Down Borough Council Councillor Patricia Morgan – Ards and North Down Borough Council Alderman Phillip Smyth – Ards and North Down Borough Council  Carly McMullan – Rural Development Manager, Ards and North Down Borough Council Glynis Poots – Assistant Regeneration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council Calum Symington – Administration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council Nicola Webster-Pickett – Labour Market Partnership Manager, Ards and North Down Borough Council Maura Bettes – Economic Development Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Stephen Gardiner – Section Engineer, Department for Infrastructure  Niall McVitty – Deputy Director, Department for Communities  Iris McBride – Comber Chamber of Trade Liz Hamilton – Faith Representative
<b>Item 1</b>	<b>Welcome</b>
	Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
<b>Item 2</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
	Apologies were received from:  Roy Murray – Community Representative
<b>Item 3</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
	No Declarations of Interest were received at this time.

Item 4	Minutes and actions the of previous meeting (Please refer to Appendix 001)																				
	<p>The minutes of the previous meeting, 15 August 2024, were agreed as an accurate reflection of the previous meeting</p> <p>G Poots provided an update on the previous actions</p> <table><tr><th>Action</th><th>Lead</th><th>Outcome</th></tr><tr><td>Regeneration to find out ownership of the Castle Street fence and come back to the group.</td><td>ANDBC</td><td>Castle Street site is private ownership. The previously completed works were completed under a grant scheme by the Council in agreement with the owner.  Terms as per the agreement: <i>'Upon completion of the Works the Licensor shall be responsible for the repair and maintenance of the Property and shall keep and maintain the Property in a safe and reasonable state of repair and condition'</i></td></tr><tr><td>Renew planning permission for existing location of the parklet.</td><td>ANDBC</td><td>In progress</td></tr><tr><td>Regeneration to provide update in relation to Laurel Bank area</td><td>ANDBC</td><td>Please refer to update provided by Emma Adair, Assistant Development Manager, Parks &amp; Cemeteries (<i>Appendix A</i>)</td></tr><tr><td>Contact Parks and Cemeteries regards planting in the Parklet and the weeds in the carpark</td><td>ANDBC</td><td>Reported to Parks &amp; Cemeteries</td></tr><tr><td>Group suggested we report to DFI re the entrance signage to the town hidden behind trees</td><td>ANDBC</td><td>Reported to DfI</td></tr></table>			Action	Lead	Outcome	Regeneration to find out ownership of the Castle Street fence and come back to the group.	ANDBC	Castle Street site is private ownership. The previously completed works were completed under a grant scheme by the Council in agreement with the owner.  Terms as per the agreement: <i>'Upon completion of the Works the Licensor shall be responsible for the repair and maintenance of the Property and shall keep and maintain the Property in a safe and reasonable state of repair and condition'</i>	Renew planning permission for existing location of the parklet.	ANDBC	In progress	Regeneration to provide update in relation to Laurel Bank area	ANDBC	Please refer to update provided by Emma Adair, Assistant Development Manager, Parks & Cemeteries ( <i>Appendix A</i> )	Contact Parks and Cemeteries regards planting in the Parklet and the weeds in the carpark	ANDBC	Reported to Parks & Cemeteries	Group suggested we report to DFI re the entrance signage to the town hidden behind trees	ANDBC	Reported to DfI
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	<p><b>Action 1 – Castle Street Fence</b> Chair advised he had spoken to R Murray who is seeking funding to repair the current fence and advised there is a willingness from Comber Regeneration to repair if funded.</p> <p>C McMullan advised the issue was obtaining the license agreement, funding had been in place, but the funding period had now expired.</p> <p>Councillor L Douglas asked how we move this project forward. I McBride suggested it needs to be let go.</p> <p>N McVitty stated that any grant must have the relevant permissions in place.</p> <p>I McBride asked if Comber Regeneration could pursue the project on their own with funding from “Live Here, Love Here”. Chair advised that he did not recommend but noted that R Murray has a relationship with the owner.</p> <p>Chair enquired who was responsible for any health and safety issues. C McMullan advised at the time of the works the proprietor entered an agreement whereby he was responsible for upkeep, maintenance and liability following completion of the project.</p> <p>I McBride asked should the group advise the owner the area is unsafe. It was suggested that the Council would issue a letter to the proprietor to advise the site is unsafe and prevents a health and safety concern.</p> <p><b>Action: Regeneration to liaise with Environmental Health re the safety of the site.</b></p> <p><b>Action 3 – Laurel Bank</b> G Poots read out update from Emma Adair to the group (<i>Appendix A</i>)</p> <p>Chair enquired if the winter months would hold back work on the tree trimming and water inspections.</p> <p><b>Action: Regeneration to contact Emma Adair re tree trimming and water quality.</b></p> <p>Councillor P Morgan queried if it was possible to have a copy of the feasibility study carried out previously</p> <p><b>Action: Regeneration to provide feasibility study to group</b></p>
Item 5	<b>Information Sharing – Ards and North Down Borough Council</b>

	<p><b>Labour Market Partnership</b></p> <p>N Webster-Pickett provided an update to the group on the AND Labour Market Partnership (<i>Appendix B</i>)</p> <p><b>Alderman P Smyth arrived 16:19</b></p> <p>Chair asked if transport or mobility was noted as a barrier to entry. N Webster-Pickett replied that it was noted by the Jobs and Benefits Offices as a barrier to entry. Additionally, LMP have asked Jobs NI to include a filter on their website for hybrid/working from home jobs as a number of applicants are asking for working from home jobs.</p> <p><b>Go Succeed Programme</b></p> <p>M Bettes provided an update to the group on the Go Succeed programme (<i>Appendix C</i>).</p> <p>Chair enquired if there was any indication of the types of industries applying. M Bettes replied this information was not available, but it was open to all sectors.</p> <p><b>Action: M Bettes to provide sector information to group.</b></p> <p>I McBride noted that Comber Chamber is engaging with M Bettes.</p> <p>Chair thanked M Bettes and N Webster-Pickett for attending</p> <p><b>M Bettes and N Webster-Pickett left 16:30</b></p>
<b>Item 6</b>	<p><b>Information Sharing – Department for Infrastructure</b></p> <p>S Gardiner provided an update to the group on behalf of DfI:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Of an initial budget of £2,300,000 for resurfacing, £500,000 had been spent in Comber.</li> <li>- Current plans are to carry out schemes on Glen Road and the link roundabout which would enable Railway Street and Castle Street to be completed.</li> <li>- Ards and North Down Section have entered a trial scheme whereby each road will be inspected every 6 months instead of 1,3 or 6 monthly depending on usage but repairs will be carried out on 20mm defects and above instead of waiting for 50mm defects.</li> </ul>

	<p>This policy will stop any defect existing for more than 6 months. The scheme is currently running well, it may need some tweaks, but the number of complaints received by the department have reduced.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some money is expected to filter down to the Borough from the £40,000,000 allocated to DfI; which is expected to be spent on Killinchy Road.</li> <li>- If it is not completed, then it will be completed in the next financial year.</li> </ul> <p>Chair recognised the challenges DfI face and thanked them for their work on the Belfast Road noting that the new patching scheme is good.</p> <p>S Gardiner noted that the patches are being repaired properly now and 20mm repairs are the preferred repair depth.</p> <p>I McBride noted an issue with tractors parking on Killinchy Road beside the petrol station, causing sightline issues and asked if double yellow lines could be included in the planned Killinchy Road scheme. S Gardiner advised that if the lines were already in place, then they would be renewed, however, if they were not, it would need legislation.</p> <p>Chair noted that councillors need to raise the issue regularly with police for enforcement.</p> <p>I McBride stated that the garage is planning on installing 8 more parking spaces.</p> <p><b>Action: S Gardiner to speak to colleagues in traffic section about Killinchy Road parking enforcement.</b></p> <p>Councillor P Smyth stated that it was good to see the 20mm repair policy back.</p>
<b>Item 7</b>	<b>Comber Local Action Group Proposal (Please refer to Appendix 002)</b>
	<p>C McMullan advised the paper presented is an overview of the proposal as discussed at the previous meeting.</p> <p>C McMullan advised that a budget was being proposed for each group.</p> <p>It is hoped the stakeholder mapping exercise will commence before Christmas, with completion March 2025.</p>

	<p>Councillor P Morgan replied that it looked positive, and the group need to be ambitious.</p>
<b>Item 8</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p>
	<p><b>Pathway Lighting – Enler River (Please refer to Appendix 003)</b>  C McMullan advised that this had come through as a request due to safety concerns and enquired feedback from the group. C McMullan advised that there is no funding available at present, noting it is outside the town centre boundary therefore ineligible for DfC funding.</p> <p>Councillor P Morgan agreed the project seemed a good idea.  Alderman P Smyth stated it was important to have shovel ready projects.</p> <p>I McBride stated the surface needed resurfaced badly, particularly if the pathway is lit it would encourage more use.  C McMullan advised it can be put on the project list for the new Local Action Group to consider.</p> <p><b>Nomination of Representative for Neighbourhood Tourism Group (Please refer to Appendix 004)</b></p> <p><b>Action: I McBride to advise on Neighbourhood Tourism Group Representative</b></p> <p><b>Comber Enterprise Hub Feasibility Study (Please refer to Appendix 005)</b>  C McMullan advised that £12,000 had been budgeted for consultants to carry out a feasibility study to look at demand, sites, users etc for an Enterprise Hub.  Due to timescales, the quotation will be issued immediately with appointment of successful supplier before Christmas. It is expected the feasibility study will be completed before year end (31 March 2025).</p> <p>Alderman P Smyth asked who will manage the site. C McMullan advised that it is part of the study to look at potential users and operating models.</p> <p>Alderman P Smyth advised that this project had come post COVID as NI Civil Service wanted hubs in Bangor and Ards but a small hub in Comber would provide opportunities for workers.</p> <p>I McBride advised there was a similar hub in Dundonald.</p> <p><b>Action: Investigate Dundonald Enterprise Hub</b></p>



	<p>N McVitty noted that an incubation site can be difficult to manage as the enterprises need somewhere to move to after their time is finished.</p> <p>Agreed to proceed to issue the quotation as per the brief provided.</p> <p><b>Lamp Post Banners</b> C McMullan advised that Regeneration have secured funding from DfC for lamp post banners. The banners will be installed before Spring 2025. Due to timescales for design and the date of the next meeting, it was proposed the design is issued to the group via email for feedback – this was agreed.</p> <p><b>Business Improvement District</b> N McVitty asked if there had been any progress with the proposed Business Improvement District.</p> <p>I McBride stated that the chamber had a productive meeting with Eamon from Newry BID, alongside A Cozzo, Rosheen from DfC and Donaghadee chamber. It was a good discussion, but it wasn't for Comber.</p>
<b>Item 9</b>	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>
	<p><b>To be confirmed</b></p> <p><b>Meeting finished 17:00</b></p>

# Appendices

<b>Minutes of the Comber Town Advisory Meeting</b>	
<b>Date: 15th August 2024</b> <b>Time: 4pm</b> <b>Location: Comber Leisure Centre</b>	
<b>Attendees</b>	<p>Chair, Alderman Trevor Cummings – Ards and North Down Borough Council  Alderman Philip Smith – Ards and North Down Borough Council  Councillor Libby Douglas, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Anton Cozzo – Interim Head of Regeneration, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Sonia Logan – Assistant Regeneration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Glynis Poots – Assistant Regeneration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Niall McVitty – Deputy Director, Department for Communities</p> <p>Iris McBride – Chamber of Trade Representative</p> <p>Liz Hamilton – Faith Representative</p> <p>Roy Murray – Community Representative</p>
<b>Item 1</b>	<b>Welcome</b>
	Alderman T Cummings welcomed everyone to the meeting.
<b>Item 2</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
	<p>Apologies were received from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Councillor Patricia Morgan – Ards and North Down Borough Council</li> <li>- Councillor Rachel Ashe, Ards and North Down Borough Council</li> <li>- David Birch, Ards and North Down Borough Council</li> <li>- Ryan O'Neill, Department for Communities</li> <li>- Stephen Gardiner – Section Engineer for Ards and North Down, Department for Infrastructure</li> </ul>

<b>Item 3</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
	No Declarations of Interest were received.
<b>Item 4</b>	<b>Minutes of previous meeting</b>
	The minutes of the previous meeting, 20/03/2024, were agreed as an accurate reflection of the meeting content.
<b>Item 5</b>	<b>Review of Actions from previous meeting</b>
	<p>G Poots provided an update on the following:</p> <p>Draft wayfinding strategy sent advisory group with meeting documents – this has been added to today’s agenda – please see item 10.</p> <p>I McBride liaised with Comber Historical Society ref photos for gap site and provided the images to the Regeneration team – please see item 7</p> <p>Advisory group to have a dedicated area within Council website: S Logan confirmed that she spoke with the Communications team and there is a designated page for the new Advisory Group and once the review is complete Officers will report back on this.</p>
<b>Item 6</b>	<b>Update and information from Dfl – Stephen Gardiner, Section engineer, Dfl</b>
	Apologies received from S Gardiner and hopefully an update will be provided at the next meeting
<b>Item 7</b>	<b>Update on Gap sites</b>
	<p>A Cozzo provided an update on the Comber gap sites.</p> <p>Castle Street: Officers and DfC worked together to get the artwork for the gapsites. As agreed, it was readied for print however Council was unable to get agreement from the owner to accept liability. Other locations were considered by Regeneration and DfC however no other sites could be identified that met the funders objectives. Comber Regeneration have been informed that we can provide the artwork to the group.</p> <p>Alderman T Cummings asked who owned the fencing over the site.</p> <p>Alderman P Smith said he believed it had been installed by Council and traders were concerned about the condition of the fencing and safety aspect.</p>

<b>Action</b>	<p>R Murray explained that Comber Regeneration would apply to Live Here Love Here for a grant to replace fence and covering. He explained he had spoke to Norman Russell and if it went ahead Comber Regenerations Public Liability insurance would cover it.</p> <p>Alderman T Cummings noted that the group should go back to the owner to see if they still have agreement.</p> <p>N McVitty said that funding is tied to 31<sup>st</sup> March and the project is now closed from the Department's point of view.</p> <p>Alderman P Smith enquired if the Council could make the fencing safe. Officers to find out and come back to the group.</p> <p>I McBride noted that The Chronicle, the Chamber and the Historical Society had put a lot of time and work into the original design and pointed out that if people do give their time a project should be pushed forward.</p> <p>The Group discussed the images in the design and the verbal approval to use the images and N McVitty advised the group to be aware of permissions required to use the images in a public setting.</p> <p>A Cozzo informed the Group that Bridge Street is going ahead, and work should commence within the coming weeks.</p> <p>Alderman T Cummings thanked Comber Regeneration and the Chamber for working together on the gapsites.</p>
<b>Item 8</b>	<b>Local Action Group Proposal</b>
	<p>A Cozzo provided an update on the Local Action Group Proposal and thanked the Group for their participation in this process</p> <p>He noted that the aim of this process was to maximise the value in the Town Advisory Group by reviewing the current model its effectiveness and opportunities for improvement.</p> <p>This review aspect of the process is now complete with 2 recommendations, in summary –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Advisory Groups to transform to Local Action Groups.</li> </ol>

	<p>To enable to make the change from advisory to action Regeneration believe budget is a key resource that is required. The Regeneration team are seeking approval for each C/TAG to be given a budget. Governance, processes etc are TBC. The intention is to make the change from advisory to action and encourage ownership, empowerment, and hopefully participation.</p> <p>2. Support Unit created to assist</p> <p>An aim of this is to redefine the role and remit of Town Advisory Group ensuring alignment between suggestions, plans, actions, frameworks used, with the masterplans and council's aspirations for the towns and city.</p> <p>To enable the additional unit to be created Council will engage and encourage participation with key stakeholders including the chair of each City and Town Advisory Group and officers from Regeneration, Tourism, Economic Development etc, to be part of this unit.</p> <p>Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mapping exercise to make sure the structure of the Action Group and Support unit has good representation</li> <li>• Regeneration to consider potential budget, the process, governance, and terms of reference are adequate . Hope to have this for next Town Advisory Group meeting in November and if agreed, proceed with report to Council.</li> </ul> <p>The Group discussed the proposal and mentioned that if a budget was in place it should be used for a value added piece and not for work that Council would be doing.</p> <p>I McBride asked if the group could choose projects from their wish list and A Cozzo confirmed that they could if it aligns with key objectives.</p>
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Item 9	Any Other Business
<p><b>Action</b></p> <p><b>Action</b></p>	<p><b>Urban Regeneration Programme 2024-2025</b></p> <p>A Cozzo explained that Regeneration were recently given an opportunity to apply for DfC Urban Regeneration funding. Application was approved by Council on 31<sup>st</sup> July. Officers in a timely fashion were able to produce an action plan which meets the challenges and priorities of each town and city which are unique to each of them.</p> <p>2 elements of the action plan relate to Comber:</p> <p>Animation - (window dressing, banners) Placemaking –footfall counters strategically placed to give an evidenced based approach to regeneration or chamber initiatives.</p> <p>The Group discussed the footfall counters, location and how they work, and A Cozzo explained they collected data based on activity and identified hotspots within the town.</p> <p>The projects align within the masterplan goals to drive continued growth, development, and revitalisation of the urban areas. timescales will be challenging, and the intention is to have completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 25</p> <p><b>Town centre On-street Parking Restrictions</b></p> <p>A Cozzo discussed with DfI the process / possibility of parking restrictions. He explained that Ards had raised this previously and we'd be keen to progress and did Comber want to discuss this further internally or with Regeneration/DfI.</p> <p>The Group discussed this topic and decided to proceed.</p> <p><b>Parklet</b></p> <p>A Cozzo informed the Group that planning permission expires on the parklets early next year. The Group discussed the positive feedback and confirmed they would like to officers to apply to extend planning.</p> <p><b>Wayfinding Strategy (copy circulated)</b></p> <p>A Cozzo thanked the Group for the valuable input into the Wayfinding Strategy.</p>

<b>Action</b>	<p>Alderman Trevor Cummings emphasised the importance of communicating the proposed spend to the public and a phased approach would be advisable. I McBride drew attention that the current town signage at the entrance to Comber is hidden behind trees. Officers to contact DfI to get the signage visible</p>
<b>Action</b>	<p><b>Business Improvements Districts (BIDs)</b> A Cozzo discussed the BIDs initiative and advised that DfC have recently contacted Council to enquire if any town in the Borough would be interested in working up a BIDs proposal. N McVitty gave some details of other BIDs within NI. A Cozzo will bring a report on BIDs to Committee in October and therefore is asking if Comber Town Advisory group and Chamber would be potentially interested in further discussions.</p> <p><b>Response: TAG and Chamber would discuss further and advise A Cozzo and DfC a meeting would be helpful in the decision making process.</b></p>
<b>Action</b>	<p><b>Laurelbank</b></p> <p>R Murray discussed the issues of Laurelbank with the Group. SL read an update from the previous minutes and officers are to bring a further update to the Group at the next meeting</p> <p><b>Weeds in Carpark</b></p> <p>R Murray explained that the carpark is full of weeds and the grass has only been cut in Comber once this year. Officers will report this back to the Parks department</p>
<b>Item 10</b>	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>
	<p>The date of the next meeting was set to be arranged for November 2024.</p> <p>Meeting finished 17:30</p>





# Local Action Groups



## Background

In 2023 Ards and North Down Borough Council appointed consultants, The Paul Hogarth Company, and Place Solutions, to undertake a review of the existing City/Town Advisory Groups. The review aimed to assess the effectiveness, composition, structure, and function of the Advisory Groups in order to identify areas for improvement and provide recommendations for enhancing their overall performance and impact.

The review process was carried out in five stages:

1. Review of NI and Local Policy and Strategic Context
2. Research into other approaches and best practice in the UK and Ireland
3. Online Survey
4. Workshop with Council Officers and Advisory Groups
5. Recommendations

The independent review of the Advisory Groups has identified the need for change. Through a series of focused amendments to the Advisory Group structure and processes, the groupings could become increasingly effective and play a greater role in the respective settlement.

The following 5 principles summarise the proposed role of the groups going forward:

1. A **positive** force for our city or town
2. A **two-way communication** hub for all things in relation to our city or town, so that information can be shared and disseminated.
3. City/ town **specific thinking** – strategy development and advice drawn on local knowledge and experience.
4. **Positive** change – advancing actions.
5. **Championing** our town or city – speaking up for our place and its people, promoting its attributes and potential for investment.

## Key Recommendations

- ✓ Advisory Groups to transform to **Local Action Groups**.
- ✓ **Local Action Group Support Unit** to be established.

Proposed Local Action Group Structure



A **Town/ City Local Action Group** will be established for each city/town with an overarching **Local Action Group Support Unit**.

Local Action Group Support Unit

1. The Local Action Group Support Unit will be made up of key departments within Council including Regeneration, Community Planning, Economic Development and Tourism, key NI Executive Departments, and the Chair of each Local Action Group.
2. The Local Action Group Support Unit has a collective responsibility for the delivery of Actions Plans established by each City/Town Local Action Group in relation to Masterplanning, community planning, placemaking and other localised issues.
3. The purpose of the Local Action Group Support Unit is to bring together representation from each City/Town to work together to promote positive change, share knowledge and expertise, and advocate for policy changes to benefit the community across the Borough.
4. The Local Action Group Support Unit will be consulted on and help to develop proposals and objectives relating to the work of the various council departments.

## City/Town Local Action Group

1. The City/Town Local Action Groups will progress/assist work in collaboration with Council officers developing a local approach to Masterplanning, community planning, placemaking and other localised issues.
2. The City/Town Local Action Groups is responsible for:
  - A clear audit of the existing masterplans/ strategies for the towns and city for all sectors
  - Key stakeholders for consulting and reporting on short-, medium-, and long-term plans and strategies which currently impact or relate to the town.
  - Mapping of current priorities, plans, programmes, and funding to address issues in the town.
  - Information and best practice sharing.
  - Disseminate discussions and actions to the groups each member represents
  - Being sustainable - social, environmental, and economic, and considering sustainability in all aspects of the work of the group.
3. The purpose of the City/Town Local Action Groups is to bring together all stakeholders to identify and work together to solve problems, promote positive change, share knowledge and expertise, and advocate for policy changes to benefit the community.
4. The City/Town Local Action Groups will be consulted on and help to develop proposals and objectives relating to the work of the various council departments.
5. The City/Town Local Action Groups structure will be determined following the delivery of a local stakeholder mapping exercise. It will include wider representation from all sectors and wider geographical coverage (extended to the boundary of the 30mph zone for each city/town).
6. The City/Town Local Action Groups will align to the recommendations set out in the Living High Street Framework, a set of guidelines and best practices for revitalising and improving High Streets. By doing so, the groups will be empowered to leverage the framework's expertise and guidance to inform their strategies and actions, ensuring that their efforts are effective, co-ordinated, and aligned with local priorities.
7. A strengthened Terms of Reference will be developed, this will provide a clear framework for the group members to work within and will reaffirm their purpose to ensure they are effective, efficient, and focused on achieving their objectives, with a focus on placemaking, investment, city/town specific vision and thinking.

In addition to the above:

1. The groups will have an annual schedule of meetings that will be on a quarterly basis. This will ensure that each group will have a set schedule, providing a structure for their activities. This will enable the group to stay focused, make progress, and maintain momentum.
2. The groups will have a dedicated webpage on the Council's website as a mechanism for enhanced communication. This will provide a platform for the public to stay informed about the group's activities, progress, and achievements. The webpage will foster transparency, engagement, collaboration, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of the Local Action Groups.
3. The Council will facilitate an Annual Conference with invited speakers on policy and best practice. This event would provide a platform for members to come together, share knowledge, and learn from one another, as well as stay updated on the latest developments in policy and practice. It would also offer an opportunity for networking, building relationships and fostering partnership working.
4. Each Group will be assigned a dedicated Council Regeneration Officer as their primary point of contact, providing a single person to communicate with and facilitating efficient communication and collaboration. This dedicated officer can help ensure that the groups needs are understood, concerns are addressed, and feedback is heard, ultimately leading to a more effective and responsive council-action group relationship.
5. Each Group will provide an Annual Report which will serve as a comprehensive overview of their activities, outputs, and outcomes from the previous year. The report will also outline the group's priorities for the upcoming year, highlighting their alignment with local and council policies. This will enable the group to track progress, monitor performance, and make informed decisions, while also ensuring accountability and transparency.
6. A Chair and Vice Chair for each group will be nominated annually, with a preference for selecting an independent chair.
7. Regeneration Officers will be responsible for reporting to the Place and Prosperity Committee of Ards and North Down Borough Council.
8. Regeneration Officers will facilitate, provide administration function, and support the independent Chair.

## Appendix 003

### Enler River Pathway Lighting

A request has been received regarding lighting along the pathways of the Enler River.

The pathways along the Enler river both from Parkway and behind the leisure centre to Castle Lodge Comber are currently unlit.



Those who are using these walkways, to and from work, the local shops etc must walk completely in darkness in the evening, especially now that the evenings draw dark earlier.

This could be unsafe for those travelling alone, those who may have impaired eyesight or young people walking at night.

**Action: The Advisory Group to decide if this is a project they wish officers to take forward to source possible funding options.**

**It should be noted this area is outside of the town centre boundary and therefore would not be eligible for DfC funding.**

## **Appendix 004**

### **Neighbourhood Tourism Group**

The Council's Tourism Team would like to work with local groups and representatives across the Borough to develop new and assist existing Neighbourhood Tourism initiatives.

Council recognises there is a huge amount of work being done by local groups in this area, with Neighbourhood Tourism integral in developing relationships between people and place, and in addition benefitting local communities economically through the involvement of the people that live there.

There have been some fantastic success stories of passionate, local groups sharing their time, skills, stories and enthusiasm with tourists visiting the place they call home. Three such examples are:

- The Kings Award winning - Friends of Grey Abbey – providing access and tours of Grey Abbey.
- Discover Groomsport – providing guided summer tours of the village and running seasonal events.
- The Sir Samuel Kelly Project – keeping the story of the historic lifeboat alive.

We wish to host a focus group for interested representatives of such organisations this Autumn to look at what practical support can be delivered by the tourism section in this area to aid such great work.

**Action: Nomination of a representative from the Town Advisory Group or  
Nomination from any of the groups represented on the Town Advisory Group**





**QUOTATION FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTANT(S) TO DELIVER A  
FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR A COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE HUB**

A priority identified within the Comber Masterplan Review is: ‘Making the Most of Valuable Space’. An action within this priority is to undertake a feasibility study to establish demand for a Community Enterprise Hub.

The feasibility study will assess the demand for a Community Enterprise Hub. A Community Enterprise Hub within Comber would provide opportunities to grow and retain local businesses and employment, attract new business, incubate start-ups, all of which have a role in contributing to the local economy.

The feasibility study should include:

- 1. An analysis of market demand  
Consider existing demand, assess competitor offerings, assess the gaps, market trends, local economic indicators and business growth rates
- 2. Analysis of community support  
Consider demand for co-working spaces/ workplace hubs and may include surveys and interviews with potential users, such as start-up businesses, small businesses, mentor programmes etc
- 3. Identify target users  
Consider demographic data, local economic trends, existing networks/organisations
- 4. Identify the hub’s services  
Relevant to the above factors and should consider mentor programmes, business support, hot desking, workshops, event space, mobile working, incubation, research, and retail opportunities
- 5. Site Analysis  
Consider location, accessibility, demographics of surrounding area and infrastructure requirements.
- 6. Operational Models  
Consider membership, public, private, social enterprise etc, sustainable approaches should be considered

Council officers will provide the successful consultant(s) with the membership of the Comber Town Advisory Group and can arrange engagement.

Timeline:

Invitation to Quotation issued	Tuesday 19 November 2024
Invitation to Quotation closing	12noon on Tuesday 03 December 2024
Contract Award	Friday 06 December 2024
Contract Completion	Friday 28 March 2025



### **TAG Update – Comber – Laurelbank**

#### **‘Secure funding to commission a feasibility study to explore the options for habitat restoration and management at Laurel Bank and Crawfordsburn Glen’.**

Last update (February 2024) - Council have been able to secure funds to meet this action. Invitations to quote for the provision of this study closed on the 16<sup>th</sup> February and a successful applicant will be appointed soon. We await the outcome of the feasibility study and will provide a further update to the group upon its completion.

#### October 2024

March 2024 - MCL Consulting were awarded the contract to carry out a Habitat Restoration Feasibility Study for Laurelbank. This was to include a desktop study to establish various hydrological characteristics, site inspections and surveys, modelling and reporting, and production of a final report.

This study and final report has now been completed.

Officers have reviewed the report and its recommendations.

A number of recommendations include the management of scrub and grassland, creation of wildflower areas, trimming of trees and pond management.

Invasive species (Canadian Waterweed and Nuttall’s Waterweed) have been identified. These will require manual removal in line with current best practice.

Of note is a recommendation to carry out a suite of surface water monitoring to understand the water quality on site. With the historical nature of Laurelbank and its surrounding area, and its complex hydrology officers want to ensure they have a full picture of the site before progressing any works on site. Particularly any works focused on the pond and removal of invasive species.

The site sits 2.3km from Strangford Lough – ASSI, SAC, SPA and RAMSAR site, with a direct link via the Enler River.

The next step will be to appoint an appropriate consultant to look in more detail at the pond, water quality, silt, hydrology and provide recommendations on how to progress this site given its history.

## Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership:

Nicola sends her apologies that she can't be here today but her son has an orthodontist appointment that she has waited months for- (happy if you need to let them know)

## Current Projects:

All of these academies are for residents within the borough who are unemployed, at risk of redundancy or underemployed:

**Classroom Assistant Upskilling Academy:** this has commenced with 24 participants recruited, working towards the CACHE Level 3 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning. This is due to be completed at the end of June 2025.

**Academy for People with Disabilities:** Recruitment for this academy is currently underway.

**Transport Academy:** Recruitment for this academy is currently underway.

**Employer Led Upskilling Programme-** Grants for upskilling employees up to £500 per employee up to a max of 4 employees.

**LMP Collaboration:** Working with Belfast City Council to pay for places for residents to attend academies that we are currently not providing.

## Upcoming Academies:

In the new year we will commencing the following academies:

**Work Ready Programme:** Supporting economically inactive people to develop work relevant soft skills.

**Admin Academy:** Supporting people to gain work relevant skills specifically for general admin roles.

All of these academies offer mentoring opportunities, support with interview skills, CV writing and overall support.

## Upcoming events:

**Disability Employment and Support Day- 27<sup>th</sup> November 10am-1pm. Comber Leisure Centre,** this event offers support and employment opportunities for people with a disability. Employers are welcome to come along and find out what support is available for them.

Flyers and Posters are available if anyone wants any- I have attached a copy of each one.

**Skills and Employment Support Clinic: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025 10am-1pm- Comber Leisure Centre.** This event is aimed at those who are economically inactive or on benefits and want to find out what their training and employment options are.

Flyers and Posters are available if anyone wants any- I have attached a copy of each one.

**Disability Employment and Support Day- 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025- 1pm-4pm. Aurora Aquatic and Leisure Complex,** this event offers support and employment opportunities for people with a disability. Employers are welcome to come along and find out what support is available for them

**Job Fair- March 2025.** Ards Blair Mayne Leisure Centre: The date of this event will be confirmed within the next month. This event is aimed at those looking employment opportunities as well as support and training.

Any help/ assistance is disseminating this information especially about the events would be gratefully appreciated. Please let me know how best to do this??

**Employability and Skills Registers:**

AND LMP have produced two Employability and Skills Registers – one for Employers and one for Individuals - these contain all the help and support available within the borough.

This are available to download from our website:

<https://www.andbusiness.co.uk/andlmp>

Hard copies are available and if you need any please just let me know.

T: 0300 013 3333 ext 40958

Direct Dial Number: 028 9127 8062

Mobile: 07760 373 436

[Lmp@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:Lmp@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

## Go Succeed update

### Service provides 3 areas of support:

- 1 Masterclasses
- 2 Mentoring
- 3 Grants

Enrolment is through go-succeed.com

There are 4 pillars a client can be assigned to:

**Engage** - 4.5 hours mentoring with a basic business plan

**Foundation** -11 hours mentoring with a more comprehensive business plan

**Growth** – 10,15 or 21 hours mentoring support to help address barriers to growth

**Scaling** – up to 28 hours mentoring and potential Signposting to Invest NI

### Clients

- Can progress through the different pillars
- LEA deliver under Engage & Foundation
- External contractor, Full Circle deliver under Growth & Scaling

### Go Succeed Participation

Go Succeed Pillar	YTD Actual
Engage	235
Foundation	46
Growth	268
Scaling	2

### Approx 42% of engage clients are BT19 and BT20 postcodes.

Approx 55% of engage clients didn't proceed past initial registration. This is due to clients not proceeding with support, putting mentoring on hold or being assigned to other pillars.

### Approx. 37% of Foundation clients are BT19 and BT20 postcodes.

### Approx. 43% of Growth clients are BT19 and BT20 postcodes

### Go Succeed Grants

The Go Succeed Grant can provide funding of up to 70% of costs for capital and/or revenue items up to a maximum grant of £4,000 and minimum of £1,000. Grants are available under the Foundation and Growth pillars and clients are eligible when they have completed at least 50% of mentoring.

Go Succeed Pillar	YTD Awarded
Engage	-
Foundation	3
Growth	50
Scaling	-



<b>Minutes of the Donaghadee Town Advisory Meeting</b>	
<b>Date: 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024</b> <b>Time: 4pm</b> <b>Location: Donaghadee Community Centre</b>	
<b>Attendees</b>	<p>Alderman Mark Brooks - Ards and North Down Borough Council  Councillor Eddie Thompson - Ards and North Down Borough Council  Councillor John Hennessy - Ards and North Down Borough Council  Councillor James Cochrane - Ards and North Down Borough Council  Councillor David Chambers - Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Graeme Bannister – Director of Community and Wellbeing  Carly McMullan – Rural Development Manager, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Sonia Logan – Assistant Regeneration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Calum Symington – Administration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Angela McAllister – Assistant Economic Development Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Stephen Gardiner – Section Engineer, Department for Infrastructure</p> <p>(Chair) Adrian Kerr – Donaghadee Community &amp; District Association  John Caldwell – Donaghadee Community &amp; District Association</p> <p>Kate Boyd – Chamber Representative</p>
<b>Item 1</b>	<b>Welcome</b>
	Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting
<b>Item 2</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
	<p>Apologies were received from</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Councillor Hannah Irwin - Ards and North Down Borough Council</li> <li>- Niall McVitty – Department for Communities</li> </ul>
<b>Item 3</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
	No Declarations of Interest were received at this time.

Item 4	Minutes and Actions from the previous meeting, 12 August 2024 – Please refer to Appendix 001		
	Regeneration to request an update from Leisure Services in relation to the sports hub	Regeneration	Actioned
	Regeneration to arrange a special meeting of the TAG for Leisure/A Johnson to attend and provide a sports hub update	Regeneration	Actioned, Graeme Bannister to attend next TAG meeting
	DCDA to write draft signage report to council for next regular meeting	DCDA	Signage working group set up
	Regeneration to follow up with Assets and Property regarding the natural reef for Donaghadee harbour	Regeneration	Spoke with Peter Caldwell, a report has been sent to council. Regeneration will update TAG when this has gone through Council.
	Regeneration to speak to the Sustainability officer about a school visit for recycling education	Regeneration	Response received from Paul Fisher (Recycling and Waste Minimisation Officer)
	<p>S Logan provided an update on action 5 from Paul Fisher (Recycling and Waste Minimisation Officer)</p> <p>“As a Council we certainly do offer support and provide recycling education to the local schools whether it be nursery, primary or secondary. We have engaged with Donaghadee Primary on numerous occasions and helped them achieve Eco-schools Green Flag Status. Just last week we attended Killard House in Donaghadee to deliver a Recycling PowerPoint.”</p> <p><b>Action: Correction of previous minutes “Moved from Priority 6 to Priority 9 on the list of 22 projects” on page 2 of previous minutes to be updated from Priority 9 to Priority 19</b></p>		

Item 5	Information Sharing – Ards and North Down Borough Council
	<p><b>Go Succeed Programme &amp; Labour Market Partnership (Angela McAllister, Assistant Economic Development Officer)</b></p> <p>A McAllister provided an update to the group on behalf of AND Labour Market Partnership (Appendix A) and Go Succeed (Appendix B). Donaghadee currently has 44 businesses going through the Go Succeed programme and the top sectors represented are Arts and Culture, Health and Wellbeing and Professional Services.</p> <p><b>Action: LMP and Go Succeed to provide report to group</b></p> <p>Chair thanked A McAllister.</p> <p>Councillor J Hennessy enquired if the programmes were successful against their targets, A McAllister replied that they were.</p> <p>J Caldwell commended A McAllister and enquired if there was any sense of the level of unemployment across the Borough and Donaghadee. A McAllister advised it could be looked at through postcodes alongside focusing on particular groups, deprived areas were being targeted and the focus in 2025/26 is to work with schools.</p> <p><b>Donaghadee Sports Hub (Graeme Bannister, Director of Community and Wellbeing)</b></p> <p>G Bannister provided an update on the Donaghadee Sports Hub and offered a sincere apology on behalf of Alan Johnson for the delay in attending the group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The project initiated from community discussions.</li> <li>- Ian O'Neill (Head of Leisure Services) was involved in getting four main sports clubs involved from 2013 onwards.</li> <li>- The concept was to have all sports available in one site to increase efficiencies.</li> <li>- It was supported by Sports NI</li> <li>- Approximate £4/5million of grants may be possible to support with an approximate cost of £6million</li> <li>- A business case was completed</li> <li>- Grants were reduced to £1million while costs rose to £8/9million</li> <li>- Discussion was had with clubs regarding hiring and running costs</li> <li>- A second business case was completed detailing several potential options. Each site was examined individually, and 5 or 6</li> </ul>



	<p>configurations were presented. A number of recommendations were considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Donaldson Park for rugby and/or hockey, and Crommelin pitch for football and/or hockey.</li> <li>- Discussions with hockey and rugby clubs indicated a desire to have hockey and rugby together.</li> <li>- 2022/23 proposal presented to Council.</li> <li>- A Johnson recommenced discussions with clubs re potential operating models.</li> <li>- The cricket club were happy with their current site with a new lease for more responsibilities which would allow them to apply for grants. The cricket club have subsequently applied to the Council for a lease at Northfield.</li> <li>- The rugby club have presented the Council with a new alternative which would require a lease at a refurbished Donaldson Park. Negotiations with the Council continue. This may or may not include hockey a potential way forward.</li> <li>- The football club have enquired about a lease to commence upon the refurbishment being completed.</li> <li>- Land &amp; Property Services have suggested that certain parts are not leased.</li> <li>- Trying to future proof the football pitch – The Council has recently invested £100K at the Crommelin pitch.</li> <li>- As it stands there is no shared hub being considered and the focus is now on developing the individual sites.</li> </ul> <p>Alderman M Brooks thanked G Bannister but noted that Crommelin Park facilities are not up to standard. Most of the capital projects on Councils list are Council driven but the hub is member led. The reality is that Leisure is looking at leases and can the clubs fund the new operating model. Promises have been made but little has happened, the clubs have had nothing in the last 10-15 years.</p> <p>G Bannister replied that the rugby club left a recent meeting very happy, and the Council are investing in the site to allow the rugby club to take the site on properly. The cricket club are in a good place and the football club are invested.</p> <p>Alderman M Brooks noted that facilities in Coleraine are a good model.</p> <p>G Bannister agreed but noted that these facilities were built at a different time.</p>
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	<p>J Caldwell thanked G Bannister for attending and raised several points relating to the Council Pitch Strategy 2020 noting that the leases are a short term solution. G Bannister noted that the lease arrangement doesn't have to be permanent.</p> <p>J Caldwell noted there was no room for parking for the local school collection and was disappointed that the hockey club are having to play at Bangor Grammar School facilities. Further noted that Ballycastle has 6,000 people but provides a spa, 25m pool, a new leisure centre, Gaelic pitch and astroturf. Donaghadee is under provided for children and there needs to be more land available.</p> <p>Councillor D Chambers enquired which elements the rugby club had found satisfactory at recent discussions. G Bannister replied that the rugby club were discussing the building, car park and drainage and they were to list any issues to determine what can be done by the rugby club and the Council.</p> <p>Councillor D Chambers enquired if there were any current plans to develop Crommelin Park</p> <p>G Bannister replied that there was still potential for hockey to be sited there as the Council's preferred option. A report is due to Council in February or March and it can be brought back to the group then.</p> <p><b>G Bannister and A McAllister left 16:40</b></p>
<b>Item 6</b>	<b>Information Sharing – Department for Infrastructure (Stephen Gardiner, Section Engineer)</b>
	<p>S Gardiner provided an update to the group on behalf of DfI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cypress Park and Union Street have recently been resurfaced</li> <li>- William Street is due next in 2025/26 budget</li> <li>- Beechfield area will be due after that although some patching has already been carried out</li> <li>- A trial policy has been implemented to repair defects at 20mm as previously done - should result in a better network</li> <li>- Defects can still be reported as usual</li> <li>- One scheme is sacrificed each year to benefit entire 1200km network</li> <li>- It is a 6 month cycle of road inspection</li> <li>- Currently a fluid process so there may be tweaks</li> </ul>

	<p>Chair and J Caldwell commended S Gardiner on the resurfacing at Union Street.</p> <p>J Caldwell noted the current poor state of William Street and Meeting House Street.</p> <p>S Gardiner noted that maintenance is due in area before resurfacing is carried out.</p> <p>J Caldwell enquired if anybody was aware of the sewer network in Donaghadee, a sewer in New Street had collapsed and the discharge at the swimming point is at dangerous levels. Additionally planners are not approving new housing until the sewers have been upgraded</p> <p>S Gardiner replied that responsibility for sewers lay with NI Water but he can see if they have a reply to the queries. The discharge at the swimming point is more than likely surface runoff.</p> <p>Alderman M Brooks noted that the advice was to not swim for 48 hours after a heavy rain.</p> <p>S Gardiner noted that sewage being discharged would mean the mine is broken, it is more likely to be dirt and muck from roads. The valve used at the discharge point is a non-return valve.</p>
<b>Item 7</b>	<b>Information Sharing – Donaghadee Community &amp; District Association (John Caldwell) - Please refer to Appendix 002</b>
	<p>J Caldwell provided an update to the group on behalf of DCDA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The festival continues to be an important part of DCDA work</li> <li>- Grants continue to help</li> <li>- The Christmas Grant has stayed at £3,000 while In Bloom grants have stayed at £1,000</li> <li>- Christmas festival had to be moved indoors</li> <li>- Significant costs are involved, the event costs £4,000 before anything done</li> <li>- Donaghadee is hoping to be in Britain in Bloom next year</li> </ul> <p>J Caldwell also noted rising sea levels affecting Donaghadee, stating that MLA Connie Egan had asked Parliament who is responsible for coastal erosion.</p>

	<p>Additionally, a public meeting is being held regarding car parking in the town on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025 as traders are losing trade from people's inability to park nearby.</p> <p>K Boyd noted that the last six months had seen a big difference, the town needs serious help and people are driving round unable to park.</p> <p>Councillor E Thompson noted that there had already been some work carried out by Council Officers and the signage sub working group as people are unaware where the big car park is.</p> <p>C McMullan informed the Council had secured funding from DfC for resurfacing of Crommelin car park under the Urban Regeneration Programme.</p> <p>K Boyd noted that people come into the town with children and Crommelin car park is vital.</p> <p>Alderman M Brooks stated that there were many problems with traffic and parking, High Street would be good as a two-way street but may also create problems. It is not a simple solution and Donaghadee is a victim of its own success. Comber has similar issues but without the retail element.</p> <p>Councillor D Chambers advised that Comber received £11,000 of National Lottery Funding for their VE Day event.</p> <p>J Caldwell replied that DCDA already have National Lottery funding grant which they are trying to complete currently.</p>
<b>Item 8</b>	<b>Donaghadee Local Action Group Proposal (Regeneration) - Please refer to Appendix 003</b>
	<p>C McMullan advised there was no update since the last meeting, the paper outlines the previous discussion/ proposal. A consultant was being appointed for a stakeholder mapping exercise which will include a workshop with the Town Advisory Group in March 25.</p>
<b>Item 9</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>
	<p><b>- Signage Sub-Working Group Update</b></p> <p>S Logan advised that she, J Caldwell, and Councillor E Thompson had completed an audit of current signage in the town, a meeting had been held to discuss options and officers are currently obtaining costs. A further meeting was scheduled for the 18<sup>th</sup> December and designs will be circulated to the group via email.</p>

	<p><b>- Nomination of representative for Neighbourhood Tourism Group – Please refer to Appendix 004 – Group to consider representation</b> C McMullan noted that there were representatives on the group from the Town Advisory Group.</p> <p>Councillor E Thompson advised he has attended the previous meeting of the group and explained that Council received new funding to bring as many groups as possible together to share training and information to help groups set up etc.</p> <p>Chair noted that Donaghadee already has several tourist walks in place.</p> <p><b>- Lamp Post Banners</b> C McMullan advised that funding had been secured and initial designs are being discussed. Design options will be issued in early next year to the group for feedback with installation expected in April.</p> <p><b>Meeting concluded 17:14</b></p>
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# Appendices

<b>Minutes of the Donaghadee Town Advisory Meeting</b>	
<b>Date: 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024</b> <b>Time: 4pm</b> <b>Location: Donaghadee Community Centre</b>	
<b>Attendees</b>	<p>Alderman Mark Brooks – Ards and North Down Borough Council  Councillor Eddie Thompson - Ards and North Down Borough Council  Councillor James Cochrane - Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Anton Cozzo – Interim Head of Regeneration, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Sonia Logan – Assistant Regeneration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Calum Symington – Administration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>(Chair) Adrian Kerr – Donaghadee Community &amp; District Association  John Caldwell – Donaghadee Community &amp; District Association</p>
<b>Item 1</b>	<b>Welcome</b>
	Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting
<b>Item 2</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
	<p>Apologies were received from</p> <p>Councillor Hannah Irwin - Ards and North Down Borough Council  Councillor David Chambers - Ards and North Down Borough Council  Stephen Gardiner – Department for Infrastructure  Niall McVitty – Department for Communities  Kate Boyd – Donaghadee Community &amp; District Association  Alan Johnson - Ards and North Down Borough Council</p>
<b>Item 3</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
	No Declarations of Interest were received at this time.

<b>Item 4</b>	<b>Sports Hub Update - Alan Johnson, ANDBC</b>
	<p>Apologies were received from A Johnston Alderman M Brooks provided an update in the absence of A Johnston:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Original plans were to create a sports hub in Donaghadee</li> <li>- This remains a project within the capital programme</li> <li>- Includes pitches for hockey, football, rugby and cricket</li> <li>- The local clubs decided they did not wish to go ahead due to costs involved</li> <li>- Project is currently with the council to move forward</li> <li>- Moved from Priority 6 to Priority 19 on the list of 22 projects</li> <li>- Graeme Bannister, Director of Community and Wellbeing, has stated that a MUGA is not suitable</li> <li>- Rugby and Football clubs are looking at new leases for their current grounds</li> <li>- There is a programme coming to council to curtail the capital programme as it automatically adds 1.75% to the rates every year</li> <li>- Disappointed that A Johnson is not here to provide further updates</li> <li>- Lots of hurdles to overcome</li> </ul> <p>A Cozzo thanked Alderman M Brooks for the update.</p> <p><b>Action: Regeneration to request an update from Leisure Services in relation to the Sports Hub</b></p> <p>J Caldwell noted his bitter disappointment that A Johnson had not attended or deputised another officer to attend in several meetings. Further stated that it was not expected for the sports hub project to drop to 9<sup>th</sup> place on capital list.</p> <p>Chair suggested a special meeting for A Johnson to attend and update the group.</p> <p>J Caldwell queried that if the football club lease both pitches in Donaghadee, where would the public be able to play football in the area? Northfield is not fit for cricket as balls are exiting the field onto Cloughey Road and presenting a serious safety issue. The new link road being created will push more traffic onto the road and stated that Leisure Services are not taking a wide enough view in the matter.</p>



	<b>Action: Regeneration to arrange a special meeting of the TAG for Leisure/A Johnson to attend and provide an update.</b>
<b>12Item 5</b>	<b>Minutes of previous meeting</b>
	The minutes were agreed as an accurate reflection of the previous meeting. Proposed by Councillor J Cochrane and seconded by J Caldwell.
<b>Item 6</b>	<b>Review of actions from previous meeting</b>
	<p>S Logan provided an update on the actions from the previous meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Constable S Eccles (PSNI) to be invited to next meeting to provide an update on anti-social behaviour in Donaghadee - Rolled over to next meeting due to extensive agenda</li> <li>2. S Gardiner to contact Translink in relation to bus stop relocation to relieve traffic congestion - Roll over to next meeting – Apologies received from S Gardiner</li> <li>3. Councillor G McCollum to provide update to members with information from meeting with Graeme Bannister RE The development of sports facilities in Donaghadee - Email update provided, Alderman M Brooks to provide in person update at this meeting</li> <li>4. S Logan to keep Advisory Group updated with any developments in relation to the wheel/skate park – No update at present</li> <li>5. Regeneration to ask request information regarding wardens, shifts and fines for dog fouling in the Donaghadee area. The number of fixed penalty notices issued within the borough 2022 = 41 2023 = 19 January-June 2024 = 11</li> </ol>
<b>Item 7</b>	<b>Update and Information from Dfl – Stephen Gardiner, Dfl</b>
	Apologies were received from S Gardiner
<b>Item 8</b>	<b>DCDA Progress Report – John Caldwell, DCDA</b>
	<p>J Caldwell provided a progress report on behalf of DCDA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Car parking is the key issue in the town</li> <li>- New businesses have opened on Bridge Street</li> <li>- Can't get people to walk to that part of the town</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two derelict addresses as well</li> <li>- Suggest a review of business rates for derelict properties</li> <li>- Increase rates to encourage investment</li> </ul>
<b>Item 9</b>	<b>Town Centre Signage</b>
	<p>Alderman M Brooks advised that the camera obscura located at the Moat is the only one of its type in Ireland but there are no signs to direct people to it or other information points. Work is ongoing with the Rotary Club to create directional signage to the camera.</p> <p>Councillor E Thompson advised that the only sign to the camera is located in Lemon's Wharf car park.</p> <p>A conversation has been had with DfI regarding signage for Sir Samuel Kelly Lifeboat, DfI have no issues and are very keen to progress it as the location is hard to find without direction</p> <p>A Cozzo advised that regeneration have met with members from the Sir Samuel Kelly group who appear very proactive. Regeneration received several additional signage requests and will be taking a more strategic approach to maximise coverage with less signs leading to street clutter etc.</p> <p>A Cozzo further suggested a sub-group to be set up to look at the signage in Donaghadee.</p> <p><b>Action: Regeneration to set up Signage Sub-Group to discuss additional signage requests for Donaghadee. Sub-group will then produce a report to go to Council</b></p> <p>The members suggested tying in the Donaghadee signage with the wayfinding strategy. The members enquired the costs of wayfinding strategy.</p> <p>A Cozzo responded that costs are expected of over £1 million across the borough.</p> <p>J Caldwell noted the costs for the wayfinding seemed excessive. A Cozzo replied that included a higher spec of signage.</p>
<b>Item 10</b>	<b>Local Action Group Proposal</b>

	<p>A Cozzo thanked everyone for help in completing the review of the advisory group.</p> <p>A Cozzo advised a draft report had been received from the Consultants which Council Officers were currently reviewing. A Cozzo provided a summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advisory Group to become a Local Action Group</li> <li>- The main aim is to maximise the benefit of the group</li> <li>- There is a real appetite for more input</li> <li>- Want to see more action</li> <li>- Budget required for the delivery of the masterplan (Regeneration will support a budget request to Council)</li> <li>- Local Action Group to be supported by a Support Unit comprising of representation from all Actions Groups across the towns and city</li> <li>- Next step is a group mapping exercise in each of the towns and city to identify key stakeholders and ensure the correct representation for each group</li> </ul> <p>Chair stated that the support unit was long overdue and asked for examples of what the group would be responsible for.</p> <p>A Cozzo replied that part of the rationale would be giving more power to the group to carry out feasibility studies etc. The group could carry out any work as they see fit with officers from different departments able to provide advice.</p> <p>Alderman M Brooks noted that feasibility studies usually don't go anywhere.</p> <p>J Caldwell asked what way the budget would be allocated i.e. a five way split.</p> <p>Alderman M Brooks noted that Donaghadee had one of the most effective public realm schemes.</p> <p>A Cozzo stated that Donaghadee is the fastest growing town in the borough and he would like to see more representation in the group with the mapping exercise.</p> <p>J Caldwell asked if other councils had used this approach.</p> <p>A Cozzo advised that council see it as a way of empowering the group and they are able to give support.</p>
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	<p>Councillor J Cochrane suggested there should be consequences for non-attendance of members and suggested it should be after three missed meetings.</p> <p>Chair suggested it would be good to bring groups together to share ideas and stories.</p> <p>A Cozzo advised that he is trying to move away from silo groups and his intention is to take a report to Council in early 2025 for launch in April 2025.</p>
<b>Item 11</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>
	<p><b>Urban Regeneration Programme 2024-2025</b>  A Cozzo explained that DfC have made Regeneration aware of a new funding opportunity. Regeneration have made an application for funding and secured £373,000 which includes a 10% contribution from Council. There were three main elements included in the application. Animation to include lamppost banners and window dressing. Connectivity including directional signage. Finally, Placemaking to include laneway enhancements and footfall counters. The money has come from a de-commitment of funds from another area and will include £60,000 for improvement works to Crommelin Car Park</p> <p>J Caldwell stated that David Lindsay had advised Sir Samuel Kelly car park would be getting marked out for spaces.</p> <p>J Caldwell also noted that Portrush has allowed parking of campervans and charges 50p per hour. Alderman M Brooks noted that the car park would have to comply with Caravan Park legislation to do this and it would be monitored very closely by other caravan parks on the peninsula.</p> <p>A Cozzo also raised the plans to bring footfall counters into the town. J Caldwell replied that DCDA worked with the Royal Statistical Society to produce a 36-page report of evidence for investment, it highlighted the need for more arts and culture focus so DCDA have set up a creative hub.</p> <p><b>Town Centre On-Street Car Parking Restrictions</b>  A Cozzo advised some of the other towns within the Borough are considering extending the 1-hour parking restriction to 2-hours. A Cozzo requested feedback from the group as a consideration for Donaghadee.</p> <p>Chair and J Caldwell replied that it was not wanted in Donaghadee. Car parking is at a premium and 1-hour is plenty.</p>

**Risks to Shore from Rising Sea Levels and Storm Surges-John Caldwell DCDA**

J Caldwell advised that DfI regard this as a matter for council. MLA, Connie Egan is arranging to meet the Minister of Agriculture, Andrew Muir, and DAERA officials. Peter Caldwell, Head of Assets and Property Services is also reviewing costs for a natural reef.

Alderman M Brooks noted at a council meeting it was agreed the Chief Executive would engage DfI re Millisle Car park, Alderman M Brooks queries why this was not the case for the harbour as it continues to deteriorate.

Chair stated that Council had taken ownership of the harbour with no condition report completed.

J Caldwell noted that DfI can make grants and loans available to local councils.

**Action: Regeneration to follow up with Assets and Property Services regarding natural reef**

**Proposed Sensory Walk-John Caldwell DCDA**

J Caldwell advised this project had been costed at £20,000 and would be in conjunction with Clifton School and Killard School. It needs to be wheelchair friendly; the parks department are agreeable to the project and Groundworks would fund 50% of the project costs. Location would be at the side of the Parish Church.

A Cozzo noted that this could be something that suits the new Local Action Group.

Chair added that it is also to have the projects shovel ready.

**Any Other Business**

Alderman M Brooks stated that recently there had been a classic car night, benches at the harbour were removed to accommodate but they have not been replaced.

J Caldwell asked how the town promotes recycling involving school children with competitions etc.

	<b>Action: Regeneration to speak to sustainability officer about a school visit</b>
<b>Item 12</b>	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>
	<p><b>The date of the next meeting is to be set for November</b></p> <p><b>Meeting finished 17:14</b></p>

## Donaghadee Town Advisory Group Meeting 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024

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### Donaghadee Community Development Association: Progress Report

1. This report summarises the main activities of Donaghadee Community Development Association since the last Advisory Group Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024
2. **Increasing the Profile of Donaghadee**
  - 2.1 Summer festival:- The summer festival continued into September, the key events being
    - The Ulster Scots Festival 16-18 August
    - A Stunt Scooter Show – 24<sup>th</sup> August
    - Horse Relay – 31<sup>st</sup> August
    - Donaghadee Sea Sprint – 15<sup>th</sup> September

The total cost of the festival for the summer season was just under £27k with some £16k spent on the Ulster Scots festival. Funding originated from the Council (Festival fund and Chamber Funding), The Ulster Scots Agency and Sponsors. 31 different organisations put on 56 different events with several operating on more than one occasion meaning a total of 107 events over the period of the festival (85 days). Total attendances were estimated at 22,000 with the Horse Relay attracting 2,500.
  - 2.2 Christmas:- The Santa arrival and market on the evening of 29<sup>th</sup> November went very well despite the inclement weather, The market had to be moved indoors to the community centre as it was unsafe to erect gazebos. A large crowd turned out and thanks are expressed to George in the Community Centre who volunteered to work outside of his rostered hours and worked tirelessly to ensure the event was a success.
3. **Our Environment**
  - 3.1 Donaghadee in Bloom – Donaghadee won the Town category for the fourth year in succession.
  - 3.2 Crommelin Wood – General maintenance continues. Ulster Wildlife have met with us and will prepare a project outline for a feasibility study to clear and rejuvenate the wetland
  - 3.3 Marine Litter Grant – Ongoing
  - 3.4 Risk of Rising Sea Levels and Storm Surges – We understand Council has agreed to update the RPS report. Action required at central government to clarify responsibility for coastal protection
  - 3.5 Sensory Walk – Groundworks has proved to be a dead end. Next stage is to agree with the Council the terms on which we can undertake the project.
4. **Capacity Building**
  - 4.1 Information on grant opportunities and other matters of interest continue to be publicised to traders, local community groups and individuals.
  - 4.2 We continue to support the Creative Hub and have a number of grant applications pending

## **5. Key Issues**

- 5.1 Car Parking and Traffic Flows – The exponential growth of the town has exacerbated the problems of traffic flows and car parking and we have received many complaints from traders. We have had a very positive discussion with Richard McCracken (A&BD BC) and Stephen Gardiner (DFI Roads) and are arranging a full public meeting in the new year to discuss further
- 5.2 Grant Levels - We are heavily dependent on the Council for grants to enable us to complete our programme of activities. Some of these however have remained at the same level for many years and jeopardise future activities. We have drawn these issues to the relevant council officials.
- 5.3 VE Day – we have raised to possibility of funding for VE Day with the Council and the Dept for Communities

## **6. Plans for Next Period**

- 6.1 Car Parking – Organising the public meeting
- 6.2 Sensory Walk - concluding agreement with council
- 6.3 Donaghadee in Bloom – planning for the year
- 6.4 Health and Well Being - We have been working with Ards Community Network on a survey of needs in this area and hope to have this completed in the new year
- 6.5 Summer Festival – Starting work on festival 2025

**John Caldwell**  
**1<sup>st</sup> December 2024**





# Local Action Groups



## Background

In 2023 Ards and North Down Borough Council appointed consultants, The Paul Hogarth Company, and Place Solutions, to undertake a review of the existing City/Town Advisory Groups. The review aimed to assess the effectiveness, composition, structure, and function of the Advisory Groups in order to identify areas for improvement and provide recommendations for enhancing their overall performance and impact.

The review process was carried out in five stages:

1. Review of NI and Local Policy and Strategic Context
2. Research into other approaches and best practice in the UK and Ireland
3. Online Survey
4. Workshop with Council Officers and Advisory Groups
5. Recommendations

The independent review of the Advisory Groups has identified the need for change. Through a series of focused amendments to the Advisory Group structure and processes, the groupings could become increasingly effective and play a greater role in the respective settlement.

The following 5 principles summarise the proposed role of the groups going forward:

1. A **positive** force for our city or town
2. A **two-way communication** hub for all things in relation to our city or town, so that information can be shared and disseminated.
3. City/ town **specific thinking** – strategy development and advice drawn on local knowledge and experience.
4. **Positive** change – advancing actions.
5. **Championing** our town or city – speaking up for our place and its people, promoting its attributes and potential for investment.

## Key Recommendations

- ✓ Advisory Groups to transform to **Local Action Groups**.
- ✓ **Local Action Group Support Unit** to be established.

## Proposed Local Action Group Structure



A **Town/ City Local Action Group** will be established for each city/town with an overarching **Local Action Group Support Unit**.

### Local Action Group Support Unit

1. The Local Action Group Support Unit will be made up of key departments within Council including Regeneration, Community Planning, Economic Development and Tourism, key NI Executive Departments, and the Chair of each Local Action Group.
2. The Local Action Group Support Unit has a collective responsibility for the delivery of Actions Plans established by each City/Town Local Action Group in relation to Masterplanning, community planning, placemaking and other localised issues.
3. The purpose of the Local Action Group Support Unit is to bring together representation from each City/Town to work together to promote positive change, share knowledge and expertise, and advocate for policy changes to benefit the community across the Borough.
4. The Local Action Group Support Unit will be consulted on and help to develop proposals and objectives relating to the work of the various council departments.

## City/Town Local Action Group

1. The City/Town Local Action Groups will progress/assist work in collaboration with Council officers developing a local approach to Masterplanning, community planning, placemaking and other localised issues.
2. The City/Town Local Action Groups is responsible for:
  - A clear audit of the existing masterplans/ strategies for the towns and city for all sectors
  - Key stakeholders for consulting and reporting on short-, medium-, and long-term plans and strategies which currently impact or relate to the town.
  - Mapping of current priorities, plans, programmes, and funding to address issues in the town.
  - Information and best practice sharing.
  - Disseminate discussions and actions to the groups each member represents
  - Being sustainable - social, environmental, and economic, and considering sustainability in all aspects of the work of the group.
3. The purpose of the City/Town Local Action Groups is to bring together all stakeholders to identify and work together to solve problems, promote positive change, share knowledge and expertise, and advocate for policy changes to benefit the community.
4. The City/Town Local Action Groups will be consulted on and help to develop proposals and objectives relating to the work of the various council departments.
5. The City/Town Local Action Groups structure will be determined following the delivery of a local stakeholder mapping exercise. It will include wider representation from all sectors and wider geographical coverage (extended to the boundary of the 30mph zone for each city/town).
6. The City/Town Local Action Groups will align to the recommendations set out in the Living High Street Framework, a set of guidelines and best practices for revitalising and improving High Streets. By doing so, the groups will be empowered to leverage the framework's expertise and guidance to inform their strategies and actions, ensuring that their efforts are effective, co-ordinated, and aligned with local priorities.
7. A strengthened Terms of Reference will be developed, this will provide a clear framework for the group members to work within and will reaffirm their purpose to ensure they are effective, efficient, and focused on achieving their objectives, with a focus on placemaking, investment, city/town specific vision and thinking.

In addition to the above:

1. The groups will have an annual schedule of meetings that will be on a quarterly basis. This will ensure that each group will have a set schedule, providing a structure for their activities. This will enable the group to stay focused, make progress, and maintain momentum.
2. The groups will have a dedicated webpage on the Council's website as a mechanism for enhanced communication. This will provide a platform for the public to stay informed about the group's activities, progress, and achievements. The webpage will foster transparency, engagement, collaboration, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of the Local Action Groups.
3. The Council will facilitate an Annual Conference with invited speakers on policy and best practice. This event would provide a platform for members to come together, share knowledge, and learn from one another, as well as stay updated on the latest developments in policy and practice. It would also offer an opportunity for networking, building relationships and fostering partnership working.
4. Each Group will be assigned a dedicated Council Regeneration Officer as their primary point of contact, providing a single person to communicate with and facilitating efficient communication and collaboration. This dedicated officer can help ensure that the groups needs are understood, concerns are addressed, and feedback is heard, ultimately leading to a more effective and responsive council-action group relationship.
5. Each Group will provide an Annual Report which will serve as a comprehensive overview of their activities, outputs, and outcomes from the previous year. The report will also outline the group's priorities for the upcoming year, highlighting their alignment with local and council policies. This will enable the group to track progress, monitor performance, and make informed decisions, while also ensuring accountability and transparency.
6. A Chair and Vice Chair for each group will be nominated annually, with a preference for selecting an independent chair.
7. Regeneration Officers will be responsible for reporting to the Place and Prosperity Committee of Ards and North Down Borough Council.
8. Regeneration Officers will facilitate, provide administration function, and support the independent Chair.

## Appendix 004

### Neighbourhood Tourism Group

The Council's Tourism Team would like to work with local groups and representatives across the Borough to develop new and assist existing Neighbourhood Tourism initiatives.

Council recognises there is a huge amount of work being done by local groups in this area, with Neighbourhood Tourism integral in developing relationships between people and place, and in addition benefitting local communities economically through the involvement of the people that live there.

There have been some fantastic success stories of passionate, local groups sharing their time, skills, stories and enthusiasm with tourists visiting the place they call home. Three such examples are:

The Kings Award winning - Friends of Grey Abbey – providing access and tours of Grey Abbey.

Discover Groomsport – providing guided summer tours of the village and running seasonal events.

The Sir Samuel Kelly Project – keeping the story of the historic lifeboat alive.

We wish to host a focus group on **Tuesday 3 December in Donaghadee Community Centre at 10am**, for interested representatives of such organisations to look at what practical support can be delivered by the tourism section in this area to aid such great work.

**Action: If your group would be interested, please email Judith Hammond the contact information for one representative, email [judith.hammond@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:judith.hammond@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)**

## Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership:

Nicola sends her apologies that she can't be here today but her son has an orthodontist appointment that she has waited months for- (happy if you need to let them know)

## Current Projects:

All of these academies are for residents within the borough who are unemployed, at risk of redundancy or underemployed:

**Classroom Assistant Upskilling Academy:** this has commenced with 24 participants recruited, working towards the CACHE Level 3 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning. This is due to be completed at the end of June 2025.

**Academy for People with Disabilities:** Recruitment for this academy is currently underway.

**Transport Academy:** Recruitment for this academy is currently underway.

**Employer Led Upskilling Programme-** Grants for upskilling employees up to £500 per employee up to a max of 4 employees.

**LMP Collaboration:** Working with Belfast City Council to pay for places for residents to attend academies that we are currently not providing.

## Upcoming Academies:

In the new year we will commencing the following academies:

**Work Ready Programme:** Supporting economically inactive people to develop work relevant soft skills.

**Admin Academy:** Supporting people to gain work relevant skills specifically for general admin roles.

All of these academies offer mentoring opportunities, support with interview skills, CV writing and overall support.

## Upcoming events:

**Disability Employment and Support Day- 27<sup>th</sup> November 10am-1pm. Comber Leisure Centre,** this event offers support and employment opportunities for people with a disability. Employers are welcome to come along and find out what support is available for them.

Flyers and Posters are available if anyone wants any- I have attached a copy of each one.

**Skills and Employment Support Clinic: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025 10am-1pm- Comber Leisure Centre.** This event is aimed at those who are economically inactive or on benefits and want to find out what their training and employment options are.

Flyers and Posters are available if anyone wants any- I have attached a copy of each one.

**Disability Employment and Support Day- 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025- 1pm-4pm. Aurora Aquatic and Leisure Complex,** this event offers support and employment opportunities for people with a disability. Employers are welcome to come along and find out what support is available for them

**Job Fair- March 2025.** Ards Blair Mayne Leisure Centre: The date of this event will be confirmed within the next month. This event is aimed at those looking employment opportunities as well as support and training.

Any help/ assistance is disseminating this information especially about the events would be gratefully appreciated. Please let me know how best to do this??

**Employability and Skills Registers:**

AND LMP have produced two Employability and Skills Registers – one for Employers and one for Individuals - these contain all the help and support available within the borough.

This are available to download from our website:

<https://www.andbusiness.co.uk/andlmp>

Hard copies are available and if you need any please just let me know.

T: 0300 013 3333 ext 40958

Direct Dial Number: 028 9127 8062

Mobile: 07760 373 436

[Lmp@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:Lmp@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)



## Go Succeed update

### Service provides 3 areas of support:

- 1 Masterclasses
- 2 Mentoring
- 3 Grants

Enrolment is through go-succeed.com

There are 4 pillars a client can be assigned to:

**Engage** - 4.5 hours mentoring with a basic business plan

**Foundation** -11 hours mentoring with a more comprehensive business plan

**Growth** – 10,15 or 21 hours mentoring support to help address barriers to growth

**Scaling** – up to 28 hours mentoring and potential Signposting to Invest NI

### Clients

- Can progress through the different pillars
- LEA deliver under Engage & Foundation
- External contractor, Full Circle deliver under Growth & Scaling

### Go Succeed Participation

Go Succeed Pillar	YTD Actual
Engage	235
Foundation	46
Growth	268
Scaling	2

### Approx 42% of engage clients are BT19 and BT20 postcodes.

Approx 55% of engage clients didn't proceed past initial registration. This is due to clients not proceeding with support, putting mentoring on hold or being assigned to other pillars.

### Approx. 37% of Foundation clients are BT19 and BT20 postcodes.

### Approx. 43% of Growth clients are BT19 and BT20 postcodes

### Go Succeed Grants

The Go Succeed Grant can provide funding of up to 70% of costs for capital and/or revenue items up to a maximum grant of £4,000 and minimum of £1,000. Grants are available under the Foundation and Growth pillars and clients are eligible when they have completed at least 50% of mentoring.

Go Succeed Pillar	YTD Awarded
Engage	-
Foundation	3
Growth	50
Scaling	-



<b>Minutes of the Holywood Town Advisory Meeting</b>	
<b>Date: 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024</b> <b>Time: 4pm</b> <b>Location: Queens Leisure Complex, Holywood</b>	
<b>Attendees</b>	<p>(Chair) Councillor Linzi McLaren - Ards and North Down Borough Council  Alderman Martin McRandal - Ards and North Down Borough Council  Councillor Lauren Kendall - Ards and North Down Borough Council  Councillor Gillian McCollum - Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Carly McMullan – Rural Development Manager, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Sonia Logan – Assistant Regeneration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Calum Symington – Administration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Nicola Webster-Pickett – Labour Market Partnership Manager, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Ciara McKenna – Business Client Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Ryan Wallace – Parks and Cemeteries Area Operations Manager (South), Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Stephen Gardiner – Section Engineer, Department for Infrastructure</p> <p>Niall McVitty – Deputy Director, Department for Communities</p> <p>Nadia Dornan – Youth Representative  Marilyn Toogood – Faith Representative  Rachel Woods – Community Representative</p>
<b>Item 1</b>	<b>Welcome</b>
	Councillor L McLaren welcomed everyone to the meeting.
<b>Item 2</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
	No apologies were received.
<b>Item 3</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
	No Declarations of Interest were received at this time.

Item 4	Minutes and Actions from the previous meeting, 13 August 2024 (Please refer to Appendix 001)																							
	<table><tr><td>Action</td><td>Person(s) Responsible</td><td>Outcome</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Dfl to update RE Bins obstructing paths in town</td><td>S Gardiner</td><td>Actioned, to update at meeting</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Update from parks RE Seapark weeds</td><td>R Wallace</td><td>Actioned, on agenda</td></tr><tr><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>To contact N Dorrian RE Queens Hall event invitation</td><td>Regeneration</td><td>Actioned, invite sent</td></tr></table> <p><b>Action 1</b> S Gardiner advised he had engaged with the businesses and were now proceeding with formal enforcement under Article 59 for offenders. The process included 2no warning letters and a final letter that the obstructing items will be seized and the owners summoned to court.</p> <p>Councillor G McCollum enquired if Strand Avenue was included. S Gardiner replied that currently Dfl were focusing on High Street, but it can be expanded after High Street has been resolved.</p> <p>Councillor L Kendall noted an issue with traders not obtaining pavement licenses for signage on the pavement. S Gardiner advised Dfl would have to work with Council to enforce.</p>			Action	Person(s) Responsible	Outcome				Dfl to update RE Bins obstructing paths in town	S Gardiner	Actioned, to update at meeting				Update from parks RE Seapark weeds	R Wallace	Actioned, on agenda				To contact N Dorrian RE Queens Hall event invitation	Regeneration	Actioned, invite sent
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Item 5	Information Sharing – Ards and North Down Borough Council																							
	<p><b>Parks Update (Ryan Wallace)</b> R Wallace provided an update to the group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Holywood falls under R Wallace's remit</li><li>- An ecology survey has been carried out on the plants at Seapark</li></ul> <p><b>Action: R Wallace to provide survey to group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The greenery on the beach cannot be touched under NIEA rules</li><li>- Identical issue to not being able to move seaweed on beach</li><li>- The growth does support some habitats</li></ul>																							

- Barriers are to be installed at the lower car park to assist with the parking issue
- Parks are exploring the option of planting trees to create barrier
- They would be heavy standard trees of at least 3 metres in height

Councillor L McLaren enquired the cost of the trees against another barrier. R Wallace replied that he can find out the cost, but it is within Parks budget.

Alderman M McRandal asked how this project would affect the ice cream van. R Wallace replied that there is a tarmac area that he can park on and that it should help the van owner.

Councillor G McCollum asked if the new trees would impede any view or light, R Wallace confirmed it won't.

Alderman M McRandal asked if there was a need for it and stated he would be inclined to consult residents first on the issue. R Wallace advised they could just resort to a standard barrier.

S Gardiner noted that mature trees near roadway would need considerations made should a vehicle leave the roadway and hit them. R Wallace advised that Dylan Freeburn is the lead officer on the project but there is always the option to do nothing.

Councillor L Kendall advised that it would be good to get a social media post out as people are very interested in the area, but she doesn't think it would impede any views of residents.

**Action: R Wallace to provide map of project to group.**

Alderman A Graham stated that if there wasn't demand from residents then he would be inclined to leave the project.

R Wallace advised he will take comments back to Jonny Bettes for consideration.

Discussion was raised on noxious weeds. R Wallace advised NIEA enforce and report noxious weeds to ANDBC.

Councillor L McLaren asked if there was a sign present in Seapark car park stating  
"No Motorhomes"

**Action: R Wallace to check with D Martin regarding "No Motorhomes" sign for Seapark car park**

	<p>R Wallace left the meeting 16:33</p> <p><b>Labour Market Partnership (Nicola Webster-Pickett)</b> N Webster-Pickett introduced herself and provided an update on Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership (LMP) to the group (<i>Appendix A</i>)</p> <p>N Webster-Pickett noted there was a real need in the borough for disability support and lots of parent of disabled children were attending exhibitions.</p> <p>Alderman A Graham thanked N Webster-Pickett and enquired if someone who can't go back to their original job due to medical treatment would be eligible. N Webster-Pickett replied yes, they would be as it can be self-diagnosed due to waiting lists for diagnosis in NI. LMP work with specialists to offer programmes and training in any area. Additionally, LMP can signpost to other services and they have other support agencies in the room as well.</p> <p>Councillor G McCollum asked if the classroom assistant programme had been filled. N Webster-Pickett replied that it had been, two places had been offered to each Special Educational Needs (SEN) school in the borough and the assistants were upskilled to get them into permanent roles with support from the headmasters.</p> <p>Councillor G McCollum asked if the programme was going out to charities as well. N Webster-Pickett replied that they were, and they would love more direct contacts. Additionally, one more stand is available for the Comber Fair if a group wished to avail of the offer.</p> <p>N Webster-Pickett advised that LMP are looking at an event for employer engagement and changing employer perceptions, using employees to speak and vouch for the programme.</p> <p>Councillor L McLaren asked where LMP is advertised. N Webster-Pickett replied that they advertise through the Council Facebook page, adverts, PR campaigns and the programmes all have large waiting lists.</p> <p>Councillor L Kendall asked if LMP carry out any work pre transition from school to employment. N Webster-Pickett replied that LMP work with Killard School but it is harder to reach in mainstream schools but LMP have created 12 videos for careers advisors in schools.</p> <p>Councillor G McCollum stated that there was a transition officer in EA and asked if LMP were in contact. N Webster-Pickett replied that EA sit on partnership.</p>
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	<p>Discussion was raised on advertising for LMP.</p> <p><b>Go Succeed Programme (Ciara McKenna)</b> C McKenna introduced herself and provided an update on the Go Succeed Programme to the group (<i>Appendix B</i>).</p> <p>Councillor G McCollum thanked C McKenna and N Webster-Pickett and noted it was nice to hear about the daily work being carried out by the teams, suggested carrying out a presentation to Place &amp; Prosperity Committee.</p> <p>Councillor L McLaren asked if Economic Development were giving out grants or just signposting. C McKenna replied that there were grants of between £1000 and £4000 available through Go Succeed, at 70% funding. Councillor L McLaren asked if they offer help to applicants with business loan applications. C McKenna replied that under the Go Succeed Programme clients are allocated a mentor for business support. Council Officers are happy to meet with any client who would like support in making grant applications for Go Succeed or business advice.</p> <p>N Webster-Pickett and C McKenna left the meeting 17:03</p>
<b>Item 6</b>	<b>Information Sharing – Department for Infrastructure</b>
	<p>S Gardiner provided an update to the group on behalf of Department for Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The shuck along the rugby club had been cleared out with assistance from NI Water, Rivers Agency and Translink Railways</li> <li>- DfI trialled an overnight closure of the A2 carriageway to allow for litter sweeping, patching of the surface and sweeping</li> <li>- This is planned to happen twice per year</li> <li>- If additional money is available in the budget, then High Street will be resurfaced mid-January</li> <li>- Kinnegar Drive will also be completed if budget allows but if not, it will be completed in the 2025 financial year</li> </ul> <p>Councillor G McCollum noted an issue with overgrowing hedges on pathway to Marino. S Gardiner replied that DfI can issue hedge cutting notices, additionally a signage review is being carried out on the A2.</p> <p>R Woods advised a large pothole was present on the footpath outside The Dirty Duck restaurant, there is no street lighting in the area which is presenting a safety issue. The pothole has been marked with blue paint.</p>

	<p>S Gardiner advised that the blue paint means an external contractor has marked the defect for repair and that the standard timeframe from marking to repair still applies.</p> <p>S Gardiner also advised on a new pilot scheme being carried out in Ards and North Down whereby each road will be inspected every 6 months instead of 1,3 or 6 monthly depending on usage but repairs will be carried out on 20mm defects and above instead of waiting for 50mm defects. This policy will stop any defect existing for more than 6 months.</p> <p>The scheme is currently running well, it may need some tweaks, but the number of complaints received by the department have reduced. Additionally, the Minister is supporting the scheme and if it is successful it could lead to a policy change.</p> <p>Alderman M McRandal noted flooding on Old Holywood Road following the recent heavy rain.</p> <p>S Gardiner advised that two issues were present, leaves and capacity of the system. The drain systems can cope with average rainfall, but recent rain was abnormal and no further issues had developed once the rain had ceased.</p> <p>Councillor L Kendall pressed the issue of resurfacing Kinnegar Drive and thanked Dfl for their hard work. Additionally, raised the need for a programme to resolve traffic light issues on the A2. Councillor L Kendall thanked Dfl for repairing the bump at Jacksons Road and enquired if there were plans to further smooth it. S Gardiner replied that Dfl were aware of the issue.</p> <p><b>Councillor G McCollum left the meeting 17:13</b></p>
<b>Item 7</b>	<b>Holywood Local Action Group Proposal (Please refer to Appendix 002)</b>
	<p>C McMullan advised that a stakeholder mapping exercise was to be carried out which may include a workshop of the advisory group members. There are no further changes to the proposal that was presented at the previous meeting.</p>



Item 8	Any Other Business
	<p><b>Directional Signage from Town Centre to Waterfront (Please refer to Appendix 003)</b></p> <p>C McMullan advised that this project has come from the masterplan and a small pot of money has been made available by DfC to fund this. Officers have looked at possible locations and are seeking feedback from the group. R Woods enquired what type of signage would be placed at Queens Leisure Complex. C McMullan replied that it would be signage that can be completed under permitted development rights and that the signage would be designed in house.</p> <p>R Woods suggested a map of Holywood. C McMullan advised that it was up for discussion and that officers were looking at distances to the waterfront as key messaging as per the Masterplan recommendation.</p> <p>Councillor L McLaren asked what the budget for the project was. C McMullan replied that it was part of a programme of projects funded by DfC.</p> <p>Alderman M McRandal stated that the signage would depend on who it is trying to direct.</p> <p>Councillor L McLaren noted excessive signage around the public toilets and raised concerns that money is being spent just because it is available.</p> <p>C McMullan noted a similar project in Donaghadee where Regeneration is working with licensing officers to ensure efficient use of the signs.</p> <p>Alderman M McRandal stated he thought the objective was to direct to all points of interest. C McMullan explained that this is an item in the masterplan that feeds into the wayfinding strategy for the town.</p> <p>Councillor L McLaren noted that QR codes in Crawfordsburn Country Park are never used and that we need to ensure the signs are necessary.</p> <p>C McMullan advised of an option to place markers on the sides of buildings for direction. Councillor L Kendall noted that there was another underpass in Holywood to Praeger's Field which is not known.</p> <p>C McMullan advised that Regeneration could look at a slightly wider area but not too far outside of the town centre boundary as this was a funded project.</p> <p>Councillor L McLaren advised that this project is relating to directing to the waterfront and not the full wayfinding project.</p>

	<p>M Toogood stated that people go to Seapark but don't know what is in the town. C McMullan noted that the DfC funding only covers the town centre boundary.</p> <p>N Dornan stated that residents know there is a waterfront, and this would be more targeted to visitors, as such, the group need to look at access points.</p> <p>C McMullan advised that officers could look at costing options and bring back to the group for a decision.</p> <p>N McVitty added that the signage would have to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.</p> <p><b>Nomination of representative for Neighbourhood Tourism Group (Please refer to Appendix 004)</b></p> <p>R Woods noted the date of the next meeting for the Neighbourhood Tourism Group was soon and asked if there would be further opportunities to attend. C McMullan replied that there were further meetings of the group planned.</p> <p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p>Councillor L Kendall enquired if a representative could be nominated from the TAG to attend the Coastal Path Working Group (CPWG). C McMullan advised a representative had already been put forward. R Woods noted that the representation had not been discussed at a meeting yet. Alderman A Graham noted that several of the TAG members are already members of the CPWG and if there are opinions they can be relayed between the groups.</p> <p><b>Action: Confirm representative from Holywood TAG on CPWG</b></p> <p><b>Agreed: M Toogood to attend 6 January meeting of CPWG until representative confirmed</b></p>
<b>Item 9</b>	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>
	<p><b>Meeting concluded 17:45</b></p> <p><b>Date of the next meeting is to be agreed</b></p>

# Appendices

<b>Minutes of the Holywood Town Advisory Meeting</b>	
<b>Date: 13<sup>th</sup> August 2024</b> <b>Time: 4pm</b> <b>Location: Queens Leisure Complex, Holywood</b>	
<b>Attendees</b>	<p>Alderman Alan Graham – Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Anton Cozzo – Interim Head of Regeneration, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Sonia Logan – Assistant Regeneration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Calum Symington – Administration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Niall McVitty – Deputy Director, Department for Communities</p> <p>Nadia Dornan – Youth Representative</p> <p>Marilyn Toogood – Faith Representative</p> <p>Christine Layton – Community Representative</p> <p>Rachel Woods – Holywood Shared Town</p>
<b>Item 1</b>	<b>Welcome</b>
	<p>A Cozzo welcomed everyone.</p> <p>A Cozzo assumed role of chair in Councillor L McLarens absence.</p>
<b>Item 2</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
	<p>Apologies were received from:</p> <p>Alderman Martin McRandal - Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Stephen Gardiner – Department for Infrastructure</p>
<b>Item 3</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
	No Declarations of Interest were received at this time.
<b>Item 4</b>	<b>Minutes of previous meeting</b>
	The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

<b>Item 5</b>	<b>Review of actions from previous meeting</b>
	<p>S Logan provided an update on the actions from the previous meeting.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wayfinding Strategy to be distributed to Advisory Group members – Complete</li> <li>2. W Smith to contact contractor reference Hibernia Street car park – Complete (contractors were very cooperative and supported the event)</li> <li>3. Alderman M McRandal to contact NCLT re Queen's Leisure Complex community use – covered in agenda.</li> </ol>
<b>Item 6</b>	<b>Update and information from Dfl</b>
	<p>Apologies were received from S Gardiner</p> <p>Alderman A Graham raised an ongoing issue with bins being left on footpaths blocking pedestrians. One particular premise has a van parked outside.</p> <p>C Layton advised that the chamber is dealing with the issue as well.</p> <p>Alderman A Graham advised that he has asked the traffic wardens and was told that they have certain areas they cannot interfere with.</p> <p>M Toogood stated that S Gardiner has organised a meeting with traffic enforcement in September to discuss.</p> <p><b>Action: Regeneration to follow up obstruction issue with Dfl</b></p>
<b>Item 7</b>	<b>Local Action Group Proposal</b>
	<p>A Cozzo provided an update on the review of the Advisory Group and the proposals received from the consultant, Paul Hogarth Company and Place Solutions -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advisory Group to become a Local Action Group</li> <li>- The main aim is to maximise the benefit of the group</li> <li>- There is a real appetite for more input</li> <li>- Want to see more action</li> <li>- Budget required for the delivery of the Masterplan (Regeneration will support a budget request to Council)</li> <li>- Local Action Group to be supported by a Support Unit comprising of representation from all Action Groups across the towns and city</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Next step is a group mapping exercise in each of the towns and city to identify key stakeholders and ensure the correct representation for each group</li> </ul> <p>N Dornan advised that it would be nice to have a budget but queried that if budget doesn't come will that stop the action group.</p> <p>A Cozzo responded that we wanted the independent review to give stronger evidence to go to Council with. Regeneration would still be keen even in the absence of budget as it would push for more support from other Council departments and maximise the groups impact.</p> <p>M Toogood stated it would be good to have the power for suggestions.</p> <p>N McVitty advised that members can contact the Regeneration Team to add items to the agenda. There was a discussion regarding preparing the items for the agendas for the meetings in future, and it was suggested that there would be a more collaborative approach with the members.</p> <p>M Toogood stated that there can be a feeling of "What are we doing here" and that there are issues out there that people are not aware of.</p> <p>N McVitty advised that the structure of the group is important, it was originally based on the focus of delivering the public realm scheme and follow up revitalisation programme. It can now be more regeneration focused and could be so much larger and further reaching. Any individuals in the local community can bring issues to the group</p> <p>A Cozzo advised that the next steps were a mapping exercise to determine good representation for the group with a wide range of views. A report will be brought to the next meeting of the Advisory Group, followed by a report to Council early 2025, with the aim of the Action Group commencing in April 2025.</p> <p>R Woods asked how many other recommendations had been made. A Cozzo replied the two recommendations (Local Action Group and creation of a Support Unit) are the focus, but broader collaboration mentioned in the review will be taken forward as an additional internal recommendation.</p> <p>R Woods asked if the proposed budget would need to be considered under the rates setting process. A Cozzo confirmed.</p> <p>R Woods stated that she thought wider representation was good and asked if there had been discussion with other departments.</p>
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	<p>A Cozzo replied yes and that they want to get people in place who can give answers on the day.</p> <p>S Logan added that there was internal consultation throughout the process.</p>
<b>Item 8</b>	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p>
	<p><b>Urban Regeneration Programme 2024/25</b></p> <p>A Cozzo explained that the DfC informed the Council of a potential funding opportunity. The Council submitted an application for a range of urban regeneration projects at a total value of £373K (£335,700 funding and £37,200 Council contribution)</p> <p>N McVitty advised that the application has been approved.</p> <p>A Cozzo stated that there were three main elements included in the application.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Animation</li> <li>2. Connectivity</li> <li>3. Place Making</li> </ol> <p>A range of projects were proposed for Holywood to include window dressing of vacant business units, footfall counters, directional signage to/from the coast etc.</p> <p>C Layton asked if it would tie in with the wayfinding strategy.</p> <p>N McVitty stated that the window vinyls could be used to direct people to places of interest.</p> <p>R Woods stated that there was lots of work on historical Holywood going on around the town.</p> <p>N McVitty advised that he is keen on trying things out, value can be had in lessons learned and if there is any thoughts or ideas to let the team know.</p> <p>M Toogood stated that there had been lots of talk of encouraging people up and around the town.</p> <p>The members discussed the poor state of the beach area at Seapark. It's overgrown with barely any sand left. M Toogood went on to state that the locals are dissatisfied and fully understands that the area maybe overgrown due to protected species, Council have yet to issue a response to any queries.</p> <p>Alderman A Graham advised that the explanation given to him was there was lots of regulations about protecting beaches.</p>

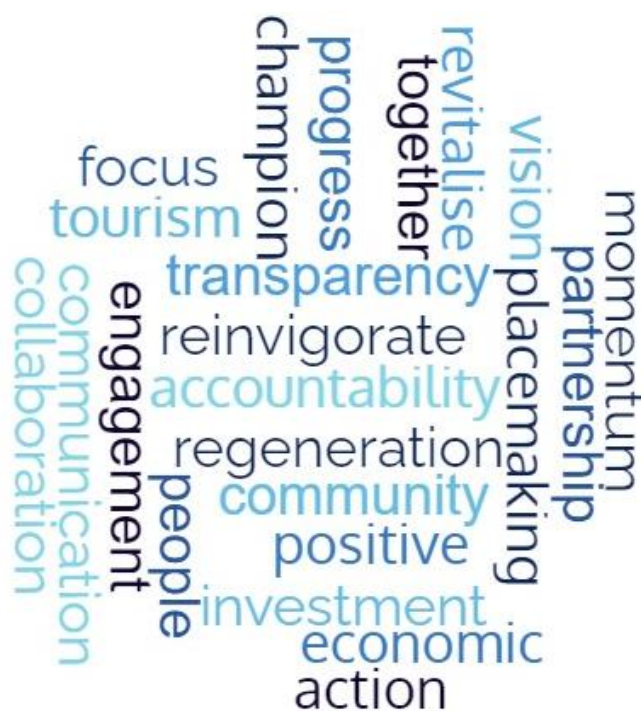
	<p>M Toogood praised the playpark facilities but noted that there was an abundance of weeds.</p> <p><b>Action: Comments to be passed to relevant department</b></p> <p><b>Town Centre On-Street Car Parking Restrictions</b></p> <p>A Cozzo stated that Council and DfI have been working together on a strategy to change parking restrictions on streets from 1-hour to 2-hours.</p> <p>R Woods questioned what the rationale behind the strategy was.</p> <p>A Cozzo replied that Newtownards Advisory Group see value in increasing the length of time, allowing people to shop and get coffee, however the 1-hour restriction does allow rotation of cars. The outcome will depend on the feedback from chambers and the towns.</p> <p>Alderman A Graham stated that it would depend on the availability of off-street car parking.</p> <p>N Dornan stated that she can see some benefit, but residents may find it annoying.</p> <p>C Kayton added that it ties in with the Wayfinding Strategy and walking but need to change people's mentality.</p> <p><b>Wayfinding Strategy (<i>copy circulated</i>)</b></p> <p>A Cozzo stated that Regeneration is content with the strategy proposed but reminded the group that there is no available budget for delivery. Regeneration can take the report to Council to ask for budget. Trying to make it more strategic/accessible but there are significant costs involved (Approx. £1million across the borough)</p> <p>Alderman A Graham asked if there were costs per town available.</p> <p>A Cozzo stated rough costs had been provided.</p> <p>Alderman A Graham stated that the public can sometimes have a perception of these costs, they need to be taken in context.</p>
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	<p><b>Update on Community use of Queen's Leisure Complex (Queen's Hall)</b></p> <p>A Cozzo advised that an aspiration of the Masterplan was the repurposing of Queens Leisure Complex and advised SERCO have a contract in place until 2028. Regeneration thought it was too early to engage in any repurposing now given the contract period. There is a community event planned for 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024 to commence early engagement, this will be led by the Community &amp; Culture Unit.</p> <p>M Toogood stated that it might give people hope that something is being done. Queen's Leisure Complex is not in the best condition and the council should have been monitoring the condition. The kitchen has been condemned and anything that can be done to bring it back would be good.</p> <p>R Woods asked who was invited to the September event and noted that she was here as Robin Maysfield replacement. Holywood Shared Town had not been invited and it was unrealistic to invite people now. A revised proposal would be brought to the event. The SERCO contract does include a clause to support arts and culture which they are not doing.</p> <p>A Cozzo noted that invites had not been sent out yet</p> <p><b>Action: Nicola Dorrian, Head of Community &amp; Culture to be contacted RE invitation</b></p> <p>Alderman A Graham questioned if availability of community facilities was the issue or was it more to do with the management of them. Council halls in Bangor are reasonable to rent.</p> <p>M Toogood noted that the room being used could be 2.5x the cost of council facilities.</p> <p>A Cozzo added that Regeneration can be the conduit and are open to discussions.</p>
<b>Item 9</b>	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>
	<p><b>The date and time of the next meeting to be issued (October/November).</b></p> <p><b>Meeting concluded 16:59</b></p>



# Local Action Groups



## Background

In 2023 Ards and North Down Borough Council appointed consultants, The Paul Hogarth Company, and Place Solutions, to undertake a review of the existing City/Town Advisory Groups. The review aimed to assess the effectiveness, composition, structure, and function of the Advisory Groups in order to identify areas for improvement and provide recommendations for enhancing their overall performance and impact.

The review process was carried out in five stages:

1. Review of NI and Local Policy and Strategic Context
2. Research into other approaches and best practice in the UK and Ireland
3. Online Survey
4. Workshop with Council Officers and Advisory Groups
5. Recommendations

The independent review of the Advisory Groups has identified the need for change. Through a series of focused amendments to the Advisory Group structure and processes, the groupings could become increasingly effective and play a greater role in the respective settlement.

The following 5 principles summarise the proposed role of the groups going forward:

1. A **positive** force for our city or town
2. A **two-way communication** hub for all things in relation to our city or town, so that information can be shared and disseminated.
3. City/ town **specific thinking** – strategy development and advice drawn on local knowledge and experience.
4. **Positive** change – advancing actions.
5. **Championing** our town or city – speaking up for our place and its people, promoting its attributes and potential for investment.

## Key Recommendations

- ✓ Advisory Groups to transform to **Local Action Groups**.
- ✓ **Local Action Group Support Unit** to be established.

Proposed Local Action Group Structure



A **Town/ City Local Action Group** will be established for each city/town with an overarching **Local Action Group Support Unit**.

Local Action Group Support Unit

1. The Local Action Group Support Unit will be made up of key departments within Council including Regeneration, Community Planning, Economic Development and Tourism, key NI Executive Departments, and the Chair of each Local Action Group.
2. The Local Action Group Support Unit has a collective responsibility for the delivery of Actions Plans established by each City/Town Local Action Group in relation to Masterplanning, community planning, placemaking and other localised issues.
3. The purpose of the Local Action Group Support Unit is to bring together representation from each City/Town to work together to promote positive change, share knowledge and expertise, and advocate for policy changes to benefit the community across the Borough.
4. The Local Action Group Support Unit will be consulted on and help to develop proposals and objectives relating to the work of the various council departments.

### City/Town Local Action Group

1. The City/Town Local Action Groups will progress/assist work in collaboration with Council officers developing a local approach to Masterplanning, community planning, placemaking and other localised issues.
2. The City/Town Local Action Groups is responsible for:
  - A clear audit of the existing masterplans/ strategies for the towns and city for all sectors
  - Key stakeholders for consulting and reporting on short-, medium-, and long-term plans and strategies which currently impact or relate to the town.
  - Mapping of current priorities, plans, programmes, and funding to address issues in the town.
  - Information and best practice sharing.
  - Disseminate discussions and actions to the groups each member represents
  - Being sustainable - social, environmental, and economic, and considering sustainability in all aspects of the work of the group.
3. The purpose of the City/Town Local Action Groups is to bring together all stakeholders to identify and work together to solve problems, promote positive change, share knowledge and expertise, and advocate for policy changes to benefit the community.
4. The City/Town Local Action Groups will be consulted on and help to develop proposals and objectives relating to the work of the various council departments.
5. The City/Town Local Action Groups structure will be determined following the delivery of a local stakeholder mapping exercise. It will include wider representation from all sectors and wider geographical coverage (extended to the boundary of the 30mph zone for each city/town).
6. The City/Town Local Action Groups will align to the recommendations set out in the Living High Street Framework, a set of guidelines and best practices for revitalising and improving High Streets. By doing so, the groups will be empowered to leverage the framework's expertise and guidance to inform their strategies and actions, ensuring that their efforts are effective, co-ordinated, and aligned with local priorities.
7. A strengthened Terms of Reference will be developed, this will provide a clear framework for the group members to work within and will reaffirm their purpose to ensure they are effective, efficient, and focused on achieving their objectives, with a focus on placemaking, investment, city/town specific vision and thinking.

In addition to the above:

1. The groups will have an annual schedule of meetings that will be on a quarterly basis. This will ensure that each group will have a set schedule, providing a structure for their activities. This will enable the group to stay focused, make progress, and maintain momentum.
2. The groups will have a dedicated webpage on the Council's website as a mechanism for enhanced communication. This will provide a platform for the public to stay informed about the group's activities, progress, and achievements. The webpage will foster transparency, engagement, collaboration, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of the Local Action Groups.
3. The Council will facilitate an Annual Conference with invited speakers on policy and best practice. This event would provide a platform for members to come together, share knowledge, and learn from one another, as well as stay updated on the latest developments in policy and practice. It would also offer an opportunity for networking, building relationships and fostering partnership working.
4. Each Group will be assigned a dedicated Council Regeneration Officer as their primary point of contact, providing a single person to communicate with and facilitating efficient communication and collaboration. This dedicated officer can help ensure that the groups needs are understood, concerns are addressed, and feedback is heard, ultimately leading to a more effective and responsive council-action group relationship.
5. Each Group will provide an Annual Report which will serve as a comprehensive overview of their activities, outputs, and outcomes from the previous year. The report will also outline the group's priorities for the upcoming year, highlighting their alignment with local and council policies. This will enable the group to track progress, monitor performance, and make informed decisions, while also ensuring accountability and transparency.
6. A Chair and Vice Chair for each group will be nominated annually, with a preference for selecting an independent chair.
7. Regeneration Officers will be responsible for reporting to the Place and Prosperity Committee of Ards and North Down Borough Council.
8. Regeneration Officers will facilitate, provide administration function, and support the independent Chair.

## APPENDIX 003

### Holywood Waterfront Signage

The review of the Holywood Masterplan in 2023 identified the need to enhance the relationship between the town and the sea through improved public realm, signage and the potential for future possibilities.

There is an opportunity to install directional/ informational signage to direct visitors to the waterfront under the Urban Regeneration Programme 2024/25.

Officers have conducted a site visit and have identified locations for consideration.

It must be noted that signage must be placed within the town centre boundary (as per funding requirements). It should also be noted that officers have identified locations that are less likely to prevent a risk due to ownership/ consents.

### Location 001 – Entrance/ Exit to Subway

Audience: Visitors accessing the town via the subway.



### Location 002 – Adjacent to public toilets

Audience: Users of the public services.





Location 003 – Queen’s Leisure Complex

Audience: Visitors using this route to access/exit the subway.

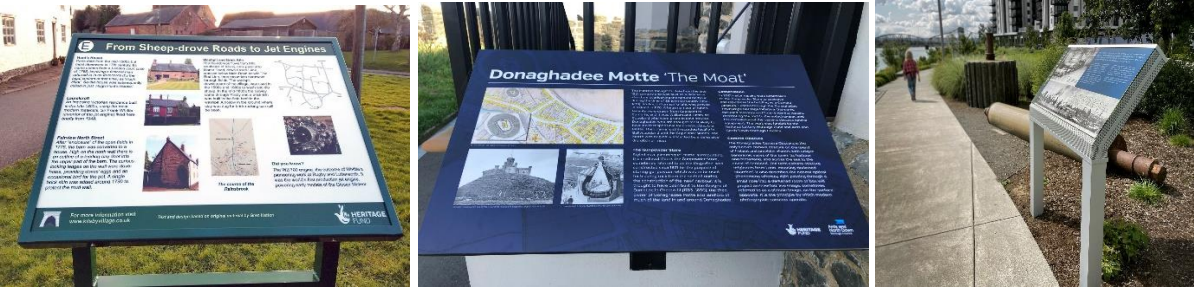


Location 004 – Council Owned Car Parks

Audience: Visitors arriving in the town by car.

- Hibernia Street North
- Hibernia Street South
- Church Road

Proposed Style of Signage (Location 001-003) (The signage displayed in the car park will differ in style)



Interpretative panel with visual elements (illustrations and maps) and text.



## Appendix 004

### Neighbourhood Tourism Group

The Council's Tourism Team would like to work with local groups and representatives across the Borough to develop new and assist existing Neighbourhood Tourism initiatives.

Council recognises there is a huge amount of work being done by local groups in this area, with Neighbourhood Tourism integral in developing relationships between people and place, and in addition benefitting local communities economically through the involvement of the people that live there.

There have been some fantastic success stories of passionate, local groups sharing their time, skills, stories and enthusiasm with tourists visiting the place they call home. Three such examples are:

The Kings Award winning - Friends of Grey Abbey – providing access and tours of Grey Abbey.

Discover Groomsport – providing guided summer tours of the village and running seasonal events.

The Sir Samuel Kelly Project – keeping the story of the historic lifeboat alive.

We wish to host a focus group on **Tuesday 3 December in Donaghadee Community Centre at 10am**, for interested representatives of such organisations to look at what practical support can be delivered by the tourism section in this area to aid such great work.

**Action: If your group would be interested, please email Judith Hammond the contact information for one representative, email [judith.hammond@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:judith.hammond@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)**

## Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership:

Nicola sends her apologies that she can't be here today but her son has an orthodontist appointment that she has waited months for- (happy if you need to let them know)

## Current Projects:

All of these academies are for residents within the borough who are unemployed, at risk of redundancy or underemployed:

**Classroom Assistant Upskilling Academy:** this has commenced with 24 participants recruited, working towards the CACHE Level 3 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning. This is due to be completed at the end of June 2025.

**Academy for People with Disabilities:** Recruitment for this academy is currently underway.

**Transport Academy:** Recruitment for this academy is currently underway.

**Employer Led Upskilling Programme-** Grants for upskilling employees up to £500 per employee up to a max of 4 employees.

**LMP Collaboration:** Working with Belfast City Council to pay for places for residents to attend academies that we are currently not providing.

## Upcoming Academies:

In the new year we will commencing the following academies:

**Work Ready Programme:** Supporting economically inactive people to develop work relevant soft skills.

**Admin Academy:** Supporting people to gain work relevant skills specifically for general admin roles.

All of these academies offer mentoring opportunities, support with interview skills, CV writing and overall support.

## Upcoming events:

**Disability Employment and Support Day- 27<sup>th</sup> November 10am-1pm. Comber Leisure Centre,** this event offers support and employment opportunities for people with a disability. Employers are welcome to come along and find out what support is available for them.

Flyers and Posters are available if anyone wants any- I have attached a copy of each one.

**Skills and Employment Support Clinic: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025 10am-1pm- Comber Leisure Centre.** This event is aimed at those who are economically inactive or on benefits and want to find out what their training and employment options are.

Flyers and Posters are available if anyone wants any- I have attached a copy of each one.

**Disability Employment and Support Day- 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025- 1pm-4pm. Aurora Aquatic and Leisure Complex,** this event offers support and employment opportunities for people with a disability. Employers are welcome to come along and find out what support is available for them

**Job Fair- March 2025.** Ards Blair Mayne Leisure Centre: The date of this event will be confirmed within the next month. This event is aimed at those looking employment opportunities as well as support and training.

Any help/ assistance in disseminating this information especially about the events would be gratefully appreciated. Please let me know how best to do this??

**Employability and Skills Registers:**

AND LMP have produced two Employability and Skills Registers – one for Employers and one for Individuals - these contain all the help and support available within the borough.

These are available to download from our website:

<https://www.andbusiness.co.uk/andlmp>

Hard copies are available and if you need any please just let me know.

T: 0300 013 3333 ext 40958

Direct Dial Number: 028 9127 8062

Mobile: 07760 373 436

[Lmp@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:Lmp@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

## Go Succeed update

### Service provides 3 areas of support:

- 1 Masterclasses
- 2 Mentoring
- 3 Grants

Enrolment is through go-succeed.com

There are 4 pillars a client can be assigned to:

**Engage** - 4.5 hours mentoring with a basic business plan

**Foundation** -11 hours mentoring with a more comprehensive business plan

**Growth** – 10,15 or 21 hours mentoring support to help address barriers to growth

**Scaling** – up to 28 hours mentoring and potential Signposting to Invest NI

### Clients

- Can progress through the different pillars
- LEA deliver under Engage & Foundation
- External contractor, Full Circle deliver under Growth & Scaling

### Go Succeed Participation

Go Succeed Pillar	YTD Actual
Engage	235
Foundation	46
Growth	268
Scaling	2

### Approx 42% of engage clients are BT19 and BT20 postcodes.

Approx 55% of engage clients didn't proceed past initial registration. This is due to clients not proceeding with support, putting mentoring on hold or being assigned to other pillars.

### Approx. 37% of Foundation clients are BT19 and BT20 postcodes.

### Approx. 43% of Growth clients are BT19 and BT20 postcodes

### Go Succeed Grants

The Go Succeed Grant can provide funding of up to 70% of costs for capital and/or revenue items up to a maximum grant of £4,000 and minimum of £1,000. Grants are available under the Foundation and Growth pillars and clients are eligible when they have completed at least 50% of mentoring.

Go Succeed Pillar	YTD Awarded
Engage	-
Foundation	3
Growth	50
Scaling	-



<b>Minutes of the Newtownards Town Advisory Meeting</b>	
<b>Date: 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024</b> <b>Time: 4pm</b> <b>Location: Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex, Newtownards</b>	
<b>Attendees</b>	(Chair) Alderman Stephen McIlveen – Ards and North Down borough Council Councillor Richard Smart – Ards and North Down Borough Council Councillor Steven Irvine – Ards and North Down Borough Council  Carly McMullan – Rural Development Manager, Ards and North Down Borough Council Calum Symington – Administration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council Richard McCracken – Head of Regulatory Services, Ards and North Down Borough Council Maura Bettes – Economic Development Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council Wendy Smith – Events Manager, Ards and North Down Borough Council Heather Shields – Events Officer (Delivery & Development), Ards and North Down Borough Council  Niall McVitty – Deputy Director, Department for Communities  Stephen Gardiner – Section Engineer, Department for Infrastructure  Derek Wright – Newtownards Chamber of Trade Heather Lavery – Newtownards Chamber of Trade Ian Foster – Newtownards Chamber of Trade Cathy Hanna – Newtownards Chamber of Trade
<b>Item 1</b>	<b>Welcome</b>
	Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting
<b>Item 2</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
	Apologies were received from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Councillor Victoria Moore, Ards and North Down Borough Council</li> </ul>
<b>Item 3</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>

	No Declarations of Interest were received at this time.																	
Item 4	Minutes and Actions from the previous meeting, 7 August 2024 – Please refer to Appendix 001																	
	<table><tr><th>Action</th><th>Lead</th><th>Outcome</th></tr><tr><td>Feedback on Sunday trading hours to be sent to Regeneration by 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024</td><td>Group Members</td><td>Completed</td></tr><tr><td>S Gardiner to provide updated map of Conway Square to group</td><td>S Gardiner</td><td>Completed, sent to group</td></tr><tr><td>Newtownards Chamber to write to Minister reference parking in Newtownards</td><td>Newtownards Chamber</td><td>To update at meeting</td></tr><tr><td>Newtownards Chamber to gather consensus from retailers in relation to on street parking restrictions</td><td>Newtownards Chamber</td><td>To update at meeting</td></tr></table> <p><b>Action 3</b> D Wright advised this has been completed</p> <p><b>Action 4</b> D Wright advised that every retailer has confirmed they will stop parking in Conway Square when enforcement comes into effect. Additionally, there is an ongoing issue where traders are exploiting a loophole in parking regulations to park all day in 1 hour parking bays. 14 cars stay on Frances Street all day owned by traders.</p>			Action	Lead	Outcome	Feedback on Sunday trading hours to be sent to Regeneration by 19 <sup>th</sup> August 2024	Group Members	Completed	S Gardiner to provide updated map of Conway Square to group	S Gardiner	Completed, sent to group	Newtownards Chamber to write to Minister reference parking in Newtownards	Newtownards Chamber	To update at meeting	Newtownards Chamber to gather consensus from retailers in relation to on street parking restrictions	Newtownards Chamber	To update at meeting
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Item 5	Information Sharing – Ards and North Down Borough Council																	
	<p><b>Go Succeed Update (Maura Bettes)</b> M Bettes provided an update to the group (<i>Appendix A</i>)</p>																	

	<p>M Bettes advised that this is the first year of the programme and it was slow to take off, but Newtownards is doing very well. The top three industries in the programme are health, retail and hospitality.</p> <p>D Wright thank M Bettes and noted that Newtownards is “punching well above its weight.” The Go Succeed programme is excellent and centred around growth.</p> <p>Councillor R Smart enquired if there was enough awareness around the programme. D Wright stated that there is a strong presence on print and social media and noted that the chamber is pushing the programme locally.</p> <p>M Bettes provided an update to the group on the Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership (LMP) on behalf of Nicola Webster-Pickett (AND LMP Manager) (<i>Appendix B</i>).</p> <p><b>Conway Square Parking (Richard McCracken) (Appendix C)</b></p> <p>R McCracken thanked S Gardiner and advised that this project had come in partnership with ANDBC and DfI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The problem has come from ownership versus control</li> <li>- It is currently difficult to determine ownership</li> <li>- This proposal to the Advisory Group and elected members is to regularise ownership</li> <li>- It would give DfI the ability to enforce parking on three sides of the Square</li> <li>- Boundaries would be marked with metal studs and removable metal bollards placed outside the Town Hall</li> <li>- This would allow DfI to implement traffic regulations with unloading/loading permitted from 8am to 10am</li> <li>- The blue section of the map would be enforced by DfI</li> <li>- Pink section would be managed by Council with removable bollards</li> <li>- This plan would not require resources to open and close the bollards daily</li> <li>- On-street traffic wardens would enforce the traffic regulations</li> </ul> <p>Alderman S McIlveen noted his main concern was the unloading window for the traders being appropriate.</p> <p>D Wright stated that all the traders agree the parking needs controlled, not all traders can get deliveries in this time, but they don’t see it as being a problem.</p> <p>R McCracken noted that the parking is preventing emergency services getting access.</p>
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	<p>D Wright asked if the restrictions would also include blue badge holders, R McCracken confirmed it would.</p> <p>S Gardiner added that legislation will be written that excludes everyone, one-time exceptions can be attained but it requires specific criteria and advance notice.</p> <p>D Wright noted that the majority of traders have access via Lower Mary Street.</p> <p>R McCracken advised that the boundary would run tight to the tree pits and green areas, there is already three removable bollards leading to the centre of the Square, the new bollards would create an area outside the Town Hall for access, it does require some amount of responsibility and the bollards could be lockable.</p> <p>I Foster asked if Council would be responsible for the bollards cutting off the centre of the square to which R McCracken confirmed they will.</p> <p>I Foster asked why the original suggestion from the chamber is not being used.</p> <p>R McCracken replied that resourcing would be different for occasional opening of the bollards for Council events or Saturday Market against opening the bollards every day.</p> <p>I Foster re-iterated that the Chambers position is that Council should control the whole Square.</p> <p>S Gardiner stated that officers thinking is that once legislation is in place then the traffic wardens ticketing every hour would stop people parking.</p> <p>D Wright noted that it would only be until 6pm when traffic wardens finish their shift and that the bollards outside the Town Hall seemed excessive.</p> <p>R McCracken clarified the area outside the Town Hall and noted the two sections would allow ANDBC vans to park for set up of events.</p> <p>Councillor R Smart enquired if planning would be required for the bollards. R McCracken advised he would need to confirm this.</p> <p>N McVitty noted that the project could need approval from Historic Environment Division due to the Town Halls listed status.</p> <p>Councillor R Smart asked if Council would need a road closures order for events.</p>
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	<p>S Gardiner replied that as it is not technically a road all that would be required is an email between departments.</p> <p>D Wright noted that during conversations with Stephen Reid, former Chief Executive, ANDBC were to take back Conway Square but then decided they did not want it.</p> <p>R McCracken stated that if Council took the whole area back then it would be barriered by bollards with no intention of resourcing the opening of the barriers.</p> <p>Councillor R Smart asked if car park operators Marsden's could take the responsibility to open it. Further discussion took place on opening the barriers.</p> <p>I Foster asked why Council are not taking the entire area outside the Town Hall. R McCracken advised it was due to safety concerns; the way it has been designed allows vehicles to drive all the way around instead of having to reverse.</p> <p>D Wright asked if Council own the car parking at the entrance to the Square as the Continental Market uses the spaces.</p> <p>R McCracken confirmed they were DfI managed and Council seek permission from DfI to place the market there.</p> <p>R McCracken advised that opinions will be relayed but Council feel this is the best proposal.</p> <p>D Wright welcomed Councillor support for the Chamber proposals.</p> <p>Councillor S Irvine asked what DfI abandonment of the square would look like. R McCracken and S Gardiner advised it can be looked at as a possible option but may not be the best option.</p> <p>D Wright noted that there could be in excess of 40 bollards and 100 studs, and suggested the staff from the Arts Centre could operate them.</p> <p>Councillor S McIlveen added his concern at the number of bollards.</p> <p>Further discussion was raised on the number and control of bollards.</p> <p><b>Action: R McCracken to confirm number of bollards in scheme</b></p>
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	<p>Councillor R Smart noted that councillors have been trying to control the parking at Londonderry Park for a long time, Council would have to close the entire Square to control it, one report is needed that brings DfI and Council opinions to enable a decision.</p> <p><b>Action: R McCracken and S Gardiner to produce report for next Advisory Group Meeting in conjunction with Chamber and Saturday Market.</b></p> <p>R McCracken advised that there is a big difference in opening the bollards as part of someone's job versus employing someone to do it. D Wright suggested that it could tie in with public toilet attendants' job. I Foster suggested a mix of automatic and manual controls. R McCracken advised that it would be excessively costly</p> <p>R McCracken left the meeting 17:07</p> <p><b>Newtownards Events Update (Wendy Smith &amp; Heather Shields)</b> W Smith provided an update to the group regarding events in Newtownards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 30,000 visitors had attended Armed Forces Day (AFD)</li> <li>- Events Team had applied for Red Arrows event</li> <li>- The shop window displays created by the chamber were very good</li> <li>- 19<sup>th</sup> July Pipe Band Championships at Regent House Playing Fields</li> <li>- 28<sup>th</sup> June Comber Earlies Event in Comber</li> <li>- Want to develop Comber Earlies week with local traders</li> <li>- 4<sup>th</sup> October Shorelife Event at Castle Espie and Mount Stewart</li> </ul> <p>Discussion was raised regarding budgets for Comber Earlies, Portavogie Tide and Turf and Armed Forces Day events.</p> <p>D Wright stated that the chamber wanted to emphasise to Councillors that funding was being provided to areas that don't bring economic benefit where funding to Newtownards would provide economic benefit not only to the town but the Borough. The Chamber wanted to see more funding provided to W Smith and the Events Team alongside more funding for the weekly market and their Christmas light switch on as retailers state that it is their busiest day of the year. With more funding it could be a two-day market event.</p> <p><b>M Bettes left 17:15</b></p> <p>W Smith replied that the passport scheme has been very successful in the town and the events team have been trying to get all hospitality sector in</p>
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	<p>the room together to get everybody involved. The feedback on passports and window displays has been great and the Events Team are more than happy to work with the Chamber.</p> <p>Alderman S McIlveen noted that Councillors are constantly fighting to get more funding for Newtownards and that Armed Forces Day was potentially going to be held in Ward Park. We want to see more coming to Newtownards, a few years ago an event review led to Bangor and Donaghadee losing out.</p> <p>Further discussion took place regarding events -</p> <p>Discussion followed on licensing artists to perform in Conway Square to help animate area.</p> <p>Alderman S McIlveen noted that Linen Hall in Belfast have a Business Improvement District set up that is responsible for animation and asked if Newtownards Chamber were looking into this. D Wright noted that it is currently being explored but they are keen for Events to re-imagine things.</p> <p>Discussion was raised on personal spend during events. I Foster raised the need to build the nighttime economy.</p> <p>Councillor R Smart advised that Councillors were in admiration of Chamber for the switch on event. Councillors have been lobbying for increased budget and any information or figures the Chamber could provide to support would help. The Councillors are pitching across the borough for funding and Ards has been very successful for securing one-off events but has struggled to secure an event that defines the town.</p> <p>I Foster stated that we should look at events that make money but there is a need for overnight accommodation.</p> <p>Councillor S Irvine noted there is brewery and distilleries in area, could focus on those for an event.</p> <p>D Wright noted that the 100-year anniversary of the Ards TT was soon, High Street could be closed and a display of vintage cars laid on to celebrate the TT.</p> <p>N McVitty noted that he can facilitate any contacts for the BID application if wanted, DfC can offer support and resources for start-up.</p> <p>D Wright thanked W Smith and H Shields for attending.</p> <p><b>W Smith and H Shields left 17:40</b></p>
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<b>Item 6</b>	<b>Information Sharing – Department for Infrastructure (Stephen Gardiner, Section Engineer)</b>
	<p>S Gardiner provided an update to the group on behalf of DfI.</p> <p>S Gardiner advised that £200,000 had been allocated for works on Ann Street and Orchard Place, these works will tie in with expected works on Meetinghouse Lane which is still going through design phase. The Meetinghouse Lane project will remove one car parking space to allow for the pedestrianisation. Additionally, surplus material from the public realm scheme has been located in a DfI depot.</p> <p>Councillor R Smart stated that hopefully the found material can be used to repair cracked pavements in Newtownards.</p> <p>S Gardiner advised that DfC have funded further public realm on Frances Street, Court Square and Castle Street. The materials have been ordered. Kerbs are not being lifted but they will be straightened.</p> <p>D Wright advised it was good to give early warning to the landowners as there is lots of development areas.</p> <p>S Gardiner advised that certain areas outside the Priory have been left out of the scheme due to issues with Historic Environment Division.</p> <p>Councillor R Smart enquired regarding the dropped kerbs from the Parlour Bar to the Cenotaph.</p> <p><b>Action: S Gardiner to investigate progress of dropped kerbs at Parlour Bar/Cenotaph.</b></p> <p>S Gardiner enquired if Ards Antiques were part of the chamber as their footpath displays are excessive and DfI were planning to carry out enforcement action. D Wright advised they were not and asked if the same enforcement covered bins being left out. Alderman S McIlveen advised that the Council had wrote to the Minister and other Councils for support in gaining powers to enforce bins but did not receive sufficient support. It has been noted as an issue across the borough.</p>

<b>Item 7</b>	<b>Newtownards Strategic Projects (Regeneration and Newtownards Chamber of Trade)</b>
	<p>C McMullan stated that Regeneration was keen to identify sub-groups for each project. C McMullan explained that the subgroups were smaller and could therefore meet more regularly, it would allow the group to bring in other people as necessary to develop the projects.</p> <p>I Foster advised that he had already met with Council Officers and felt the projects were already progressing well and did not require sub-groups.</p> <p>I Foster stated that the Chamber sees Newtownards being designated as a gateway town as helpful to their BID.</p> <p>D Wright added that the chamber has tried to push out the business awards to cover Ards Peninsula.</p> <p>Councillor R Smart queried if it was primarily a marketing focus. I Foster stated that it is a business context to help promote the town as a destination and that it is mainly a promotional designation.</p> <p>N McVitty asked if there was any downside to designating the town as a gateway. I Foster replied that there wasn't as it was not a legislative action.</p> <p>Councillor Steven Irvine enquired if there was any cost involved. I Foster replied that there wasn't</p> <p><b>Agreed: Newtownards to be designated a gateway town. Proposed by I Foster, seconded by Councillor S Irvine</b></p> <p><b>Action: Gateway town designation to go to December Place &amp; Prosperity Committee</b></p> <p><b>Agreed: Sub-working groups were not needed</b></p>
<b>Item 8</b>	<b>Newtownards Local Action Group Proposal (Regeneration) Please refer to Appendix 002</b>
	<p>C McMullan advised the paper presented is an overview of the proposal as discussed at the previous meeting.</p> <p>It is hoped the stakeholder mapping exercise will commence before Christmas, with completion March 2025 and will include a workshop with the advisory group.</p> <p>Councillor R Smart that additional membership could be discussed at the next meeting.</p>

Item 9	Any Other Business
	<p><b>Neighbourhood Tourism Group Please refer to Appendix 003</b> C McMullan advised that Tourism were seeking representation from the Town Advisory group.</p> <p><b>Lamp Post Banners</b> C McMullan advised the group that lamp post banners will be welcomed across the towns in Spring 2025, currently there is no design but an email will be sent with the design for approval.</p> <p>Councillor R Smart asked if “Gateway” could be included in the design. C McMullan advised that Regeneration have spoken with the Chamber, and they are concentrating on the highlights of the town, there will be six designs, and they cannot include advertising.</p> <p><b>Any Other Business</b> D Wright raised concerns that the £1 for 5 hours scheme appears to have stopped in certain car parks in Newtownards. Alderman S McIlveen replied that he had spoken with officers, and they had confirmed that nothing had been changed but officers had assured they will look into the matter.</p> <p>D Wright raised further concerns that the disabled parking space markings on Regent Street cannot be made out and people are getting ticketed unfairly. S Gardiner advised that he look at Regent Street for remarking to provide clarity.</p> <p>C McMullan advised that DfI Active Travel Plan was now out for consultation and details will be shared to the group.</p> <p><b>Action: Regeneration to share DfI Active Travel Plan link to group members</b></p> <p>C McMullan advised that Regeneration have received complaints regarding clothing on Paddington statue and Regeneration are planning on installing signage to deter.</p> <p><b>Meeting finished 18:19</b></p>



# Appendices



<b>Minutes of the Newtownards Town Advisory Meeting</b>	
<b>Date: 7<sup>th</sup> August 2024</b> <b>Time: 4pm</b> <b>Location: Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Centre</b>	
<b>Attendees</b>	<p>Alderman Alan McDowell - Ards and North Down Borough Council  Councillor Steven Irvine - Ards and North Down Borough Council  Councillor Richard Smart - Ards and North Down Borough Council  Councillor Victoria Moore - Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Anton Cozzo – Interim Head of Regeneration, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Carly McMullan – Rural Development Manager, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Calum Symington – Administration Officer, Ards and North Down Borough Council  Richard McCracken – Head of Regulatory Services, Ards and North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Niall McVitty – Deputy Director, Department for Communities</p> <p>Stephen Gardiner – Section Engineer, Department for Infrastructure</p> <p>Derek Wright – Newtownards Chamber of Trade  Ian Foster – Newtownards Chamber of Trade  Heather Lavery – Newtownards Chamber of Trade</p>
<b>Item 1</b>	<b>Welcome</b>
	<p>A Cozzo welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Councillor V Moore assumed the role of interim chair in the absence of Alderman S McIlveen. Proposed by Councillor R Smart.</p> <p>Introductions were conducted.</p>
<b>Item 2</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
	<p>Apologies were received from:  Alderman S McIlveen - Ards and North Down Borough Council</p>

<b>Item 3</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>
	No Declarations of Interest were received at this time.
<b>Item 4</b>	<b>Sunday Opening Proposal – Richard McCracken, Head of Regulatory Services, Ards and North Down Borough Council</b> <b>*IN CONFIDENCE*</b>
	<p>R McCracken shared an update on a proposal to designate Bangor and Newtownards as seasonal towns to allow an increase in Sunday opening hours (please refer to Appendix 1).</p> <p>R McCracken advised that he was inviting feedback to allow him to put a report to the Environment Committee. It is an opportunity to increase turnover and the legislation change would apply until it was removed.</p> <p>D Wright replied that the Chamber would be opposed to the proposed change. It is important for small businesses to have a break. It also allows small retailers an opportunity to compete against the larger retailers, protects business and the community as a whole by protecting staffs family life.</p> <p>R McCracken stated that he appreciated the feedback and will consult with other groups as well.</p> <p>Councillor R Smart advised that when the proposal came before committee, they were opposed but wanted to gather feedback. Taking away the advantage of smaller retailers is not fair and that seasonal hours are designed for holiday locations.</p> <p>Chair asked if there was any research on the economic benefit for those that open. R McCracken advised that he was not aware of any research.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Any further feedback/comments to be sent to Regeneration by Friday 19 August 2024.</b></p>
<b>Item 5</b>	<b>Minutes of previous meeting</b>
	<p>The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate reflection of the previous meeting.</p> <p>Proposed by Councillor R Smart and seconded by I Foster.</p>
<b>Item 6</b>	<b>Review of Actions from Previous Meeting</b>
	No previous actions.

Item 7	Update and information from DfI – Stephen Gardiner, DfI
	<p>S Gardiner provided an update on behalf of the Department for Infrastructure.</p> <p>£1.9M has been budgeted for resurfacing across the Borough, of which £750,000 was allocated for resurfacing the Comber Road. The budget also includes two grass cuts, weed spraying and one gully clean. A paper had been sent from DfI to the Minister for Infrastructure to return to the former policy of repairing any defect greater than 20mm which had been accepted in principle. However, a 6-month period has been required to determine costings.</p> <p>Alderman A McDowell stated that the longer pot holes are left the more it costs to repair them. Alderman A McDowell also questioned if any budget had been allocated for pavements. S Gardiner replied that £200k had been allocated to pavement maintenance.</p> <p>Chair questioned the differences in the new and old policies. S Gardiner explained that the old policy included repairs at 20mm, 50mm and 100mm. The new policy removed the repairs at 20mm. The new suggested policy is to find and fix defects.</p> <p>Alderman A McDowell suggested a road repair method of laying tar and then stone. S Gardiner replied that type of repair is still conducted on the rural network but in towns it resulted in a lot of claims due to the adhesive nature of the tar. It is an effective treatment but has limitations, it also requires lots of traffic volume to bed it in.</p> <p>S Gardiner also noted that the Clondeboyne Road Scheme cost approximately £630,000 to repair 0.7km and that budget would account for a lot of patching. A business case has been passed to the Minister to allow earlier patching of defects. Additionally pavements have received £200,000 of budget allocation. This year this will cover Manse Road and West Winds main streets. DfC are also providing budget for two schemes, Court Square and Frances Street.</p> <p>N McVitty added that the group will be aware of Court Square scheme which was due to be completed in the last fiscal year however did not proceed due to contractor availability. This scheme will now be delivered within this financial year and has provided the opportunity to include Frances Street as this was not part of the public realm scheme.</p> <p>D Wright noted commendations for the work completed to the road adjoining Lidl supermarket and asked if there was an update for Talbot Street and Conway Square pavement.</p>

	<p>S Gardiner replied that repairs had been conducted, NIE had drilled through a drainage pipe but had now fixed the damage. Any flooding can be reported to S Gardiner. Conway Square has also been repaired, Dfl have walked the site and drawn a line 6 metres from the current building lines, the outside of which will be under Dfl control for maintenance and enforcement.</p> <p>The chamber queried if Council could adopt the entirety of Conway Square and then install moveable bollards to discourage unauthorised parking which presents a potential health and safety issue</p> <p>N McVitty explained that the idea for Dfl adopting part of Conway Square was to allow enforcement of parking restrictions.</p> <p>D Wright advised Council ownership is preferred, and this would be beneficial when events are being delivered in the Square. S Gardiner advised that any events only require a letter from Council to Dfl to request the use of land. Additionally legislation can be included to allow for deliveries between certain times.</p> <p>A Cozzo noted that operationally Dfl enforcement would be preferred because of their enforcement powers in comparison to Council's. Additionally, the logistics of moveable bollards (keys and emergency access provision etc) would need to be carefully considered.</p> <p><b>Action: S Gardiner to provide updated map to group</b></p> <p>D Wright stated that a number of traders have approached the chamber regarding on street car parking. A trader is parking seven cars then moving them regularly to avoid receiving a ticket.</p> <p>S Gardiner replied that it is a loophole in the legislation and suggested a letter from the Chamber to the Minister.</p> <p><b>Action: D Wright/Newtownards Chamber to write to Minister reference parking in Newtownards</b></p>
<b>Item 8</b>	<b>Local Action Group Proposal</b>
	<p>A Cozzo provided an update on the review of the Advisory Group and the proposals received from the consultant, Paul Hogarth Company and Place Solutions -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advisory Group to become a Local Action Group</li> <li>- The main aim is to maximise the benefit of the group</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There is a real appetite for more input</li> <li>- Want to see more action</li> <li>- Budget required for the delivery of the Masterplan (Regeneration will support a budget request to Council)</li> <li>- Local Action Group to be supported by a Support Unit comprising of representation from all Action Groups across the towns and city</li> <li>- Next step is a group mapping exercise in each of the towns and city to identify key stakeholders and ensure the correct representation for each group</li> </ul> <p>I Foster asked why the group is being replaced. A Cozzo replied that the group is being revised following the recommendations from the review process.</p> <p>I Foster stated that things needed slimmed down as there was too many groups.</p> <p>Chair asked if there was a Terms of Reference and the stipulations around the proposed budget i.e. who decides what can be achieved.</p> <p>N McVitty stated that there was a lot of potential for a broader remit, with an allocated budget the group could identify potential projects and conduct feasibility studies etc.</p> <p>Chair asked if the group has the capacity, budget, and scope to be effective.</p> <p>D Wright stated that the group should seek funding and not waste a budget.</p> <p>I Foster suggested that the group needs to be who prepares bids to do work around the town and reminded the group that the chamber have six projects that need worked up.</p> <p>N McVitty advised that budget could be used to bring in professionals to work up those projects.</p> <p>I Foster asked if there was no-one in Council who could do it.</p> <p>Alderman A McDowell advised that a report was brought forward to the recent Council meeting regarding a funded regeneration programme of works and stated that what we get when money is available is not always the best and that he was underwhelmed with the projects brought forward by Regeneration.</p>
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	<p>I Foster stated that he was under the impression that what was required was to work up project to a shovel ready status.</p> <p>A Cozzo advised that the projects under the Regeneration Programme constituted a £373K investment into the towns and city funded by DfC, this figure includes a 10% contribution from ANDBC.</p> <p>Councillor R Smart stated that he can see the benefit in a Local Action Group for Comber and Donaghadee where there is community and volunteer involvement, it would aid the group in delivering and thinks there is room for Newtownards to get a small budget which could prove to be useful. I Foster advised that it could be a duplication of jobs.</p> <p>Councillor R Smart noted that there is a strategic focus on overnight stays.</p> <p>Chair advised that the budget would give the group the autonomy to focus on other projects.</p> <p>Alderman A McDowell agreed with Councillor R Smart, noting the success of the Portaferry Gala and that Council are more likely to fund community driven events.</p> <p>Councillor A McDowell advised that council officers are good at co-ordinating and council can print programmes etc</p> <p>I Foster stated that it sometimes felt like Council expect the chamber to plan and run events.</p> <p>Discussion was raised around events in Ards and it was agreed to invite the Events Unit to the next meeting.</p> <p><b>Action: Wendy Smith /Heather Shields to be invited to next meeting</b></p> <p>Councillor R Smart advised that he has highlighted that Ards should be the focus for the next growth event.</p>
<b>Item 9</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b>
	<p><b>Urban Regeneration Programme 2024/25</b></p> <p>A Cozzo advised that the DfC had informed the Council of a potential funding opportunity. The Council proceeded to submit an application for a range of urban regeneration projects at a total value of £373K (£335,700 funding and £33,570 council contribution).</p>

	<p>A Cozzo stated that there were three main elements included in the application.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Animation</li> <li>2. Connectivity</li> <li>3. Place Making</li> </ol> <p>A range of projects were proposed for Newtownards to include lamppost banners, window dressing of vacant business units, capital improvement works to Meetinghouse Lane, footfall counters etc.</p> <p>The budget is being spent across the urban towns and city and has a tight deadline of completion no later than 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.</p> <p>D Wright commended Regeneration officers on acquiring the budget.</p> <p>N McVitty advised that he will be involved with Council officers in risk assessing all the projects to determine which will need more active management.</p> <p><b>Parklets</b></p> <p>A Cozzo advised that planning permission is due to expire on the parklets in early 2025 and asked if there was a desire amongst the group to relocate them.</p> <p>D Wright replied that High Street's parklet was well used, the Frances Street parklet is not used and he was unsure about the Regent Street parklet.</p> <p>A Cozzo noted the flooding issue under the parklet currently sits with S Gardiner. S Gardiner replied that there has always been some form of flooding in the area, but a scheme is being developed to add pipe to drain the area into a nearby drain. This will be addressed this fiscal year.</p> <p>Chair noted some damage on the Frances Street parklet.</p> <p><b>Wayfinding Strategy</b> <i>(copy circulated)</i></p> <p>A Cozzo informed the Wayfinding Strategy has been circulated and thanked the members for their input. A Cozzo welcomed feedback from the group.</p>
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### **Town Centre On-Street Car Parking Restrictions**

D Wright advised that the chamber would like to see a parking strategy implemented with 2-hours free parking on and off street.

A Cozzo advised that he had asked Bangor CAG to report back with a wide consensus of what is suitable to the traders.

D Wright stated that traders are competing with retail parks for free parking.

Councillor R Smart stated that when Council received off street car parking from DfI in 2014 they did not receive the powers to alter fees. Council have written to central government to obtain these powers but legal team so far have advised against changing fees.

**Action: Ards Chamber to gather consensus from retailers in relation to parking restrictions**

### **Paddington \*IN CONFIDENCE\***

A Cozzo advised that the implementation of a Paddington Bear statue in Conway Square had been ratified by Council in May and ANDBC have committed to installation. A marketing plan is being developed with installation planned for week commencing 30<sup>th</sup> September and reveal week commencing 7<sup>th</sup> October as part of a UK wide trail in support of the new Paddington movie.

D Wright advised he has asked local businesses to start putting marmalade on their menus.

### **Date for follow up Project Workshop**

S Logan has communicated with the chamber with proposed dates for a follow up workshop. Date to be agreed.

### **Rhys McClenaghan**

D Wright stated that the group were proud of Rhys' achievements however social media had been negative of the council due to no visible support. The chamber has been pushing Council to support all Olympians from



	<p>across the borough. The chamber has held meetings with Council officers but were disappointed with costings put forward to host a fan zone in Conway Square.</p> <p>A Cozzo noted that the costs were in excess of £20,000 and were obtained from a reputable events company.</p> <p>D Wright noted that Coleraine had been able to produce a TV screen for the event.</p> <p>A Cozzo replied that officers will be in touch with Coleraine to enquire feedback which can be used as a case study for future events.</p> <p>D Wright stated that the chamber had pursued some organisations which had come back with costings of approx. £2-3K for the event. However, they were not able to obtain a TV license. The general consensus is why were we not able to provide a screen for Rhys McClenaghan and Ciara Mageean. The chamber is in strong discussions for the homecoming event.</p> <p>A Cozzo advised that C McMullan has met with DfC who will also support the event.</p> <p>Chair asked what the procedure would be to obtain a golden post-box. D Wright advised that he has already spoken to Post Office</p> <p>Chair questioned if there could be any issues with Rhys competing for Ireland.</p> <p>Councillor S Irvine noted there was no recognition for Paralympian at the World Championships and Council need to be more aware.</p> <p>D Wright suggested covering all athletes with headliner gold medallists.</p> <p>D Wright further noted that Newtownards has reached finalist position of High Street Retail Awards. A Cozzo noted that was incredibly positive for the second year in a row.</p> <p>Councillor R Smart stated that we were all very proud of what Rhys has done and that we need to take on learning from Coleraine. However, we must be cognisant that the event may not have worked and there was a risk delivering the event as well as not doing it. Councillor R Smart added that not many Councils dedicate a £30M gym to one person and their business.</p>
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	<p>Councillor S Irvine added that Ciara has also received a lot of training support from an early age from Council.</p> <p>D Wright noted that the chamber felt 7 months was enough time to arrange a Fan-Zone event but hopes to re-visit in four years.</p>
<b>Item 10</b>	<b>Date and Time of Next Meeting</b>
	<p><b>The date of the next meeting is to be set for November.</b></p> <p><b>Meeting finished 17:53</b></p>



# Local Action Groups



## Background

In 2023 Ards and North Down Borough Council appointed consultants, The Paul Hogarth Company, and Place Solutions, to undertake a review of the existing City/Town Advisory Groups. The review aimed to assess the effectiveness, composition, structure, and function of the Advisory Groups in order to identify areas for improvement and provide recommendations for enhancing their overall performance and impact.

The review process was carried out in five stages:

1. Review of NI and Local Policy and Strategic Context
2. Research into other approaches and best practice in the UK and Ireland
3. Online Survey
4. Workshop with Council Officers and Advisory Groups
5. Recommendations

The independent review of the Advisory Groups has identified the need for change. Through a series of focused amendments to the Advisory Group structure and processes, the groupings could become increasingly effective and play a greater role in the respective settlement.

The following 5 principles summarise the proposed role of the groups going forward:

1. A **positive** force for our city or town
2. A **two-way communication** hub for all things in relation to our city or town, so that information can be shared and disseminated.
3. City/ town **specific thinking** – strategy development and advice drawn on local knowledge and experience.
4. **Positive** change – advancing actions.
5. **Championing** our town or city – speaking up for our place and its people, promoting its attributes and potential for investment.

## Key Recommendations

- ✓ Advisory Groups to transform to **Local Action Groups**.
- ✓ **Local Action Group Support Unit** to be established.

## Proposed Local Action Group Structure



A **Town/ City Local Action Group** will be established for each city/town with an overarching **Local Action Group Support Unit**.

### Local Action Group Support Unit

1. The Local Action Group Support Unit will be made up of key departments within Council including Regeneration, Community Planning, Economic Development and Tourism, key NI Executive Departments, and the Chair of each Local Action Group.
2. The Local Action Group Support Unit has a collective responsibility for the delivery of Actions Plans established by each City/Town Local Action Group in relation to Masterplanning, community planning, placemaking and other localised issues.
3. The purpose of the Local Action Group Support Unit is to bring together representation from each City/Town to work together to promote positive change, share knowledge and expertise, and advocate for policy changes to benefit the community across the Borough.
4. The Local Action Group Support Unit will be consulted on and help to develop proposals and objectives relating to the work of the various council departments.

### City/Town Local Action Group

1. The City/Town Local Action Groups will progress/assist work in collaboration with Council officers developing a local approach to Masterplanning, community planning, placemaking and other localised issues.
2. The City/Town Local Action Groups is responsible for:
  - A clear audit of the existing masterplans/ strategies for the towns and city for all sectors
  - Key stakeholders for consulting and reporting on short-, medium-, and long-term plans and strategies which currently impact or relate to the town.
  - Mapping of current priorities, plans, programmes, and funding to address issues in the town.
  - Information and best practice sharing.
  - Disseminate discussions and actions to the groups each member represents
  - Being sustainable - social, environmental, and economic, and considering sustainability in all aspects of the work of the group.
3. The purpose of the City/Town Local Action Groups is to bring together all stakeholders to identify and work together to solve problems, promote positive change, share knowledge and expertise, and advocate for policy changes to benefit the community.
4. The City/Town Local Action Groups will be consulted on and help to develop proposals and objectives relating to the work of the various council departments.
5. The City/Town Local Action Groups structure will be determined following the delivery of a local stakeholder mapping exercise. It will include wider representation from all sectors and wider geographical coverage (extended to the boundary of the 30mph zone for each city/town).
6. The City/Town Local Action Groups will align to the recommendations set out in the Living High Street Framework, a set of guidelines and best practices for revitalising and improving High Streets. By doing so, the groups will be empowered to leverage the framework's expertise and guidance to inform their strategies and actions, ensuring that their efforts are effective, co-ordinated, and aligned with local priorities.
7. A strengthened Terms of Reference will be developed, this will provide a clear framework for the group members to work within and will reaffirm their purpose to ensure they are effective, efficient, and focused on achieving their objectives, with a focus on placemaking, investment, city/town specific vision and thinking.

In addition to the above:

1. The groups will have an annual schedule of meetings that will be on a quarterly basis. This will ensure that each group will have a set schedule, providing a structure for their activities. This will enable the group to stay focused, make progress, and maintain momentum.
2. The groups will have a dedicated webpage on the Council's website as a mechanism for enhanced communication. This will provide a platform for the public to stay informed about the group's activities, progress, and achievements. The webpage will foster transparency, engagement, collaboration, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of the Local Action Groups.
3. The Council will facilitate an Annual Conference with invited speakers on policy and best practice. This event would provide a platform for members to come together, share knowledge, and learn from one another, as well as stay updated on the latest developments in policy and practice. It would also offer an opportunity for networking, building relationships and fostering partnership working.
4. Each Group will be assigned a dedicated Council Regeneration Officer as their primary point of contact, providing a single person to communicate with and facilitating efficient communication and collaboration. This dedicated officer can help ensure that the groups needs are understood, concerns are addressed, and feedback is heard, ultimately leading to a more effective and responsive council-action group relationship.
5. Each Group will provide an Annual Report which will serve as a comprehensive overview of their activities, outputs, and outcomes from the previous year. The report will also outline the group's priorities for the upcoming year, highlighting their alignment with local and council policies. This will enable the group to track progress, monitor performance, and make informed decisions, while also ensuring accountability and transparency.
6. A Chair and Vice Chair for each group will be nominated annually, with a preference for selecting an independent chair.
7. Regeneration Officers will be responsible for reporting to the Place and Prosperity Committee of Ards and North Down Borough Council.
8. Regeneration Officers will facilitate, provide administration function, and support the independent Chair.

## Appendix 003

### Neighbourhood Tourism Group

The Council's Tourism Team would like to work with local groups and representatives across the Borough to develop new and assist existing Neighbourhood Tourism initiatives.

Council recognises there is a huge amount of work being done by local groups in this area, with Neighbourhood Tourism integral in developing relationships between people and place, and in addition benefitting local communities economically through the involvement of the people that live there.

There have been some fantastic success stories of passionate, local groups sharing their time, skills, stories and enthusiasm with tourists visiting the place they call home. Three such examples are:

- The Kings Award winning - Friends of Grey Abbey – providing access and tours of Grey Abbey.
- Discover Groomsport – providing guided summer tours of the village and running seasonal events.
- The Sir Samuel Kelly Project – keeping the story of the historic lifeboat alive.

We wish to host a focus group on **Tuesday 3 December in Donaghadee Community Centre at 10am**, for interested representatives of such organisations to look at what practical support can be delivered by the tourism section in this area to aid such great work.

**Action: If your group would be interested, please email Judith Hammond the contact information for one representative, email [judith.hammond@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:judith.hammond@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)**



## Go Succeed update

### Service provides 3 areas of support:

- 1 Masterclasses
- 2 Mentoring
- 3 Grants

Enrolment is through go-succeed.com

There are 4 pillars a client can be assigned to:

**Engage** - 4.5 hours mentoring with a basic business plan

**Foundation** -11 hours mentoring with a more comprehensive business plan

**Growth** – 10,15 or 21 hours mentoring support to help address barriers to growth

**Scaling** – up to 28 hours mentoring and potential Signposting to Invest NI

### Clients

- Can progress through the different pillars
- LEA deliver under Engage & Foundation
- External contractor, Full Circle deliver under Growth & Scaling

### Go Succeed Participation

Go Succeed Pillar	YTD Actual
Engage	235
Foundation	46
Growth	268
Scaling	2

### Approx 42% of engage clients are BT19 and BT20 postcodes.

Approx 55% of engage clients didn't proceed past initial registration. This is due to clients not proceeding with support, putting mentoring on hold or being assigned to other pillars.

### Approx. 37% of Foundation clients are BT19 and BT20 postcodes.

### Approx. 43% of Growth clients are BT19 and BT20 postcodes

### Go Succeed Grants

The Go Succeed Grant can provide funding of up to 70% of costs for capital and/or revenue items up to a maximum grant of £4,000 and minimum of £1,000. Grants are available under the Foundation and Growth pillars and clients are eligible when they have completed at least 50% of mentoring.

Go Succeed Pillar	YTD Awarded
Engage	-
Foundation	3
Growth	50
Scaling	-



## Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership:

Nicola sends her apologies that she can't be here today but her son has an orthodontist appointment that she has waited months for- (happy if you need to let them know)

## Current Projects:

All of these academies are for residents within the borough who are unemployed, at risk of redundancy or underemployed:

**Classroom Assistant Upskilling Academy:** this has commenced with 24 participants recruited, working towards the CACHE Level 3 Certificate in Supporting Teaching and Learning. This is due to be completed at the end of June 2025.

**Academy for People with Disabilities:** Recruitment for this academy is currently underway.

**Transport Academy:** Recruitment for this academy is currently underway.

**Employer Led Upskilling Programme-** Grants for upskilling employees up to £500 per employee up to a max of 4 employees.

**LMP Collaboration:** Working with Belfast City Council to pay for places for residents to attend academies that we are currently not providing.

## Upcoming Academies:

In the new year we will commencing the following academies:

**Work Ready Programme:** Supporting economically inactive people to develop work relevant soft skills.

**Admin Academy:** Supporting people to gain work relevant skills specifically for general admin roles.

All of these academies offer mentoring opportunities, support with interview skills, CV writing and overall support.

## Upcoming events:

**Disability Employment and Support Day- 27<sup>th</sup> November 10am-1pm. Comber Leisure Centre,** this event offers support and employment opportunities for people with a disability. Employers are welcome to come along and find out what support is available for them.

Flyers and Posters are available if anyone wants any- I have attached a copy of each one.

**Skills and Employment Support Clinic: 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025 10am-1pm- Comber Leisure Centre.** This event is aimed at those who are economically inactive or on benefits and want to find out what their training and employment options are.

Flyers and Posters are available if anyone wants any- I have attached a copy of each one.

**Disability Employment and Support Day- 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025- 1pm-4pm. Aurora Aquatic and Leisure Complex,** this event offers support and employment opportunities for people with a disability. Employers are welcome to come along and find out what support is available for them

**Job Fair- March 2025.** Ards Blair Mayne Leisure Centre: The date of this event will be confirmed within the next month. This event is aimed at those looking employment opportunities as well as support and training.

Any help/ assistance in disseminating this information especially about the events would be gratefully appreciated. Please let me know how best to do this??

**Employability and Skills Registers:**

AND LMP have produced two Employability and Skills Registers – one for Employers and one for Individuals - these contain all the help and support available within the borough.

These are available to download from our website:

<https://www.andbusiness.co.uk/andlmp>

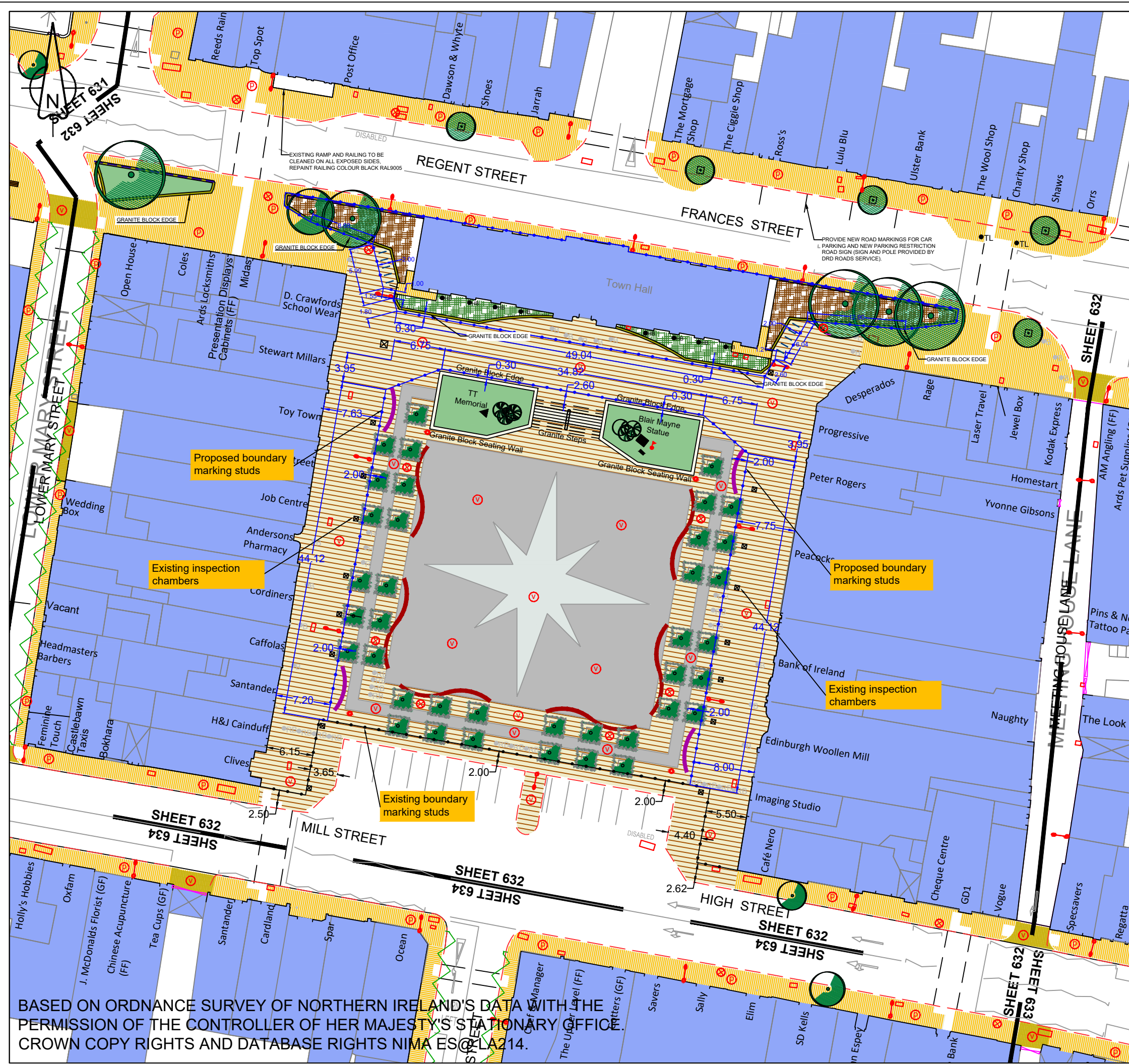
Hard copies are available and if you need any please just let me know.

T: 0300 013 3333 ext 40958

Direct Dial Number: 028 9127 8062



Mobile: 07760 373 436

[Lmp@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:Lmp@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)



- ## NOTES
1. Drawing is for information purposes only. No attempt should be made to scale of this drawing.
  2. All road signage are in accordance with the Traffic Signs Manual (TSM) Chapter 3 & Chapter 4 and the Traffic Signs Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997.

LEGEND:

-  PROPOSED BOUNDARY STUDS  
 EXISTING BOUNDARY STUDS

NO.	REVISION	DATE

Project: CONWAY SQUARE  
NEWTOWNARDS

Title:

PUBLIC REALM SCHEME

FILE NO.		DESIGNED	VC	Date:	20/08/24
DRAWN	VC	CHECKED	VMcC	Date:	20/08/24
TRACED		APPROVED	VMcC	Date:	20/08/24

<p>Dr. No.</p> <p>TM-RK-24-21</p>	<p>Revision</p> <p>-</p>
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Scales: Scale 1 : 500 @ A3

# Dfl-ROADS

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