

December 1st, 2023

**Notice Of Meeting**

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Thursday, 7th December 2023 at 7:00 pm** in **Hybrid Meeting - Church Street, Newtownards & Zoom.**

# Agenda

## Virtual Meeting Guidance

📎 *Guidance for virtual Council meetings.pdf*

*Not included*

## Agenda

📎 *PP 07.12.2023 Agenda.pdf*

*Page 1*

### 1. Apologies

### 2. Declarations of Interest

### 3. Q2 Economic Development Service Performance Report 2023/24

Report attached

📎 *3.0 ED Performance Report Q2 2023-24.pdf*

*Page 3*

### 4. Digital Update

Report attached

📎 *4.0 ED Digital Update.pdf*

*Page 7*

### 5. Taste AND - Food and Drink Sector Development Update 2023

Report attached

📎 *5. Taste AND - Food and Drink Sector Development Update 2023.pdf*

*Page 12*

📎 *5.1 Appendix 1 List of Food and Drink Awards 2023.pdf*

*Page 17*

### 6. Draft Tourism Strategy for NI: 10 Year Plan - Consultation Response

Report attached

📎 *6.0 Draft Tourism Strategy 10 Year Plan ANDBC response to Consultation.pdf*

*Page 18*

📎 *6.1 ANDBC Response Tourism-Strategy-Consultation-Questionnaire.pdf*

*Page 20*

## **7. Q2 Tourism Service Performance Report 2023/24**

Report attached

[!\[\]\(c507f772dba2b921f86777f01218e570\_img.jpg\) 7. Q2 Tourism Performance Report 2023.24.pdf](#)

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## **8. Q2 Regeneration Service Performance Report 2023/24**

Report attached

[!\[\]\(cbe2492b119e39e02a1dab2af4a4b296\_img.jpg\) 8. Q2 Regeneration Service Performance report.pdf](#)

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## **9. Village Entrance Signage Scheme**

Report attached

[!\[\]\(870f5d5e9c0d57485634be3ecf52f3ca\_img.jpg\) 9. Village Entrance Signage Scheme.pdf](#)

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## **10. Project 24 Expressions of Interest for Pods and Hub**

Report attached

[!\[\]\(7d1d6890825e83a6a4a51febe2dcc7f3\_img.jpg\) 10. Project 24 - Expressions of Interest for Pods and Hub.pdf](#)

Page 36

## **11. Response to Notice of Motion - Safety Concerns at Kircubbin Harbour**

Report attached

[!\[\]\(28f72b996fc97883dfd9d4e8b1b16b4e\_img.jpg\) 11.0 Response to NoM re Kircubbin Harbour 23nov23.pdf](#)

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[!\[\]\(aff7c69c44a5e015f18c35867ef3f5c3\_img.jpg\) 11.1 Response from DfC re Safety Concerns at the Harbour Kircubbin Harbour.pdf](#)

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## **12. Q2 Capital Projects Performance Report**

Report attached

[!\[\]\(a25a22d88c5882f4a20f36103df86562\_img.jpg\) 12 Q2 Capital Projects Performance Report.pdf](#)

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## **13. Levelling Up Fund Round 3**

Report attached

[!\[\]\(62e94c0795f5d0e811cb40e6b18f26fd\_img.jpg\) 13. Levelling Up Fund Round 3.pdf](#)

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## 14. Notices of motion referred to Committee by Council

## 15. Any Other Notified Business

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

## 16. Pickie Q2 2023-2024 Report

Report attached

[16.0 Pickie Quarter 2 Report - July - Sept 2023.pdf](#)

*Not included*

## 17. Exploris Q2 2023-24 Report

Report attached

[17.0 Exploris Quarter 2 Report - July - Sept 2023.pdf](#)

*Not included*

## 18. Bangor Marina Q2 2023-24 Report including Bangor Marina Quarterly Report July - September 2023

Report attached

[18.0 Bangor Marina Q2 Report July-Sept 2023-24.pdf](#)

*Not included*

[18.1 Appendix 1 Bangor Marina Quarterly Report July-Sept 2023.pdf](#)

*Not included*

## 19. Kinnegar Update Report

Report attached

[19. Kinnegar Logistics Base Update.pdf](#)

*Not included*

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

1 December 2023

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 7 December 2023**, commencing at **7.00pm**.

Yours faithfully

Stephen Reid  
Chief Executive  
Ards and North Down Borough Council

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

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Q2 Economic Development Service Performance Report 2023/24 (report attached)
4. Digital Update (report attached)
5. Taste AND - Food and Drink Sector Development Update 2023 (report attached)
6. Draft Tourism Strategy for NI: 10 Year Plan - Consultation Response (report enclosed)
7. Q2 Tourism Service Performance Report 2023/24 (report attached)
8. Q2 Regeneration Service Performance report 2023/24 (report attached)
9. Village Entrance Signage Scheme (report attached)
10. Project 24 Expressions of Interest for Pods and Hub (report attached)
11. Response to Notice of Motion – Safety Concerns at Kircubbin Harbour (report attached)
12. Q2 Capital Projects Performance Report (report attached)
13. Levelling Up Fund Round 3 (report attached)
14. Notices of motion referred to Committee by Council

15. Any Other Notified Business

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

16. Pickie Q2 2023-2-24 Report (report attached)

17. Exploris Q2 2023-24 Report (report attached)

18. Bangor Marina Q2 2023-24 Report including Bangor Marina Quarterly report July – September 2023 (report attached)

19. Kinnegar Update Report (report attached)

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

|                           |                      |
|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Alderman Adair            | Councillor Kennedy   |
| Alderman Armstrong-Cotter | Councillor MacArthur |
| Alderman McDowell         | Councillor McCracken |
| Councillor Ashe           | Councillor McCollum  |
| Councillor Blaney         | Councillor McKimm    |
| Councillor Edmund         | Councillor McLaren   |
| Councillor Gilmour        | Councillor Rossiter  |
| Councillor Hollywood      | Councillor Smart     |

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  |
| Date of Meeting             | 7 December 2023   |
| Responsible Director        | Director of Prosperity  |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Economic Development  |
| Date of Report              | 22 November 2023  |
| File Reference              | 160167  |
| Legislation                 |   |
| Section 75 Compliant        | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/><br>If other, please add comment below: |
| Subject                     | ED Performance Report Q2 2023-24  |
| Attachments                 | N/A   |

**Context**

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

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan Towards 2024 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually in September
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2023)

Not applicable

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

### Reporting approach

The Service Plans will be reported to relevant Committees on a half-yearly basis as undernoted:

| Reference      | Period            | Reporting Month |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Quarter 2 (Q2) | April – September | December        |
| Q4             | October – March   | March           |

The report for Quarter 2 2023-24 is attached.

### Key points to note:

- There have been certain challenges within the first half of the year such as DfC's withdrawal of budget for the LMP, only to reinstate it, but delayed allocation of funds; targets have therefore been pushed back to later in the year.
- Much of officer time within the ED Service Unit had to be devoted to the development of the successor service to *Go For It* and as a result, along with other budget priorities across the overall service area, some programmes had to be curtailed.
- Following a joint meeting with DfE and NI Audit Office (NIAO), it has been agreed that Councils should reference both the statutory targets and the *Go for It* programme targets. We are therefore reporting on the two sets of targets for Business Start-up activity: the original target set as part of transferring functions under RPA (referred to as NIBSUP2) and the revised target issued last year by DfE for *Go For It*. The new target will not be formally agreed to replace the original until the Executive is in place.

### Key achievements:

- The Labour Market Partnership was reinstated, and we managed to re-recruit staff who had left previously due to the uncertainty over funding. As a result, intensive planning was able to take place to ensure rollout of support and optimisation of budgets within this financial year.
- While our attractions have come under pressure due to increased costs and footfall numbers, they have continued to develop and enhance their respective offerings and have ensured all elements of the contracts have been delivered. August saw the launch of the new Ocean Tank at Exploris to coincide with its 7-year anniversary.
- Business Start targets have been exceeded as support was extended under *Go For It* while the new service was in development.



Not applicable

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**Emerging issues:**

- With late allocation of budget from DfC it will be challenging to procure and deliver all initiatives agreed by the LMP before the end of the financial year.
- The new Enterprise Support Service will require enhanced resources in order to fully deliver the requirements of the support.

**Action to be taken:**

- Officers will work with HR and other Councils to optimise work streams and staffing.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council note this report.









Not applicable

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## Half yearly Performance Report - Economic Development

Generated on: 22 November 2023

Last Update H1 2023/24

| Performance Data Traffic Light Icon   | PI Short Name   | Performance Data Current Value | Performance Data Current Target |
|---|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|  | % spend against budget  | 93.68%                         | 100%                            |
|  | Manage operator agreements performance                              | 100%                           | 100%                            |
|  | % staff attendance  | 92.53%                         | 93%                             |
|  | No of 1:1 Business Advice sessions (cumulative)                     | 41                             | 45                              |
|  | Number of business research assignments                             | 70                             | 35                              |
|  | Draw down of Seal Sanctuary claim from DAERA                        | 100%                           | 100%                            |
|  | No of new jobs created through NIBSUP                               | 63                             | 40                              |
|  | Number of new jobs created through Go For It programme (cumulative) | 63                             | 55                              |

Unclassified

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

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Report Classification       | Unclassified  |
| Exemption Reason            | Not Applicable  |
| Council/Committee           | Place and Prosperity Committee  |
| Date of Meeting             | 07 December 2023  |
| Responsible Director        | Director of Prosperity  |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Economic Development  |
| Date of Report              | 16 November 2023  |
| File Reference              | Dev23   |
| Legislation                 | N/A   |
| Section 75 Compliant        | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/><br>If other, please add comment below: |
| Subject                     | Digital Update  |
| Attachments                 | N/A   |

**Purpose and Background**

This report details an update summary on the development of digital projects:

1. Peace Plus – “Smart Towns and Villages”
2. Innovation Hub
3. Digital Transformation Flexible Fund

**1. Peace Plus – “Smart Towns and Villages”****Summary**

The East Border Region (EBR) organisation is made up of the following Council partners: Ards and North Down Borough Council; Armagh City, Banbridge, and Craigavon Borough Council; Meath County Council; Monaghan County Council; Newry, Mourne and Down District Council; and Louth County Council. It is the body through which Council has typically accessed funding for cross-border or inter-regional projects.

Not Applicable

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Members will be aware from the report presented in June 2023 that two projects have been in development through EBR under the Peace Plus strategic priority 2.4 “Smart Towns and Villages”.

The funding call for this priority is yet to open but is expected to do so before Christmas 2023 and the funding mechanism can only be applied to towns and villages with a population of less than 18,000.

Two projects for this funding mechanism which EBR has been coordinating are:

1. Digi Hubs
2. C.H.A.R.I.O.T.

### **Project 1: Digi Hubs**

The Digi Hubs project is expected to be made up of all six EBR partners in addition to:

1. SERC
2. East Border Region organisation
3. Dundalk Institute of Technology

This project is designed to bring in capital funding to retro-fit an existing underutilised Council asset to accommodate digital transformation hardware and software.

The project takes a holistic approach to digital transformation. It combines physical Mini Digital Hubs with a Mobile Digital Lab, to ensure accessibility for both urban and rural communities. Additionally, the emphasis on cross-border collaboration and the involvement of academia, industry, and government creates a comprehensive and inclusive digital ecosystem. This project recognises that digital innovation should be inclusive, community-driven, and sustainable, laying the groundwork for a thriving digital future that benefits everyone in the region.

Key points for the project:

- Develop an area-based approach to smart projects.
- Use a social innovation-led approach to maximise the potential of ICT to deliver improved social and economic outcomes in target areas.
- Use technology to enable, accelerate or support strategic goals such as economic growth, wellbeing, sustainability, environmental solutions, social inclusion and cross-border relationships.

Further reports will be brought to Council as the project is developed and the benefits further evaluated by officers; however, at this stage, Council has been asked to consider potential eligible existing Council assets located in towns or villages with a population of less than 18,000 and to propose its preferred location for inclusion in the Digi Hub project proposal. The sites will need to house digital transformation hard-ware and soft-ware.

Not Applicable

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The detail of the project is still to be further worked up and much more discussion on the realisation of the concept in each area is required; but, it is estimated that approximately €0.5 million will be available for digital transformation purposes per partner Council. As part of the funding, it is thought that budget could be made available for a resource to manage the hub area and support that it will offer.

### **Project 2: C.H.A.R.I.O.T. (Councils Harnessing Augmented Reality and Internet of Things)**

This project was developed by Officers in ANDBC and presented to the EBR working groups. Despite strong feedback from SEUPB (Special EU Programmes Body) the EBR region has taken the decision not to proceed with this project due to lack of engagement by two of the cross-border partners and a decision from the third to leave the project. Without a cross-border element the project is not eligible for funding. Feedback has been requested from EBR as to why the cross-border parties have either not engaged or withdrawn; no feedback has been received to date.

### **2. Innovation Hub**

Members will be aware that the Belfast Region City Deal (BRCD) provides the opportunity under the digital pillar for the development of an Innovation Hub. Previous reports have detailed the development of an Outline Business Case (OBC) for a hub specific to the Film/TV and Digital Technology Sectors.

The draft OBC for the Hollywood Innovation Hub has now been submitted to Invest Northern Ireland (INI) for review as the body appointed by the Department for the Economy (DfE) for feedback before being submitted for Board approval and casework. Once feedback is received, and any required amendments made, a report will be brought to Council for approval prior to full submission to the DfE.

### **2. Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF)**

#### **Background**

DTFF is a new £7.5m digital transformation initiative developed by Belfast Region City Deal partners and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and is supported by the wider city and growth deals across the region. It is a unique project as it is one of the first Cross-Growth deal projects to be developed. It is delivered by all local authorities across NI under the Full Fibre Northern Ireland Consortium (FFNI) and supported by Invest NI. The project is part funded by the NI Executive, UK Government, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and all local authorities in Northern Ireland.

#### **Aims of DTFF**

DTFF's key purpose is to support economic recovery and fast track the progress of the micro and small business community to respond to the opportunities of digital transformation using advanced and emerging technologies.

The programme seeks to address the financial barrier that many small businesses face when seeking to digitally transform, by establishing a capital grant fund that will support investment in equipment critical to their strategic digital transformation ambitions. This grant can assist those smaller organisations that do not have the

Not Applicable

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necessary capital available to develop and trial new products and services using new and advanced technologies.

The DTFF capital investments are designed to enable business transformation and not improve the 'digitisation' of existing business models/operations. As such the DTFF will fund advanced digital technologies projects which include the following:

- Smart technologies/ smart environments and the Internet of Things (IoT)
- Process automation via robotics/cobotics
- Big-data and analytics
- Immersive Technologies (AR/VR/MR/Haptics)
- Artificial intelligence and machine learning; and
- Distributed ledger systems/ blockchain technologies

For full eligibility guidelines please refer to the DTFF website: [www.dtff.co.uk](http://www.dtff.co.uk)

If successful, DTFF can offer a grant towards a Digital Transformation Project up to 70% with 30% match funding to come from the applicant. The 70% intervention rate is typically unheard of from government funded grants but is important to stimulate innovation amongst our micro and small businesses.

The programme aligns with a number of other key projects in the Digital and Innovation Ecosystem including those offered through the City and Growth deal projects and is supported by a number of key stakeholders operating in the same area.

### **Key Issues**

Newry, Mourne and Down Officials will centrally manage and administrate the DTFF grant with support from all Councils. Marketing and PR activities will be coordinated by NMDDC with local animation conducted by local Economic Development teams.

The first call for the project opened on 8 November and will close on 6 December. A series of pre-briefing sessions are being delivered across all council areas including online sessions for those businesses that cannot make it in person.

Eligibility and Application guidance will be made available at these pre-briefing sessions and provided through the DTFF website along with the Expression of Interest: [www.dtff.co.uk](http://www.dtff.co.uk)

The priority is to open the first funding call to allow businesses to apply, however a formal launch is being developed in parallel to promote the scheme officially.

At the time of writing this report the ANDBC soft launch pre-briefing session of the project is booked for 21 November, 10:00am while the formal launch is planned to take place in Riddell Hall on 29 November 2023.

Not Applicable

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## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

1. Proposes its preferred location (which meets the criteria of a population of less than 18,000) for inclusion in the Digi Hub project proposal for the purpose of receiving capital investment for digital transformation purposes;
2. notes the progress of the development of the draft OBC for the AND Innovation Hub; and
3. notes the status of the DTFF and agrees to promote the programme to relevant businesses, where possible.

Unclassified

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

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Report Classification       | Unclassified  |
| Exemption Reason            | Not Applicable  |
| Council/Committee           | Place and Prosperity Committee  |
| Date of Meeting             | 07 December 2023  |
| Responsible Director        | Director of Prosperity  |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Tourism   |
| Date of Report              | 14 November 2023  |
| File Reference              | TO/TD182  |
| Legislation                 | n/a   |
| Section 75 Compliant        | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/><br>If other, please add comment below: |
| Subject                     | Taste AND - Food and Drink Sector Development Update 2023   |
| Attachments                 | List of Food and Drink Awards 2023  |

**Background**

Since 2022, the local Food and Drink sector has had many successes at International, National and Regional Food and Drink Awards, as well as working with officers to develop and launch the Taste AND Food and Drink Destination Development Plan 2023-27. Unfortunately, there are still challenges within the sector. It has had a marginally less tumultuous year than the three previous, although the primary challenges of staffing and energy costs persist and are likely to continue for many years ahead. The resultant inflationary pressures have now started to take their toll on both food production and hospitality with business closures from the start of the year. The Food and Drink network has lost approximately a dozen businesses since the last membership registration period in January 2023.

Staff and recruitment issues are having the most impact on restaurants with businesses not being able to operate a full team for shift schedules to pre-Brexit and pre-pandemic levels, this is a national picture. This has led to reduced operational



Not Applicable

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hours and reported a rise in 'burn out' for overburdened staff. Training and therefore career progression is also seeing an impact.

The war in Ukraine and global insecurity has built upon the impact of Brexit in terms of food prices, the supply chain is more disjointed, and businesses advise they need to source new suppliers of core ingredients and find new ways to reach customers via direct sales. The upside of this issue is that businesses have become more agile to meet customer needs and local producers are seeing more opportunities to find local customers. Businesses are increasingly resilient and much more diverse in terms of services and products. More of what is made locally is staying local and those who lead newly formed businesses are more ambitious and skilled to take on the tough environment.

### **Taste AND Food and Drink Achievements 2023**

The following highlights the activity and achievements year to date.

#### **1. Taste AND Food and Drink Destination Development Plan 2023-27**

The second Food and Drink Plan for the Borough was developed and launched in October 2023. The four-year plan contains 12 actions, with a scheduled mid-term review in 2025.

#### **2. Training Programme**

There was a significant increase of in-person training support this year (62 attendees), through collaboration with NI Food and Invest NI, which included:

- Trends and Development in Food and Drink (February)
- Digital Marketing Masterclass (March)
- Food Photography Masterclass (March)
- Recruitment & Retention in Hospitality (April)
- Meet the buyers Masterclass (May)
- SALSA (safe and local supplier) Accreditation (on-going)

#### **3. Trade Shows**

In 2023, there have been a total of 26 partially or fully subsidised spaces for industry at trade shows and events outside the Borough, which were shared among 19 producers.

- May: Balmoral Show (8 businesses)
- June: Love Your Food Show, Belfast (4 businesses)
- June: Garden Show Ireland, Antrim (4 businesses)
- August: Honey Fair, Hillsborough (4 businesses)
- September: Dingle Food Fest/Eat Ireland in a Day Showcase (5 businesses)
- October: Distilleries Showcase Belfast (1 business)

Not Applicable

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At the Eat Ireland in a Day Showcase event at the Irish Food Awards, Bow Bells, Capparelli Cooks, Copeland Distillery, Clandeboye Estate Yoghurt and Morning Glory Granola took five of the six available spaces allocated to Ulster-based producers. This was Taste AND's first formal showcase of producers outside Northern Ireland with substantial coverage via Bank of Ireland's sponsored Bord Bia promotion of the events.

The first trade show of 2024 takes place in Spring at the Love Your Food Show in Belfast, with nine businesses participating. Unfortunately, due to rising costs for attendance at these shows, it is likely there will be a reduction in the number of businesses that can be supported by Council.

#### **4. Taste Summer in Ards and North Down**

The Comber Earlies Food Festival event included a new feature called 'Taste AND Meet the Maker'. This was an opportunity for 12 Taste AND members to be interviewed by festival ambassador Lotte Duncan and for the audience to sample their produce. Lotte Duncan then featured the producers within her "Truly Scrumptious Podcast series". The feature was considered a success by participants and audiences and will return in 2024.

The shoulder activity featured a Comber Earlies showcase dinner and a garden market at No 14 The Georgian House, as well as the return of three activities at McBrides on the Square including The Big Food (Charity) Quiz, Indie Fude's Beer and Raclette Night, and the Sunday Comber Earlies Lunch.

#### **5. Taste Autumn in Ards and North Down**

Shoulder events included Wild Dining at Orlock with Ballyboley Dexters and Lightfoot Kitchen, Chilli 6 at Harbour & Co, The Seafood Showcase Dinner at Pier 36 and culminating with the Chilli Festival at Bangor Castle Walled Garden, in partnership with the Council's Parks Service. Approximately 4,000 attended over the two days.

Chilli Festival 2023 featured eight local producers and three local international-themed restaurants featuring on the demo kitchen hosted by SERC. This collaborative event has helped enforce a key food strength of the borough.

#### **Award Winners 2023**

The 2023 Food Awards season has now drawn to a close and has been the most successful year ever for both for Taste AND producers and restaurants. Throughout the year the Food and Drink Officer has continued to drive local businesses to enter local, national, and international awards through providing information and technical advice for entry.

The 'gold standard' food and drink awards in produce are the UK's "Great Taste Awards", announced in August and Ireland's "Blas na hEireann Awards", announced in September. For the alcoholic drinks producers, the gold standard class of awards are the "International Wine and Spirit Competition (IWSC)", the "World Gin Awards" and the "World Whiskey Awards". Collectively, these are considered the "Food and Drink Oscars".

Not Applicable

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Other notable awards for food are the “Irish Quality Food Awards” and the “British Quality Food Awards”, which are retail market focussed, as well as the “Free From Awards”, “UK Butchery Awards”, and the “UK Food Manufacturing Excellence Awards”. Local food and drink businesses awards of note are the “Farming Life Awards” and the “Belfast Telegraph Business Awards”.

For restaurants, the most prestigious and respected awards are Michelin Guide/Bib Gourmand, with AND now having had four of these.

See Appendix 1 for the list of Awards.

## Looking forward to 2024

### **Taste Ards and North Down Local Food Heroes Awards**

To highlight the achievements of local businesses the ‘Local Food Heroes’, an Honours Reception with the Mayor takes place each Spring. This year’s event will be held on 6 March at Bangor Castle to celebrate the success of our producers and restaurants. It will also include the 3<sup>rd</sup> Lady Dufferin Award for producer of the year and an inaugural ‘Local Food and Drink Champion’ awarded to the business that gives the most support to local produce selected by producer members.

### **Food and Drink Industry Week**

To reflect the needs of the industry a Taste AND Food and Drink Industry Week will be delivered in Spring. This will include careers support, training, buyer to buyer activity and the Local Food Heroes Awards.

### **Food and Drink Network Changes**

The Food and Drink Network Committee (Committee members nominated by the network member representatives of the industry sectors) has voted to move to a more formalised and structured approach to membership for 2024. Prospective members will now be required to apply, with an application assessed by a panel against an agreed set of criteria based on use of local ingredients or produce, contribution to network development, and local food festivals and activities. Members have long considered that a move towards a ‘local standard’ would be required and now feel that the publication of the new Food and Drink Destination Development Plan enables this to happen.

The Committee has now formalised three types of membership (full, associate and provisional), new enhanced member terms and conditions, a member code of conduct, suspension policy, along with the creation of membership and event fees to improve the long-term operational development of Taste AND. Network Committee accepts this may lead to a decline in membership numbers, perhaps as much as half, but considers this is a necessity to ensure Taste AND can move forward with an active body of invested and responsible members. This model is one that has been adopted following investigations and discussions with a number of similar Networks, which have been long established in ROI. It will be kept under review by officers.

## RECOMMENDATION

Not Applicable

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

## Appendix 1

**List of Food and Drink Awards 2023****Farming Life Awards 2023**

Three Taste Ards and North Down businesses received four of the 16 available awards with Primacy Farm Meats taking two and Ballyboley Dexters and Willowbrook Foods one each. This is the third year in a row we have won four of these awards.

**Great Taste Winners 2023**

A total of 13 awards were won by 10 businesses with most being first time winners this year. A very special 'three star' award was taken by Ballyboley Dexters who were one of only four Northern Ireland businesses put forward for the prestigious "Golden Fork Award".

**Blas na hEireann 2023**

This year resulted in a 'best ever' performance for Ards and North Down business at the Blas Awards with a near doubling of the presence of businesses as finalists. This year there were 19 finalist products from 12 companies, up from 11 products and six companies in 2022. The standout performance from the awards was Papa's Minerals/Longbridge Drinks taking home two gold awards and a best in County.

**Drinks Awards 2022**

Both Echlinville Distillery and Copeland Distillery have enjoyed their most successful awards season ever putting them at the very top of the Northern Irish distilling sector. Both have increased awards won in 2022 at almost double, mostly through international distilling awards. Copeland took their first "Blas" award and their first World Gin Award whilst Echlinville claimed a staggering 13 World Whisky Awards.

**Summary of Awards Won in 2023**

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 1  | Good Food Ireland Award                            |
| 1  | National UK Asian Restaurant Award                 |
| 1  | Georgina Campbell Award                            |
| 2  | LCN Awards   |
| 2  | World Gin Awards (Copeland/Echlinville)            |
| 2  | Business Telegraph Awards                          |
| 3  | IWSCs (Copeland)                                   |
| 3  | Retail NI Awards                                   |
| 4  | Michelin Guide or Bib Gourmand Awards              |
| 4  | McKenna's Guide Awards                             |
| 4  | Farming Life Awards                                |
| 10 | Great Taste Awards (8 businesses)                  |
| 11 | Irish Quality Food Awards Finalists (6 businesses) |
| 13 | World Whisky Awards (Echlinville)                  |
| 19 | Blas na hEireann Awards Finalists (11 businesses)  |

\*Free From Awards not known

Unclassified

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## ITEM 6

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Report Classification       | Unclassified  |
| Exemption Reason            | Not Applicable  |
| Council/Committee           | Place and Prosperity Committee  |
| Date of Meeting             | 07 December 2023  |
| Responsible Director        | Director of Prosperity  |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Tourism   |
| Date of Report              | 23 November 2023  |
| File Reference              | TO/TD187  |
| Legislation                 | n/a   |
| Section 75 Compliant        | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/><br>If other, please add comment below:<br>Consultation |
| Subject                     | Draft Tourism Strategy for NI: 10 Year Plan - Consultation Response   |
| Attachments                 | Appendix 1 - ANDBC Response to Questionnaire- Tourism Strategy: 10 Year Plan Consultation.  |

The consultation for the draft Tourism Strategy for NI 10 Year Plan opened on 6 November and closes at 17:00 12 January 2024. The Strategy is available on the link below, along with a consultation questionnaire.

[Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland: 10 Year Plan | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/draft-tourism-strategy-for-northern-ireland-10-year-plan)

The draft Plan sets out the Department for the Economy's vision and mission for the growth of the tourism sector in Northern Ireland over the next decade. It states it will help position the region internationally as an attractive place to visit, making our visitors feel welcome whilst at the same time helping to make the lives better of all our citizens. It further states that it will seek to deliver on the objectives of the 10X Economic Vision by generating economic growth that is sustainable, inclusive and innovative.

Not Applicable

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The Department wants all interested parties to consider the draft proposals for growth in the tourism sector. Tourism NI will also be consulting with the tourism industry via a parallel process of industry engagement. A session for Council officers is due to take place on 27 November 2023.

Members are encouraged to view the full draft Strategy online, and to encourage local tourism businesses to respond directly prior to the consultation deadline. The consultation exercise is being promoted locally via the tourism industry ezine.

### **Summary of draft Tourism Strategy for NI: 10 Year Plan**

#### **Vision**

Establish NI as a year-round world class destination which is renowned for its authentic experiences, landscape, heritage and culture and which benefits communities, the economy and the environment, with sustainability at its core.

#### **Mission**

Support the Tourism sector in building a more innovative sustainable and inclusive tourism industry for all the people and places in NI which enriches its people, its economy and its guests.

#### **Strategic Aim**

To increase the value of tourism to the NI economy by 50-75% compared to 2019 (last full year of statistics available) \*note the 50-75% increase in the value of tourism expressed in the Aim is based on Compound Annual Growth of 4-6%.

#### **Themes**

It is designed to be a roadmap, premised on five themes, which seek to strive for a new and ambitious growth trajectory that is **Innovative, Inclusive, Sustainable, Attractive and Collaborative** over the next decade. These are the core of the Strategy, with accompanying objectives, and are designed to support continued growth in tourism in NI to appeal to both overseas and domestic visitors, and also contribute a better quality of life for the people of who live here, enriching communities and spreading the economic and social benefits of tourism throughout the region.

#### **Framework**

The Strategy provides a framework for delivery bodies such as Tourism NI and Tourism Ireland to work with other public authorities and the tourism industry to shape and develop local tourism strategies and action plans which will support the industry to prepare for future success.

#### **ANDBC Response to Consultation**

An online response can be submitted (or emailed directly) to the Department. A suggested Council response is attached as Appendix 1.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council approves the ANDBC Response to Questionnaire - Tourism Strategy: 10 Year Plan Consultation and returns it to the Department for the Economy by 12 January 2024.



## 1. What type of organisation do you represent?

---

- Central Government
- Local Government
- Voluntary & Community Sector
- Tourism Industry
- Private Sector
- Individual
- Other

If you have selected 'Tourism Industry' please specify below, which area of the Industry you represent:

- Attraction/Experience Provider
- Accommodation
- Transport
- Tour Operator
- Destination Management Organisation
- Food & Drink
- Other

If you have selected 'Other' Please specify below:



## 2. Thinking of the Vision, Mission and Strategic Aim, to what extent do you agree or disagree that they are the right Vision, Mission and Strategic Aim for the Industry?

**Our Vision:** Establish Northern Ireland as a year-round world class destination which is renowned for its authentic experiences, landscape, heritage and culture and which benefits communities, the economy and the environment, with sustainability at its core.

**Our Mission:** To support the tourism sector in building an innovative, sustainable and inclusive tourism industry for all people and places in Northern Ireland which enriches its people, its economy and its guests.

**Our Strategic Aim:** To increase the value of tourism to the Northern Ireland economy by 50-75% compared to 2019.

NB: Please note the 50-75% increase in the value of tourism expressed in the Strategic Aim is based on a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 4-6%. We are particularly keen to hear views on the quantitative aspect of this aim that balances ambition, realism and sustainability.

- Strongly Agree**  
 **Agree**  
 **Neither Agree nor Disagree**  
 **Disagree**  
 **Strongly Disagree**

If 'Disagree or Strongly Disagree' Please Expand Below.

The Ards and North Down Borough Council's (ANDBC) Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration, and Economic Development, 2018-2030 (ITDRS) sets challenging targets for growth in visitor spend from £46m to £82m, and to increase share of overnight NI trips from 6% to 10%, by 2030. To enable ANDBC to realise these ambitious targets, investment in the tourism product, as well as tourism micro and small businesses, is required beyond Belfast. Therefore, the recognition that creating opportunities to spread sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits around the region, so that communities in all parts of NI benefit, all year round, is particularly welcome. Innovative, sustainable and inclusive tourism will require investment in digital, road and sewerage infrastructure to support enterprises and large projects such as Bangor Waterfront redevelopment through the Belfast Region City Deal. Dispersal into regions beyond Belfast will give opportunities to grow local tourism revenue.

**3. Thinking about the Themes and associated Indicators outlined in the Strategy, to what extent do you agree or disagree that they are the right ones to target future growth of the industry?**

|                      | Strongly Agree                      | Agree                    | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Disagree                 | Strongly Disagree        |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Inclusive</b>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Innovative</b>    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Sustainable</b>   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Collaborative</b> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <b>Attractive</b>    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**If 'Disagree or Strongly Disagree' Please Expand Below.**

**4. What would you view as the five most important actions which could contribute to achieving the indicators outlined within the Strategy? Please note a number of these actions would be dependent on the Public Expenditure available and the wider political and financial climate.**

- 
- Develop and deliver a bespoke Skills Action Plan
- 
- Develop a Quality Employer Charter
- 
- Develop a Tourism Employer Excellence Programme
- 
- Build awareness in businesses of sustainability (green) practices
- 
- Encourage and develop NI cross government collaboration
- 
- Build awareness of, and support for, accessing sources of alternative funding
- 
- Build awareness in businesses of innovation within the tourism sector
- 
- Formally recognize/accredit businesses for demonstrating innovation
- 
- Additional Data Collection and Robust Benchmarking
- 
- Marketing Campaigns – Regional messaging across international campaigns
- 
- Develop a NI Events Framework
- 
- Support local events and festivals
- 
- Support larger events that attract people from outside of NI
- 
- Promote importance of Business Tourism and deliver on Business Tourism Strategy
- 
- Deliver an annual tourism awards programme to recognise best practice in the industry
- 
- Develop an air route development programme to improve connectivity with France and Germany
- 
- Increased delivery of Travel & Tourism programmes in schools leading to increased qualifications
- 
- Stronger connection between employers/delivery partners/programmes to support businesses to participate in opportunities
- 
- Develop a bespoke Sustainability Accreditation Scheme and/or promote a framework to promote and recognize other quality assured sustainability accreditation schemes
- 
- A Regenerative/Sustainable Tourism Development Programme similar to the EDP to support the development of new and enhanced sustainable tourism experiences;
- 
- Promote the role tourism plays in sustaining other sectors, eg culture, arts & heritage and food
- 
- Encourage and facilitate collaboration within the sector to share best practice/knowledge/networks
- 
- More collaboration between councils to produce integrated tourism/destination plans at local level

**5. What do you think your organisation, business or those you represent, could deliver to contribute towards the Tourism Strategy? This could be in general, or in terms of the specific Themes and Indicators set out in the Strategy.**

**Inclusive and Innovative**

ANDBC is committed to delivering support and skill packages to local enterprises and businesses. The Tourism sector in ANDBC has one of the highest number of jobs employed within the tourism sector 8% second to Belfast (Source: Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2019). Innovation in the tourism and creative sector is critical for the continual growth of innovative tourism experiences within ANDBC. A dedicated team and programme of support is available for entrepreneurs, micro and small businesses. Examples of innovation include new ideas coming forward in cookery schools, wellbeing, 'learning' and cultural experiences. ANDBC would be supportive to the commitment to ensure that all tourism impacts can bring lasting and positive economic and societal benefits to communities locally. A local example includes the Open House Festival, which not only brings economic return to the borough, but also engages local businesses, volunteers and community from development to delivery as part of the Festival each year.

**Sustainable and Collaborative**

ANDBC has a Roadmap to Sustainability, which across all services seeks to maximise collaborative and direct opportunities to work towards making the Council and the borough net zero. A workstream within the ANDBC Big Plan (Community Plan) is Sustainable Tourism, whereby there is a commitment with partners to collaboratively deliver sustainable tourism initiatives. The tourism sector within ANDBC is engaged in this process and currently has a group of passionate businesses sharing knowledge and activity together as part of the AND Sustainable Giants (p.71 Tourism Strategy). Their goal is to position themselves at the forefront of green and sustainable practices.

**Attractive**

A huge range of tourism providers adhere to the brand ethos of 'Embrace our Giant Spirit' (EAGS). Giant Spirit Experience Collection contributors include Tracey's Farmhouse Kitchen Experience, Canoe and Cake on Strangford Lough, SUP- Nic, Bangor, Echlinville Distillery Tours, NI Jewellery Making, Holywood, Glide with the Tide, Strangford Lough, Copeland Distillery Tours and Sunrise SUP and Yoga. ANDBC is committed to supporting local providers to create more unique, authentic experiences which tell local stories, through its commitment to an annual Experience Development support programme. The development of these aim to encourage visitors to experience smaller capacity, higher value, sustainable activities. A number of new local experiences are in the pipeline for further Experience skills development with TNI directly. Locally, ANDBC is home to multi award winning producers/businesses in Food and Drink which is a key strength by telling the local food and drink story to visitors.

**6. Based on your responses to the above questions, do you have any further comment on the Strategy as a whole? i.e. Is there anything missing? Is it taking the industry on the right path for current and future challenges/opportunities?**

It is critical that all Central Government Departments commit to a coordinated approach to deliver the aspirations of the Tourism Strategy 10 Year Plan. Also, aligning packages of support and committing to a longer planning budget framework would enable Local Authorities to make the appropriate planned spend commitments, to deliver innovative tourism projects and experiences. A co-ordinated, collaborative and communicated approach is vital to ensure that funding opportunities, when they arise from whatever source, are maximised by good forward planning. Central to these is the requirement for the commitment from Government Departments to ensure there is suitable infrastructure in place to support the development of strategic projects (City Deal and others) and suitable developments in sustainable transport options, reaching into rural communities, where the 'heart' of authentic, passionate visitor experiences will lie alongside new visitor hubs, cities and towns.

Although not chosen as one of the top 5 in question 4 of this survey, additional data and robust benchmarking must be developed and supported to gather trend data and inform planning and business case development. Data from benchmarking, in market consumer data and future trends is central to understand where investments should be made going forward. Robust, more localised data would give confidence to local businesses regarding the 'risk' in the step towards starting, developing or growing a business. Financial support to disperse visitors beyond Belfast is key to ANDBC businesses.

Support in the recruitment and retention of staff in the food and hospitality businesses is critical to ensure that the 'offering' is available to visitors Monday- Sunday, 365 days a year. Visitors expectations are high and NI must ensure the product is available and service is high quality all year round. Service quality and a 'welcome' by and in the 'secondary' sectors is very important to ensure the return to the 'communities', as aspired to in the Tourism Strategy, is met. At the core of EAGS is people, so the broader 'visitor touchpoints' are critical to meeting potential customer expectations.

Recognition of new ways to holiday is to be embraced, whilst providing safe, sustainable solutions. A review of relevant legislation or policies e.g. future accommodation policy (p29) is welcomed. Increase in suitable local hotel accommodation is required.

The development of a NI Events Framework should be completed in collaboration with Local Authorities. Local Authorities are primary funders and supporters of events. It is therefore essential a coordinated approach is undertaken to maximise all best opportunities and prospects, whilst providing a range which is appealing to visitors (p30).

**7. In the event that we need to better understand some of the responses collected, would you be willing to be contacted by the Department for the Economy to discuss your responses in further detail? Please note that your responses are otherwise confidential.**

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**Yes**

**No**

**If Yes, please provide:**

**Name:**

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**Job Title: Head of Tourism**

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**Name of Organisation (if appropriate): Ards and North Down Borough Council**

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**Email:**

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**If you have any concerns or questions at all about the Tourism Strategy, please do not hesitate to contact 02890529930 or [tourismstrategy@economy-ni.gov.uk](mailto:tourismstrategy@economy-ni.gov.uk)**

Unclassified

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

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Report Classification       | Unclassified  |
| Exemption Reason            | Not applicable  |
| Council/Committee           | Place and Prosperity  |
| Date of Meeting             | 7 December 2023   |
| Responsible Director        | Director of Prosperity  |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Tourism   |
| Date of Report              | 20 November 2023  |
| File Reference              | TO/MAR4/160127  |
| Legislation                 | n/a   |
| Section 75 Compliant        | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/><br>If other, please add comment below:<br>Performance Report |
| Subject                     | Q2 Tourism Performance Report 2023/24   |
| Attachments                 | N/A   |

**Context**

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

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan Towards 2024 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually in September
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2023)

Not applicable

28

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

### Reporting approach

The Service Plans will be reported to relevant Committees on a half-yearly basis as undernoted, with the report for Quarter 2 included at end of report:

| Reference      | Period            | Reporting Month |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Quarter 2 (Q2) | April – September | December        |
| Q4             | October – March   | March           |

### Key points to note:

- Digital communications channels are critical to promoting the borough as an appealing visitor destination by growing audience reach.
- Return to higher level of 'out of borough' visitors, especially out of NI post-Covid at events has not returned to pre-Covid levels.
- Change of the location for Comber Earlies Food Festival was deemed a great success by participants and attendees.

### Key achievements:

- Development and launch of the TASTE AND Food and Drink Destination Development Plan 2023-27
- Delivery of the AND Experience 2023 programme against performance targets.
- Social media audience continues to grow at a very high rate, 17% above target, driven by highly engaging content and strong imagery of the Borough.
- Waste service has reported 0% contamination in waste collected at Tourism events year to date.

### Emerging issues:

- Ongoing challenges in recruitment for seasonal staff on limited hours contracts. Potential to impact progression of outreach visitor servicing if recruitment not successful pre-season 2024.
- Continuing extremes of weather and the potential impact on event delivery.
- Desire to increase recycling stations at events, subject to budget.

### Action to be taken:

- Investigate further weather mitigating events equipment.
- Train additional casuals to support recycling measures at events.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council notes the report.









Not applicable

## Half yearly Performance Report - Tourism

Generated on: 20 November 2023

Last Update H1 2023/24

| Performance Data Traffic Light Icon   | PI Short Name   | Performance Data Current Value | Performance Data Current Target |
|---|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|    | % spend against budget  | 97.26%                         | 100%                            |
|    | % customer satisfaction at events   | 86%                            | 85%                             |
|    | % staff attendance  | 94.57%                         | 95%                             |
|    | Increase VAND social media audience by 10% annually                         | 22%                            | 5%                              |
|    | Borough Marketing Strategy - No of PR pieces                                | 15                             | 5                               |
|    | % increase in Visit Strangford Lough social media                           | 6%                             | 2%                              |
|    | No. of Experience Walks and Tours (cumulative)                              | 11                             | 12                              |
|    | Number of new bookable AND Experiences                                      | 12                             | 8                               |
|   | No of Taste of AND Food Tours/Showcases (cumulative)                        | 4                              | 2                               |
|  | Number of attendees to grant assisted events                                | 56,140                         | 58,180                          |
|  | Average engagement rates from e-zine to tourism trade and consumer database | 39%                            | 30%                             |
|  | % of Out of Borough Visitors attending events                               | 27%                            | 25%                             |
|  | % of Ex NI Visitors attending events  | 1%                             | 2%                              |
|  | Number of attendees at Tourism events (cumulative)                          | 62,500                         | 58,000                          |

Unclassified

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**ITEM 8****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Report Classification       | Unclassified  |
| Exemption Reason            | Not Applicable  |
| Council/Committee           | Place and Prosperity  |
| Date of Meeting             | 7 December 2023   |
| Responsible Director        | Director of Place   |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Regeneration  |
| Date of Report              | 17 November 2023  |
| File Reference              | 160127  |
| Legislation                 |   |
| Section 75 Compliant        | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/><br>If other, please add comment below: |
| Subject                     | Q2 Regeneration Service Performance report 2023/24  |
| Attachments                 | Performance report  |

**Context**

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

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan Towards 2024 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually in September
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2023)

Not Applicable

31

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

### Reporting approach

The Service Plans will be reported to relevant Committees on a half-yearly basis as undernoted:

| Reference      | Period            | Reporting Month |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Quarter 2 (Q2) | April – September | December        |
| Q4             | October – March   | March           |

The report for the period April 2023 to September 2023 is attached.

### Key points to note:

- Within the Rural Development Section, the Temporary Rural Development Manager and an Assistant Regeneration Officer both secured new permanent manager posts within the Council. A temporary Manager has now been appointed and took up post in September.

### Key achievements:

- Small Settlements projects are progressing well and community engagement is supportive of the proposals.
- Portaferry Public realm works have commenced.
- The review of the City/town Masterplans have been completed.
- Work has commenced on developing regeneration projects for future funding.

### Emerging issues:

- It is becoming evident that there is limited access for Peace Plus funding for regeneration projects. However, the Council will continue to work with EBR to try and get projects included in the programme.
- It is becoming evident that funding for regeneration projects from central government in the next financial year will be very limited.

### Action to be taken:

- Continue to work with government departments to try and secure funding.
- Work closely with EBR over the development of future projects.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council notes the report.












Not Applicable

32

## Half yearly Performance Report - Regeneration

Generated on: 17 November 2023

Last Update H1 2023/24

| Performance Data Traffic Light Icon   | PI Short Name   | Performance Data Current Value | Performance Data Current Target |
|---|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|    | % spend against budget  | 89.96%                         | 100%                            |
|    | No of Urban/Rural projects to planning stage to access funding streams                            | 0                              | 0                               |
|    | % staff attendance  | 85.31%                         | 95%                             |
|    | Team briefings delivery to all staff who are not on leave/maternity/long term sick                | 100%                           | 100%                            |
|    | No of staff meetings including updates on service plan delivery                                   | 18                             | 18                              |
|    | To develop, agree, secure funding and commence delivery of a public realm scheme for Portaferry   | Yes                            | Yes                             |
|    | To agree detailed technical design for Marine Gardens QP with Bangor Marina                       | No                             | No                              |
|    | To progress the Bangor Waterfront Scheme, to agree Operating Model with BYC                       | 0                              | 0                               |
|   | To commence a Strategic Masterplan for Kinnegar Logistics Base                                    | 1                              | 0                               |
|  | No of meetings with Town Advisory Groups to develop regeneration improvements                     | 5                              | 5                               |
|  | Number of capital schemes commenced using funding from Covid Recovery Small Settlements Programme | 0                              | 0                               |

Unclassified

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

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Report Classification       | Unclassified  |
| Exemption Reason            | Not Applicable  |
| Council/Committee           | Place and Prosperity Committee  |
| Date of Meeting             | 07 December 2023  |
| Responsible Director        | Director of Place   |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Regeneration  |
| Date of Report              | 20 November 2023  |
| File Reference              | RDP189  |
| Legislation                 |   |
| Section 75 Compliant        | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/><br>If other, please add comment below: |
| Subject                     | Village Entrance Signage Scheme   |
| Attachments                 | None  |

**Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme – Entrance Signage Scheme**

As Members will be aware, it was agreed in April 2022 that an Entrance Signage Scheme would be implemented under the Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme. The project included the production and installation of village entrance signs in the rural villages and settlements across the Borough to replace the existing signage.

This scheme is now complete, with a total of 40 new entrance signs installed.

**Outstanding Issues**Cloughey

The new village entrance sign located at the junction of Ardminnan Road and Manse Road (private land) was installed as per the planning approval and the previous sign location, however, the landowner made a complaint regarding its position.

Previously, a legacy Ards Borough Council sign had been in situ in the same location for many years, but it was much smaller in size. The landowner was not content with

Not Applicable

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the larger signage, and as a result officers instructed the contractor to remove the sign and deliver to the North Road depot.

Officers have since attempted to locate the sign, however, this cannot be found. The contractors advised that the sign was delivered on the 10 November 2022, however, officers at the depot confirmed they have no knowledge of this delivery.

It is proposed to purchase a new sign and install it at a new location. The site identified is Portaferry Road A2 within close proximity to the 30mph sign, subject to land ownership and planning consent.

The following costs will be required:

- Planning Fee - £217
- Production and Installation - £1,125.

#### Kircubbin

An audit of the former signage was conducted prior to the commencement of the entrance signage scheme. The audit identified one sign for replacement in Kircubbin (south end of the village) which was replaced, however, it was brought to the attention of Council officers that a second sign located at the entrance travelling from Greyabbey was overlooked (this sign had been damaged by a vehicle and removed). Requests have been received to have this additional sign produced and installed to complete the entrance signage project within Kircubbin.

It is proposed to install this sign in the same location, or within close proximity subject to landowner and planning consent.

The following costs will be required:

- Planning Fee - £217
- Production & Installation - £1,125.

It should be noted that an underspend of £885 in the Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme has been identified and the Department for Communities have agreed reallocated of the budget to purchase the overlooked entrance sign.

#### Cottown

Shortly after the installation of the new entrance sign at Cottown (on the Bangor side of the village) complaints were received from residents of two properties within close proximity.

One individual made contact to advise that they had removed the sign as they believed it was blocking their view of oncoming traffic. As a result, damage to the sign was incurred, this was reported to the PSNI.

Whilst the individual should have contacted the Council before removing and damaging the sign his primary concern was safety and his belief was that this was the necessary action to avoid potential road safety issues. This belief is shared by DfI Roads Risk Management, although the location received planning approval.

The costs to repair the sign and reinstall will be £1,172 (including planning fee).

Not Applicable

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It is proposed that this sign remains in storage until such time that a location can be agreed with DfI Roads and the residents.

### **Rural Development Programme 'Welcome to Portaferry' Signage**

As Members may be aware, a number of years ago under the Rural Development Programme, Portaferry Community Collective Ltd received funding for the purchase of 'Welcome to Portaferry' signs. At that time, one of the signs was placed behind the wall at the Football Field on Coach Road. This location was chosen because of the short turnaround time to have the signage installed (funding requirements). The preferred location was the corner behind the wall at Demesne View/Coach Road. It was agreed that after the sign was erected the Council would take ownership and maintenance of the sign.

It was always the intention to move the sign to the preferred location. Portaferry Community Collective Ltd has now obtained planning consent and DfI approval to move the sign to the preferred location and will cover all associated costs.

Portaferry Community Collective Ltd has requested the Council agrees to this as the owner of the sign.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Council agrees to:

1. Cloughey Entrance Signage – proceed to purchase a new sign, obtain planning permission for an alternative site, and install the sign. Costs can be met from existing service budgets.
2. Kircubbin Village Entrance Signage – proceed to purchase a sign, obtain planning permission, and install a sign within close proximity of the original sign. Costs to be met from the underspend identified under the Covid-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme and existing service budget.
3. Portaferry Signage (under the Rural Development Programme) – continue the ownership and maintenance of the sign once relocated with the caveat that the Council will not be responsible for purchasing a new sign if the existing one is damaged during the replacement process.

Unclassified

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

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Report Classification       | Unclassified  |
| Exemption Reason            | Not Applicable  |
| Council/Committee           | Place and Prosperity Committee  |
| Date of Meeting             | 07 December 2023  |
| Responsible Director        | Director of Place   |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Regeneration  |
| Date of Report              | 21 November 2023  |
| File Reference              | 141973  |
| Legislation                 |   |
| Section 75 Compliant        | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/><br>If other, please add comment below: |
| Subject                     | Project 24 - Expressions of interest for Pods and Hub   |
| Attachments                 | None  |

**Background**

Project 24 was a temporary revitalisation project located on Queen's Parade, Bangor funded by the Department for Communities (DfC) and Council. It utilised 12 bespoke artist pods and an event space called 'The Hub'.

The project ran successfully for ten years, opening in April 2013 and closing in March 2023. The site was cleared in May 2023, with control of the site being handed back to DfC in June 2023.

A condition of the Contract for Funding for the project was to ensure the infrastructure within Project 24 was reclaimable and where possible to ensure its future use for regeneration and/or economic benefit. The infrastructure that is deemed reclaimable consists of 12 shipping containers (the pods) and 1 event space structure (the hub).



Not Applicable

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### Expression of Interest

The Council previously agreed to issue an Expression of Interest to external bodies for the reuse of the pods and hub. The Expression of Interest process opened on Thursday 12 October 2023, closing at 12 noon on Thursday 9 November 2023. The Expression of Interest was advertised in local press (Spectator and Chronicle newspapers) and on the Council's social media platforms.

Interested parties were asked to submit an Expression of Interest which was assessed on the following criteria using a pass/fail scoring system:

- a) The proposed project demonstrates a regeneration and/or economic benefit (e.g. enhance footfall, support evening economy, support employment etc)
- b) The proposed project is located within the Ards and North Down Borough.
- c) The applicant has sufficient funds or identified a funding stream to cover all costs of transportation, statutory approvals and/or installation.
- d) The applicant will provide the Council with all statutory approvals prior to the pods being made available.

A total number of 30 applications were received, one of which was from an internal department and was excluded.

Applicants were permitted to apply for a maximum of 2 pods per Expression of Interest. A total of 47 pods were applied for and 5 requests for the Hub.

An initial assessment of the Expression of Interest forms was conducted by officers from the Regeneration and Community Development Units. Officers were unable to recommend an allocation as the scheme was oversubscribed with applications that met the pass/fail criteria.

It is now proposed to invite all applicants who submitted an Expression of Interest to a second stage assessment.

The second stage will be assessed using the following criteria:

- a) Footfall - Applicants will be required to detail the level of footfall their proposal aims to attract and how they propose to do this (this should be in addition to existing footfall).
- b) Support Employment - Applicants will be required to detail how the proposal should support employment and how they propose to do this (this relates to new job creation)
- c) Regeneration Benefits – Applicants will be required to detail the wider regeneration benefits of the proposal. How will the proposal encourage people to live, work, visit and invest in the area\*  
\*Area – Ards and North Down

Applicants will also be required to provide the following evidence:

-Proof of Statutory Consents

Applicants will be required to contact statutory agencies to enquire as to what statutory consents are required. A copy of the correspondence must be

Not Applicable

provided. Where consents are required, applicants must confirm they will obtain should their applicant be successful.  
 Infrastructure will only be released when all statutory consents are obtained, and evidence is provided.

Note – the proof of statutory consents will not be scored as this was included in the first stage.

Marking System

Responses will be awarded a mark out of 5 for each criterion.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Excellent response that meets the requirement. Indicates an excellent response with detailed supporting evidence and no weaknesses.          | 5 |
| A good response that meets the requirement with good supporting evidence. Demonstrates good understanding of the requirement.                | 4 |
| Meets requirement. The response generally meets the requirement but lacks sufficient detail to warrant a higher mark.                        | 3 |
| A response with reservations. Lacks convincing detail to demonstrate that the proposed response will meet the requirements.                  | 2 |
| An unacceptable response with serious reservations. Very limited detail to demonstrate that the proposed response will meet the requirement. | 1 |
| Failed to address the question.  | 0 |

It is proposed applicants will be issued a letter of invite to the second stage assessment in early January 2024, with three weeks to respond.

An assessment panel will assess and score the second stage responses by the end of January.

If it is agreed to proceed with this proposal, a report will be brought back to Council detailing the outcome of the second stage assessment and a recommendation for allocation of the 12 shipping containers and the Hub based on the final total scores awarded to each applicant.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council agrees the above proposal to invite applicants to a second stage assessment.

Unclassified

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

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Report Classification       | Unclassified  |
| Exemption Reason            | Not Applicable  |
| Council/Committee           | Place and Prosperity Committee  |
| Date of Meeting             | 07 December 2023  |
| Responsible Director        | Director of Place   |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Regeneration  |
| Date of Report              | 23 November 2023  |
| File Reference              | RDP14   |
| Legislation                 |   |
| Section 75 Compliant        | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/><br>If other, please add comment below: |
| Subject                     | Response to Notice of Motion re Kircubbin Harbour   |
| Attachments                 | Response from DfC re Safety Concerns at the Harbour Kircubbin Harbour   |

At the meeting of the Place and Prosperity Committee held on 7 September 2023 the response from the from the Historic Environment Division (HED), which was issued on behalf of the Departments for Communities and Infrastructure, concerning the above was discussed.

It was agreed to defer consideration of the response to allow the Kircubbin Harbour Working Group to consider this. Alderman Adair undertook to contact the Group to seek their views. This was subsequently agreed by the Council.

Alderman Adair has confirmed he has contacted the Group but has been unable to secure a response.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council notes the response from the HED.



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**Communities**  
www.communities-ni.gov.uk

An Roinn  
**Pobal**

Department for  
**Commonities**

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By email: [stephen.reid@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.reid@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

Stephen Reid  
Chief Executive  
Ards and North Down Borough Council  
Town Hall  
The Castle  
Bangor  
Co. Down BT20 4BT

DfC Historic Environment Division  
9 Lanyon Place  
Town Parks  
Belfast  
BT1 3LP

Your ref: N/A

Our ref: STOF-0443-2023

16 August 2023

Dear Stephen

## **RE KIRCUBBIN HARBOUR**

Thank you for your correspondence to Colum Boyle on the condition of Kircubbin Harbour. I have been asked to respond on his behalf, and on behalf of the Department for Infrastructure (DfI).

Kircubbin Harbour was scheduled for protection under the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order 1995 on 19 December 2007. This statutory protection ensures that the Department takes a proactive interest in the management of the monument but it does not affect ownership of the asset and the harbour remains in private ownership. DfC is able to advise and support the owner to undertake positive management actions, but current legislation does not give the Department the power to force owners to do so and the management of the harbour remains the responsibility of the owner.

The Department monitors the condition of all scheduled monuments on a cyclical basis. Through this monitoring, Historic Environment Division (HED) is already aware of the current condition of the harbour and its deterioration has been noted. To assist our understanding we commissioned two reports on the condition of the harbour from our

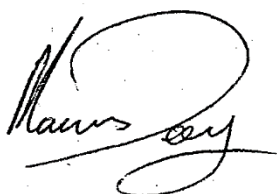
specialist advisor, the first in March 2016 which included an options appraisal, and in March 2022 which was an update on the previous assessment. Both have been shared with the owner.

DfC has reached out to the owner to offer guidance and support in light of this information. To date this has not been taken up, but we will continue to engage with the owner to offer that support.

HED has also engaged with DfI Roads on this issue over the past few years, most recently in March of 2023. DfI has advised DfC that their position has not changed since then. DfI advice to DfC is that, in the event of the structural stability of the road network being threatened, the Department for Infrastructure will seek to put measures in place to protect the network. These works would not necessarily involve the historic harbour but may involve works to protect the road in the area adjacent to the scheduled area. The DfI assessment is that the erosion remains some distance from the road boundary and will be monitored. Investigations by DfI indicate that the boundary wall between the carriageway and the harbour quay may in fact be the original sea wall and that the harbour was constructed after the sea wall. If this is the case, the stability of the carriageway is not dependent on the presence of the harbour; rather, the road relies on the sea wall in common with much of the carriageway on the A20.

My staff has had previous engagement with the Kircubbin Harbour Working Group and the representatives continue to keep in contact. We are currently trying to facilitate a meeting between the owner and the Group, but it remains the prerogative of the owner whether he wishes to engage or not. We will continue to engage with whatever group is convened that has an interest in the historic asset, within our statutory remit.

Yours sincerely,



**MANUS DEERY RIBA**  
Assistant Director  
Historic Environment Division

Unclassified

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

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Report Classification       | Unclassified   |
| Exemption Reason            | Not Applicable   |
| Council/Committee           | Place and Prosperity Committee   |
| Date of Meeting             | 07 December 2023   |
| Responsible Director        | Director of Place  |
| Responsible Head of Service | Head of Strategic Capital Development  |
| Date of Report              | 23 November 2023   |
| File Reference              | 160127   |
| Legislation                 |  |
| Section 75 Compliant        | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/><br>If other, please add comment below: |
| Subject                     | Strategic Capital Development Q2 Performance Report  |
| Attachments                 |  |

**Context**

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

- Community Plan – published every 10-15 years
- Corporate Plan – published every 4 years (Corporate Plan Towards 2024 in operation)
- Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) – published annually in September
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2023)

Not Applicable

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

### Reporting approach

The Service Plans will be reported to relevant Committees on a half-yearly basis as undernoted:

| Reference      | Period            | Reporting Month |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Quarter 2 (H1) | April – September | December        |
| Q4 (H2)        | October – March   | March           |

The report for April to September 2023 is attached.

### Key points to note:

- There continues to be good investment in staff briefings with regular fortnightly team meetings, alternating between Teams and in person.
- Professional development is also continuing as the unit continues to deliver a capital portfolio in excess of £170m over the next 10 years.
- There continues to be a good level of consultation with other Councils and Government departments through BRCD, Community Estates, the Greenways projects, Councils Estates Forum, and individual meetings.

### Key achievements:

- Continued to share capital knowledge and allow a holistic approach to all large, small and maintenance capital projects undertaken by a wide range of directorates through CPAG.
- Working with CPD to produce tender documents which take account of social value on all funded project as council policy develops.
- Contractor on site beginning Portaferry Public Reams Works.

### Emerging issues:

- Council resources to deliver ambitious capital delivery.
- High construction inflation.

### Action to be taken:

- Continue to review capital cost estimates.
- Assist in the Estate Strategy development.
- Assist in capital transformation projects.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the report is noted.







Not Applicable

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## Half yearly Performance Report - Strategic Capital Development

Generated on: 23 November 2023

Last Update H1 2023/24

| Performance Data Traffic Light Icon   | PI Short Name   | Performance Data Current Value | Performance Data Current Target |
|---|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|    | No of engagement sessions with potential partnering organisations (cumulative)  | 4                              | 4                               |
|    | % spend against budget  | 107.74%                        | 100%                            |
|    | % staff attendance  | 99.56%                         | 93%                             |
|    | % staff reporting regular receipt of team briefings                             | 100%                           | 100%                            |
|    | % of completed Employee Appraisals in the period September 2023 to March 2025   | 0%                             |                                 |
|    | No of NEC Training Sessions to support project officers achieving accreditation | 8                              | 8                               |
|    | % staff receiving PowerBI training  | 0%                             | 0%                              |
|    | Risks identified and escalated  | No                             | No                              |
|  | % procurement in line with TEO requirements using CPD templates                 | 0%                             | 0%                              |



Unclassified

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## ITEM 13

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Report Classification       | Unclassified   |
| Exemption Reason            | Not Applicable   |
| Council/Committee           | Place and Prosperity Committee   |
| Date of Meeting             | 05 December 2023   |
| Responsible Director        | Director of Place  |
| Responsible Head of Service |  |
| Date of Report              | 21 November 2023   |
| File Reference              | RDP208   |
| Legislation                 |  |
| Section 75 Compliant        | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/><br>If other, please add comment below: |
| Subject                     | Levelling Up Fund Round 3  |
| Attachments                 |  |

On 20 November 2023 the UK Government announced the availability of £1 billion for Round 3 of the government's Levelling Up Fund. The official announcement can be found at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/1-billion-boost-for-levelling-up-government-backs-55-transformational-local-projects-across-the-uk>

Members should note that funding does not include any projects in Northern Ireland with the Government advising that '*In Northern Ireland, given the current absence of a working Executive and Assembly, the Government is not proceeding with this round of the Levelling Up Fund at this time. We will continue to work closely with projects and places in Northern Ireland that were awarded a total of £120 million in the first two rounds of the Fund*'.

This new funding was allocated by a reassessment of the projects which were unsuccessful in Round 2 and will be awarded to 55 transformational projects in communities across the UK excluding NI.

Not Applicable

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Officers have been in contact with the LUF team to enquire if timing, budget, theme, and approach/process for NI is known. DLUHC has confirmed:

*'The UK Government will work with NI Executive once power sharing is restored to determine how to best support communities across Northern Ireland. Our priority remains seeing the restoration and return of a locally elected and accountable Executive, because that is what the people of Northern Ireland need and deserve.'*

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council note this report.