

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

8 June 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 15 June 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. Presentation by Alan McKeown, Executive Director Transformation, Invest NI
4. Economic Development Performance Report Q4 (Report enclosed)
5. Innovate UK: Local Industrial Decarbonisation Plans (Report enclosed)
6. Economic Development Annual Activity Report 2022-23 (Report enclosed)
7. SHINE – End of Programme report (Report enclosed)
8. Digital Projects Update (Report enclosed)
9. East Border Region Peace Plus concept note submission (Report enclosed)
10. Tourism Performance Report Q4 (Report enclosed)
11. Annual Tourism Events Programme Evaluation Report 2022 (Report enclosed)
12. Annual Tourism Events Grant Scheme Report 22/23 (Report enclosed)
13. Visitor Information Centres Annual Report 2022/23 (Report enclosed)
14. PGA EuroPro Tour Northern Ireland Masters 24-26 August 2022 Update Report (Report enclosed)
15. TASTE AND Food and Drink Destination Development Plan 2023-2027 (Report enclosed)

16. NI Regional Food Programme (NIRFP) Funding Applications Update (Report enclosed)
17. Strategic Capital Development Q4 Performance Report (Report enclosed)
18. Regeneration Q4 Performance Report (Report enclosed)
19. The Moat Car Park (Report enclosed)
20. Borough Wide Cycling Infrastructure (Report enclosed)
21. Town and City Advisory Group Minutes (Copies enclosed)
 - a. Bangor CAG 23.2.23
 - b. Comber TAG 21.2.23
 - c. Donaghadee TAG 20.2.23
 - d. Holywood TAG 28.2.23
 - e. Newtownards TAG 2.3.23
22. Small Settlements Regeneration Programme – project progress update (Report enclosed)
23. Item withdrawn
24. Chambers of Commerce Yearly Budget (Report enclosed)
25. Free Wi-Fi Provision (Report enclosed)
26. Conway Square Covering Project (Report enclosed)
27. NOM Request re Footpath provision at Shore Road, Ballyhalbert (Report enclosed)
28. Notices of Motion
 - 28.1 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Smart and Councillor S Irvine

"In acknowledging the many negative impacts of long term commercial and residential dereliction, officers are tasked with reviewing current powers and how council could best effect positive change.

As part of this review officers would investigate using part or all of Newtownards town centre as a pilot scheme to tackle dereliction, which could then be broadened across the Borough if successful. The review may form a working group which would consider what incentives could be provided through, DFC whom hold regeneration powers, the Planning system, Building Control, or by other means, to encourage the re-use or redevelopment of local derelict buildings to provide new business opportunities or homes. Consideration would also be given to what limitations can be placed on public and private property owners who are not willing to work in partnership for regeneration and the public good.

Any potential pilot would have relevance for all of the Ards and North Down Borough and may highlight the need for additional powers for council or new partnerships with central government departments. The research of officers would be expected within a reasonable

timeframe but would not be time limited. Should other professional expertise be required for elements of this research, a report seeking consent to spend would be returned to committee for consideration."

28.2 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Thompson and Councillor Adair

That this Council recognises the issues and concerns detailed in the letter sent to the Chief Executive by The Kircubbin Harbour Action Group and agrees to write to the Permanent Secretaries of the Departments of Infrastructure and Communities, asking them to provide details of the responsibility they have in ensuring the public safety of the harbour and listing any details of dealings their departments have had with the owner.

28.3 Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor T Smith and Councillor McKimm

That this Council brings back a report that looks at the restoration of much missed events namely the Bangor Easter activities (including the Easter parade), Donaghadee Lights Up and Groomsport Music Festival.

As part of this report, officers should engage and consult with local communities and business to gauge not only their support for the return of these events but also ask, if they do return, what could be done to improve these events to allow for more community involvement and also to maximize footfall and trade for local businesses.

29. Any Other Notified Business

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

30. Bangor Marina Q4 report 2022-23 (Report enclosed)

31. Pickie Quarter 4 report - 1 January - 31 March 2023 (Report enclosed)

32. Exploris Quarter 4 report - 1 January - 31 March 2023 (Report enclosed)

33. Belfast Region City Deal and Bangor Waterfront Update (Report enclosed)

34. Labour Market Partnership Update Report on funding (Report enclosed)

35. Potential Limited Liability Partnership with Public Sector Plc Update (report enclosed)

36. Open House Festival – Seaside Revival Update Report (Report enclosed)

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

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Economic Development
Date of Report	30 May 2023
File Reference	160167
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes
Subject	ED Performance Report Q4 2022-23 (Jan-Mar 2023)
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 (for publication 30 September 2022)
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2022)

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.

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Reporting approach

The Service Plans will be reported to relevant Committees on a quarterly basis as undernoted:

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Quarter 1 (Q1)	April – June	September
Q2	July – September	December
Q3	October – December	March
Q4	January - March	June

The report for Quarter 4 2022-23 is below.

Please note that, unfortunately, due to the timing of reports, some financial information has not been updated.

Key points to note:

- Performance in certain areas of the Service has been affected as difficulties in recruiting staff to fill posts has continued into this year, as have some instances of staff illness and member of staff requiring a career break. Workstreams had to be prioritised in line with the resources available and therefore some targets for the year have been not met and some budgets will be underspent.
- Following a joint meeting with DfE and the 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.
The revised target is significantly higher and due to the challenging economic climate, the number of enquiries received concerning starting a business has slowed and those progressing to setting up in business has slowed.

Key achievements:

- The Labour Market Partnership was successfully established and delivered a wide range of interventions that demonstrated real and immediate impact in helping people to achieve new skills and get into employment.
- The Digital Growth Programme exceeded its targets assisting businesses to create new digital tools to develop and grow their markets.
- While our attractions have come under pressure due to increased costs and footfall numbers, they have continued to develop their offering and have ensured all elements of the contract have been delivered.

Emerging issues:

- The Department for Communities announced in May 2023 that the budget for any LMP activity in 2023-24 will be cut by 75%. This will obviously have a huge negative effect on the work that has been planned and will have implications for the viability of the LMP going forward.

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- The new service to replace the existing *Go For It* programme is currently out to tender and timelines are extremely tight to ensure we will have continuity of service and support of sufficient quality.

Action to be taken:

- Timelines are tight but officers continue to work with all other Councils, and through Belfast City Council, with DLUHC, to receive confirmation of funding and to prepare plans for continuity of support for a new business start-up and the creation of a new support service.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council notes this report.





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Quarterly Performance Report - Economic Development









Generated on: 26/05/2023

Last Update Q4 2022/23

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	Manage operator agreements performance	100%	100%
	Team Briefings to be communicated to all available staff monthly (unless Sick or on leave)	100%	100%
	Number of business owners/employees signing up for Health and Wellbeing initiatives	27	25
	Creation of Action Plan to progress Innovation Hub concept	1	1
	PR & thought pieces placed in relevant publications	2	6
	No of business support group interventions/workshops (cumulative)	31	30
	No of 1:1 Business Advice sessions (cumulative)	102	102
	Number of participants on ERDF Digital Transformation programme	13	14
	Number of business research assignments (cumulative)	87	90
	Creative Industries Development – number of group interventions/workshops (cumulative)	4	6
	No of new jobs created through NIBSUP2	101	85
	Number of new jobs created through Go For It programme (cumulative)	101	133
	Number of jobs created through the Social Enterprise programme	11	15
	Number of businesses supported through the Digital Growth Programme	33	29
	Delivery and implementation of Digital Strategy Action Plan	1	1

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Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	Draw down of Seal Sanctuary claim from DAERA	100%	100%
	Number of projects delivered in ILMP Action Plan	19	14
	Creative Industries Development – number of 1-1 mentoring sessions (cumulative)	12	14
	Number of jobs taken up by applicants as a result of the jobs initiatives	8	25
	Number of jobs created as a result of the Shine programme	21	70
	% staff attendance	89.06%	95%
	Number of sector specific fact sheets with best in class promotion	2	2
	Number of ESF participants into employment	55	25
	Number of participants in the Women Business Support Programme	28	30
	Targeted interventions supporting Agri-Food businesses	5	4

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ITEM 5

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Economic Development
Date of Report	25 May 2023
File Reference	ED136
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Innovate UK:Local Industrial Decarbonisation Plans
Attachments	

Background

The Innovate UK: Local Industrial Decarbonisation Plans (LIDP) provides £5 million through a competitive process to support dispersed industrial sites and other public, private and third sector stakeholders to develop strategic plans that plot a route to decarbonising industry in their area.

The competition will be open to collaborative local cluster project teams formed of industrial manufacturers and other key stakeholders, such as Local Authorities. Invest NI has approached the 11 Councils to seek non-financial support to submit a bid under this fund.

LIDP Overview and planned activities

- The development of credible, context-sensitive, strategic plans for decarbonisation of local industrial clusters not located within the UK's existing industrial clusters, to develop plans to reduce their emissions and carbon leakage.
- Increased organisational collaboration between closely located industrial businesses, other stakeholders and strengthen decarbonisation planning skills, capacity and capability in local clusters.

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- Evidence gathering to inform decarbonisation of other local clusters and dispersed sites.

LIDP Project Requirements Summary

Total Grant Available	£75,000 - £800,000	
Project Start Date	1 Jan 2024	
Project End date	31 Dec 2024	
Project Lead	UK Registered Business of any size Research Organisation Public Sector Organisation Charity Not for Profit	Carry out project work in the UK Intend to exploit results from or in the UK Collaborate with other UK registered organisations
Project Team	As above plus academic institutions	Carry out project work in the UK
Subcontractors	Allowed. Must be from the UK. Costs to be justified and appropriate to the total eligible project costs	
Collaboration	Collaboration with other organisations is required. Innovate UK will not accept applications from single industrial facilities	

Invest NI Proposal

Invest NI (INI) has approached Innovate UK with a view to submitting a Northern Ireland-wide LIDP project proposal. This collaborative approach has been received favourably by Innovate UK and Invest NI have moved to engage all 11 Councils within its overall ILDP project proposal, circa £800,000.

An introductory meeting took place in INI's Headquarters in May with Council representatives to present the outline of the project and assess the willingness of local government authorities to support the project.

The proposal is currently at a very early stage and the aim of this report is to seek permission to involve relevant Officers in the development of this project.

Ards and North Down Borough Council's role

The role of the Council would be to participate in the bid proposal phase (May-Sept), attend meetings, gather data, endorse strategies and provide a letter of support. If successful, the Council will participate in the project, funded through a proportional share of the £800,000.

Note: This project, if successful, is fully funded (100%) with no additional/matched funding required.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves officer participation in the Local Industrial Decarbonisation Plans initiated and applied for by Invest NI in a strategic and supporting capacity and at no financial cost to the Council other than officers' time.

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ITEM 6

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Economic Development
Date of Report	25 May 2023
File Reference	ED55
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Economic Development Annual Activity Report 2022-23
Attachments	Item 6.1 - ED Annual Summary 2022-23

Ards and North Down Business Support Services

The role of the Economic Development Section (ED) within the Economic Development Service Unit is to promote and encourage local economic growth and to work to develop a pipeline of support from enterprise awareness, business start and business growth, employability and skills and sector development.

To encourage skills development, enterprise, growth and innovation, ED provides a suite of support, projects, interventions, and collaborations. Local businesses and entrepreneurs benefit from 1:1 confidential business advice, a business intelligence service, signposting to other support agencies, workshops, advice sessions, networking opportunities and mentoring programmes.

This year, the ED Section has continued to deliver its support, as well as managing the delivery of the Labour Market Partnership Action Plan.

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The team has worked in conjunction with colleagues across other service units to provide timely and crucial advice and support to assist businesses in navigating the issues associated with the cost-of-living crisis and other emerging issues.

This annual report, as in previous years, provides a summary overview of the elements of the support services provided to local businesses between April 2022 - March 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

Appendix 1: Economic Development Annual Activity Summary Report 2022-23

CONTENT

PRE ENTERPRISE & NEW START

1 European Social Fund Projects (ESF)

GROWTH

2 Signal Business Support

2.1 Business Support Services – Advice & Research

2.2 Business Support Services – Information & Communication

2.3 Annual Business Survey

2.4 Business Support Services – Edge Programme

2.5 Business Support Services – Food and Drink Programme 2023

2.6 Commercial Sites and Property GIS Project

2.7 Summary of Business Growth Support Services – During COVID-19

SUPPORT PROGRAMMES & EVENT

3 Economic Development Conference – The Power of Marginal Gains

4 4C UR Future

5 Go For It Programme

6 SHINE Programme

7 AND Social Enterprise Programme 2022-23 (ANDSEP)

8 Mind Body Business 2022-23

9 Tender Accelerator Programme

10 Green Business Programme

11 NI Apprenticeship Week 2023

12 Job Fair 2023

13 Women in Leadership Programme

14 Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership

Appendix 1: Economic Development Annual Activity Summary Report 2022-23

1 ESF Match Funded Programmes

The strategic aim of the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Operational Programme 2014-2020 (ESF Programme) is to combat poverty and enhance social inclusion by reducing economic inactivity and increasing the skills base of both those currently in work and future, potential workforce participants. The third Call was for projects from April 2022 to March 2023 and this tranche of funding has now come to an end. The ED section has supported five European Social Fund projects in the Ards and North Down area.

- **Exploring Enterprise – Enterprise Northern Ireland**

The Exploring Enterprise Programme, a pre-enterprise programme seeking to support people considering self-employment as their route to enter and/or return to the labour market. The programme had a mixture of group training and one to one tailored mentoring support. Participants did not need to have a specific business idea to join. EEP was a flexible programme designed to allow participants to receive support which responded to their individual needs. This was the first step for someone who believed that self-employment was their best route to the labour market, providing them with an understanding of what was required to be self-employed. It allowed participants to develop an understanding of how a business starts and operates and fills a gap in the current provision of enterprise support by supporting people who are not yet ready to progress to self-employment. Other barriers such as low levels of educational confidence and attainment were also addressed.

The key areas focused on enhancing the self-employability outcomes of participants:

- Provision of knowledge underpinned by the OCN Level 1 Understanding Business Enterprise qualification.
- Provision of soft skills and confidence they required to use their knowledge.
- Provision of one-to-one support tailored to participant's needs from qualified and experienced staff.
- Signposting to additional support which was relevant to them in order to further enhance their self-employability outcomes.

Appendix 1: Economic Development Annual Activity Summary Report 2022-23

Exploring Enterprise -Targets and progress to date

2022/23	Target	Progress
Number of participants recruited	23	25
Number of participants into paid employment on leaving	8	21
Number of participants in education/training on leaving	2	0
Number of participants with qualification outcomes	16	11

The Exploring Enterprise programme exceeded the participant target for the year and the majority of the participants progressed into paid employment rather than continuing with further training.

- **The Verve Programme – NOW Group**

The NOW Group is a social enterprise that supports people with learning disabilities, difficulties, Autism, and associated health conditions into jobs with a future. The Verve programme supported individuals to prove how valuable they were to the local workforce and to gain the skills and experience they needed to get the job they wanted and keep it.

The programme offered the following opportunities:

- It provided innovative academy pre-employment courses not available elsewhere in line with emerging labour trends in NI.
- It increased Essential Skills in numeracy and literacy.
- It increased employer engagement and subsequently creating jobs for participants.

The NOW Group continually scanned workforce trends and the economic and political environments for opportunities for employment, up skilling and social engagement which increased inclusion and wellbeing, leading to citizenship development and civic involvement for participants. Its work was also about social and community inclusion which led to the people they worked with having better health, a better education, and a brighter future.

Appendix 1: Economic Development Annual Activity Summary Report 2022-23

Verve - Targets and progress to date

2022/23	Target	Progress
Number of participants recruited	40	50
Number of participants into paid employment on leaving	10	15
Number of participants in voluntary employment on leaving	10	10
Number of participants gaining a vocational qualification	30	33
Number of participants increasing skills	40	148

The Verve Programme performed well and achieved or exceeded all the targets for 2022-23.

- **Stepping Stones to Employment 2 – Stepping Stones NI**

Stepping Stones to Employment 2 (SSTEP 2) was designed to support people who encountered barriers to employment and social challenges, more specifically people with learning disabilities, learning difficulties and Neurodiverse conditions who:

- Were unemployed or economically inactive;
- Were young school leavers with learning disabilities who are unlikely to move into education, employment, or training;
- Had low or no qualifications;
- Needed specialist support due to COVID-19 to reduce social isolation/advance skills progression.

SSTEP 2 ensured that people with a disability had the opportunity to:

- Advance their skills/qualifications and overall employability;
- Achieve accredited qualifications;
- Participate in Skills Academies leading to employment with employers;
- Live as active citizens in the Ards and North Down community;
- Gain employment and as a result increase their life satisfaction and reducing economic inactivity.

This was delivered via:

- Social Enterprise

Stepping Stones NI has a range of Social Enterprises in Lisburn that act as employability hubs in which people can develop their vocational work skills prior to work taster sessions, work experience and eventually employment in their communities.

Appendix 1: Economic Development Annual Activity Summary Report 2022-23

- Training and Skills Academies

Training, offering quality learning and skills provision through social enterprise employability hubs, academies with employers and inhouse and outreach training to people through various delivery of courses leading to the attainment of accredited qualifications.

SSTEP 2 - Targets and Progress to date

2022/23	Target	Progress
Number of participants recruited	21	50
Number of participants into paid employment	7	11
Number of participants progressing into education and or training	14	15
Number of participants completing accredited units	35	40
Number of participants in employment 6 months after leaving	7	7

The Stepping Stones to Employment 2 programme was successful and exceeded or achieved all the targets for 2022-23.

- **Training for Employment – The Conservation Volunteers**

The Conservation Volunteers provide training & support for unemployed & economically inactive people. The participants encountered various barriers to securing work including health, mental health, poor literacy, nervousness, and social barriers. The programme took account of this and offered solutions to as many of these barriers and issues as possible.

Participants were involved in practical environmental projects, food growing and improvements to community gardens, to provide a focus for training and skills development and building soft skills.

All participants were involved a minimum of one day per week for a minimum of 12 weeks and were encouraged to increase attendance to two or three days per week.

The programme lasted between 12 and 24 weeks depending on the participants' needs and motivation.

The learning and development support included:

- An individual training plan and support with chosen training and development activities;
- A dedicated member of staff to give ongoing one-to-one support and monthly individual reviews;

Appendix 1: Economic Development Annual Activity Summary Report 2022-23

- Job search training, curriculum vita development and interview skills;
- Career planning;
- Practical work experience;
- A range of job search support: applications, interview practice and other;
- Additional specialist support for learning disabilities and/or addiction issues;
- Specific requirements such as an interpreter for a hearing-impaired group.

Training for Employment - Targets and Progress to date

2022/23	Target	Progress
Number of participants recruited	40	39
Number of participants into paid employment	7	3
Number of participants progressing into education and or training	6	15
Number of participants obtaining vocational qualifications	30	16
Number of participants obtaining short accredited courses	35	22

The Training for Employment programme did not recruit the target number of participants and the financial support from Council was proportionally reduced to reflect the numbers. A large number of the participants were still working with the Conservation Volunteers when the programme ended on 31st March, and as a result the number of job outcomes and vocational qualifications were lower than expected.

- **STRIDE - Ulster Supported Employment Ltd**

Ulster Supported Employment Limited (Usel) a non-departmental public body, employs, supports, trains, and develops up to 1200 people with disabilities annually across Northern Ireland through its portfolio of programme delivery and social enterprise operations (Ability Cafes, Smartpac, UShred NI, Usel Recycling Solutions)

The STRIDE (Support & Training to Realise Individual Development & Employment) project offered people with disabilities who were unemployed or economically inactive the opportunity to gain the employability skills and qualifications required by employers.

STRIDE worked to assist those participants with low or no employability or vocational skills and/or educational achievement to effectively remove barriers to employment over the course of the project, enabling them to move into and within sustainable employment or to progress into further/higher education or training.

Appendix 1: Economic Development Annual Activity Summary Report 2022-23

Through the ever-expanding network of over 1000 local, regional, and national employers and referral partners, STRIDE worked closely to maximise opportunities to participate and engage in meaningful work experience opportunities, pre-employment academy-style programmes and to secure sustainable employment or other positive outcomes. A strategic outreach approach to project recruitment ensured that STRIDE engaged with its target groups in a supportive and inclusive manner.

Participants spent up to a maximum of one year on the project receiving tailored supports provided through a "blended" delivery model. These included accredited and non-accredited training, work experience, health and wellbeing support, advocacy support and subsidised employment before progressing into positive outcomes (employment or education/training).

The participant journey was customised to the needs and aspirations of the person with pace duration and delivery of provision tailored to the individual's personal circumstances. A roll-on roll-off approach to enrolment ensured high rates of engagement and retention.

STRIDE - Targets and Progress to date

2022/23	Target	Progress
Number of participants recruited	17	16
Number of participants into paid employment	7	5
Number of participants progressing into education and or training	4	8
Number of participants in employment 6 months after leaving	5	1

The STRIDE programme did not recruit the target number of participants and the financial support from Council was proportionally reduced. The number in employment six months after leaving, is ongoing as not all the participants have reached this stage.

Appendix 1: Economic Development Annual Activity Summary Report 2022-23

2 Business Support Services

2.1 Business Support Services – Advice and Research 2022-2023

From April 2022 - March 2023 businesses have sought the assistance of the business support team across a wide variety of topics. The assistance varied from signposting through to working on a longer-term basis to help clients with marketing, business plans and signposting to available business support programmes, i.e. ERDF SHINE, Creativity Unleashed and Digital Programmes. The services have had the take up as shown in the table below.

<i>Service</i>	<i>No Clients / Projects Apr 22 - Mar 23</i>	<i>Target</i>
1-1 Business Advice Clinics	102	102
Business Research Service	87* (77 external research requests, 10 internal research requests)	90

The Business Research Service responded to a wide range of enquiries, relating to market intelligence and consumer trends, commercial property searches, and searches for potential sources of funding.

2.2 Business Support Services – Information & Communication 2022-2023

In addition to the Business Advice and Business Research Service, the team supports businesses by keeping them updated on a variety of areas including business support programmes, marketing and development opportunities, changes to legislation, and opportunities for grant funding and assistance.

<i>Information Service</i>	<i>2022-2023 No.</i>
<i>Fortnightly Business Newsletters</i>	<i>28 issued</i>
<i>Thematic Business Ezines</i>	<i>21 issued</i>
<i>AND Business Website</i> https://www.andbusiness.co.uk/	<i>3,608 unique clicks during the year</i> <i>19 news articles added</i>

As of 31st March 2023, the Economic Development unit has 1,535 subscribers to the online newsletter and email service (down from 1,559 in the previous financial year). The reduction is due to some subscribers moving jobs and therefore email addresses are no longer valid as well as some businesses ceasing.

Appendix 1: Economic Development Annual Activity Summary Report 2022-23

2.3 Annual Business Survey

The Economic Development Team conducted an Annual Business Survey, to gain insight and views of the local business community on current trading conditions and business needs, and what interventions the council might implement to support them. The survey was open from 30 May until 22 June 2022, and was promoted through a number of channels including via the business newsletter emails. The survey received a total of 72 responses from local businesses and assisted in shaping the programme of support for the 2022/23 financial year. Work will be undertaken in the coming year to interact with businesses through a range of activity to increase the responses and feedback.

2.4 Business Support Services – Edge Programme

Edge Business Workshops

2020/21 was a challenging time for the delivery of the Ards and North Down Borough Council Business Support Programme and during the pandemic attempted to engage with businesses completely on-line. While this was necessary, we were pleased to return in 2022/23 to some normality with the resumption of face-to-face business support programmes.

Over the past year, the Economic Development Team has sought to understand the needs of local businesses through consultations, one-to-one meetings, focus groups and online business surveys. The Edge Programme aimed to address the needs identified through a series of Workshops.

2022.23	Target	Actual
Face to Face Workshops	35	20

The Edge programme of workshops was interrupted due in part to the restriction of activity during the period of mourning for the death of Queen Elizabeth (3 workshops cancelled). Workshops planned for the latter part of the year (Feb-March 2023) were also suspended due to budget and resource pressures.

Appendix 1: Economic Development Annual Activity Summary Report 2022-23

Event Type	Apr 22 – Mar 23		Apr 21 – Mar 22	
	No Businesses attended	No Participants Registered to attend	No Businesses attended	No Participants Registered to attend
In person workshops	211	318	286	479

- 1) Some companies attended more than one event and figures reflect each time they attended.
- 2) Full details of all support delivered in 2022-2023 is included within this report (The Creativity Unleashed and Digital Growth is included within the Digital Update Report).

Workshop Events and Initiatives

A total of 20 face to face workshops were delivered as follows.

No	Date	Title of Event	No registered	No Attended	Businesses Attended	% Overall Excellent Satisfaction/ Very good
1.	28-Sep-22	Digital Marketing: Strategy and Content Planning	11	11	10	100%
2	05-Oct-22	Tendering Accelerator Programme: Workshop 1: Success Model	15	15	11	100%
3	12-Oct 22	EDGE Leadership: Effective Communications	6	4	3	100%
4	26-Oct-22	EDGE -Digital Marketing: SEO and Website Optimisation	19	15	15	100%
5	2-Nov-22	EDGE - Digital Marketing: Making the Most of Canva	18	15	11	100%
6	2-Nov-22	Tendering Accelerator Programme: Workshop 2: Sourcing bid/no bid	17	15	13	100%
7	8-Nov-22	Annual Conference - The Power of Marginal Gains	84	69	38	98%
8	9-Nov-22	Tendering Accelerator Programme: Workshop 3: The Buyer Cycle	15	12	12	100%

Appendix 1: Economic Development Annual Activity Summary Report 2022-23

9	16-Nov-22	Green Business Programme: Workshop 1 - Energy Resources	10	10	10	100%
10	23-Nov-22	EDGE Innovation: Creating Value through Design Thinking	7	3	3	100%
11	7-Dec-22	EDGE - Digital Marketing: Creating Video content on Smart Phone	21	13	11	100%
12	7-Dec-22	Green Business Programme Workshop 2: Alternative Fuels	10	6	6	100%
13	9-Jan-23	Tendering Accelerator Programme: Workshop 4: Conversion Rate	9	8	8	100%
14	24-Jan-23	Green Business Programme 3: Circular Economy	10	8	8	100%
15	01-Feb-23	EDGE Sustainability Recalibrating Vision, Mission and Values	7	5	5	100%
16	8-Feb-23	Tendering Accelerator Programme: Workshop 4: Partnerships	10	8	8	100%
17	23-Feb-23	Green Business Programme: Environmental Impact	10	7	7	100%
18	7-Mar-23	Food and Drink Forum - Photography	19	15	14	100%
19	14-Mar-23	Food and Drink Forum - Digital Marketing	19	17	14	100%
20	28-Mar-23	Food and Drink - Recruit and Retain staff	10	5	4	100%
Total / Average			318	261	211	99.9%

In addition to the 20 workshops a further **11 workshops** were delivered as part of the **SHINE Programme (6 online webinars)** and **Ards and North Down Social Entrepreneurship Programme (5 online webinars)**

Total number of workshops: 31

2.5 Sectoral – Food & Drink Programme (F&D)

The Food and Drinks Officer, Tourism section, carried out a Food Destination survey in November 2022 to identify the needs of the sector. One of the results from the survey was a request to address specific training needs. The Economic Development and Food and Drinks Officer developed and provided a series of training sessions for the Food and Drink businesses to respond to this demand.

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The workshops delivered in March 2023 were based on the needs identified from the survey during challenging times with increased energy prices, rise in fuel costs and labour shortages. The objective of the training masterclasses was to develop skills and knowledge and put techniques in place.

At the end of the training sessions, participants developed a social media strategy, created a digital photography profile and tools for a better work-life balance.

The training sessions delivered were as follows:

1. **Introduction to Digital Photography**, held on Tuesday 7th March 2023, in person event at Signal Centre Suite 3, participants learnt;
 - What to think about before picking up any camera
 - What makes a “good photo”
 - Composition, focus, exposure
 - Editing / post-processing
 - Common pitfalls
 - Looking for inspiration and furthering
2. **Digital Marketing Masterclass**, held on Tuesday 14th March 2023, in person event at Signal Centre, Suite 3, participants learnt;
 - The Social Media Trends you need to know in 2023,
 - How to use social media to grow your food and drink business,
 - How to create a social media strategy that will get you results,
 - How to use email marketing and e-commerce to get sales
 - Top tips on paid social advertising.
3. **Recruit and retain staff** – held on Tuesday 21st March 2023, in person event at Signal Centre, Suite 3, participants learnt;

“How to recruit the people you need?”

 1. Best platforms to advertise and attract the correct talent for your industry.
 2. How to write a good advertisement to attract talent.
 3. How best to conduct a good interview
 4. Contracts for flexi workers

Moving on then to retention

- How to be a good leader
- How to create good culture
- Improving remuneration and compensation
- Improving training and career development
- Improving reward and recognition

Collective feedback from the sessions was as follows:

Potential Impact Upon Business	% of Respondents
Impact Turnover	84%
Affect Productivity / Processes	46%

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Help to Expand the Business	74%
Help to Enter New Markets	47%
Improve Customer/Employee Relations	63%
Increase Knowledge and Skills	100%

2.6 Commercial Sites and Property GIS Project

The Economic Development Team offers a commercial property search as part of the Business Research Service, to assist local businesses in finding suitable accommodation, and to encourage investment in the borough. The AND Business website includes a webpage dedicated to investment opportunities, which was updated to include a downloadable brochure detailing current investment and development opportunities in the Ards and North Down Borough.

Supplementary to this during the 2022/23 financial year, a project was conducted to map available commercial sites on the Council's GIS platform. A total of 16 significant investment opportunities were identified in Ards and North Down, which were mapped onto the GIS platform (property brochures were also added where these were available). This GIS mapping project is still only being used for internal purposes but can be drawn on to support research requests on commercial properties.

2.7 Summary of Business Growth Support Services

The team continued supporting a wide range of local businesses, during the challenging economic conditions resulting from the cost-of-living crisis.

The Economic Development team offered business support and advice to businesses on the latest and up-to-date information through a variety of methods including direct Business Advice, Business Research and a series of in-person events held at the Signal Centre, Bangor.

Area of Support	No. of Businesses	No. Investment opportunities
Business Advice	102	-
Business Research	73	-
In-person workshops at Signal Centre	211	-
Number of investment and development opportunities identified and mapped	-	16
Total interventions	386	

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3 Economic Development Conference

The rationale to hold a slimmed down conference 8 November 2022 was to enable the business community to come together to focus on issues-of-the-day (COVID, BREXIT, Energy Crisis) that are putting a squeeze on margin. During the pandemic businesses faced significant leadership challenges to persevere against the odds or pivot in a new direction.

Entitled *The Power of Marginal Gains*, the conference focused on macro issues that are changing operational landscapes big data, mega trends and how these are creating opportunities for new products and services; and the micro responses to navigate these changes through the triple lens of leadership, innovation, and change management.

Delegates heard from Tracey Follows, Futurologist how big-data is changing society, including the business environment requiring a Data Paradigm Shift. Delegates were challenged to re-think leadership strategies, work practices and estates utilisation through a series of TED Talks and contributed to Interactive Business Conversations in Leadership (values to be authentic), Innovation, Growth and Sustainability (lack of skills, knowledge, expertise, finance, and resources to implement).

Kevin McNamee, CEO Denroy Group provided a valuable case-study in 'Persevere'-moving sales of the Denman Hairbrush from B2C to online B2C and 'Pivot' - utilising otherwise furloughed design and engineering teams to design, prototype, certificate, manufacture, and supply HeroShield and FFP3 Surgical Facemasks. Regarding the future use of plastic Denroy outlined a future with no 'single-use' plastic and significant energy and landfill reduction solutions.

Lessons learned and key recommendations enabled the Economic Development Team to review its business support services to include Strategic Leadership support in Digital Transformation and Culture Change relevant to different levels: Strategic Options Leadership/Insights, New Competencies Knowledge/Data and Operational Excellence Skills/Revenue. The Economic Development Team was also prompted to consider developing demonstrator case-studies through the wider ANDBC Climate Action Plan and Sustainability Roadmap.

Overall, 72 delegates attended representing 78% of those registered. The slimmed down conference cost £15,803 to deliver (52% of original budget £30,000). Cost of £220/delegate was below original estimated figure of £300/delegate.

4 4C UR Future

The Economic Development Section reported to council in September 2022 and January 2023 with details on Ards & North Down Borough Council participated in a pilot careers inspiration event called 4C UR Future Live. The event was held on the 7 June 2022 in Ards Blair Mayne Leisure Centre. The event was its first of a kind in

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Northern Ireland, with all 11 council areas hosting their own event during a period of 6 months in 2022.

The event, 4C UR Future LIVE, was a fun, fast-paced, and action-packed day of interactive skills games and work-based challenges, with each game co-created and delivered by local employers, and gave Year 9 students from schools across the borough an insight into the future world of work, as well as their own strengths and talents.

Through 4C UR Future LIVE events and the first-generation CAREERS PORTAL, launched in September 2022, informing young people of the wide range of opportunities available to them, help them navigate the complex careers landscape, and inspire them to achieve their ambitions and become the best version of themselves.

Participants were as follows:

Total number of pupils – 711

Total number of teachers and school staff – 60

Total number of volunteers – 95

Schools:

Movilla High School – 102 pupils

Priory Integrated College – 110 pupils

Regent House Grammar School – 243 pupils

St Columbanus College – 125 pupils

Strangford Integrated College – 131 pupils

Teacher feedback survey results indicated the following:

53% of teachers thought the event was very good

24% describing the event as exciting and fun

59% innovative and different

30% engaging and relevant

24% teachers thought pupils increased in confident in their own capabilities

71% teachers thought pupils improved their communication by interacting with others

47% teachers thought pupils increased their awareness of different types of jobs and local employers.

Volunteer feedback survey results indicated the following:

95% volunteers had a positive experience

86% volunteers said they would like to volunteer for a 4C UR Future Live event in the future

72% volunteers felt taking part helped their employer support the local community

90% believed 4C UR Future Live played a positive role in bringing individuals from different backgrounds and cultures together

63% felt the event raised awareness of their employer and sector.

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Pupil feedback survey results indicated the following:

28% of pupils said they met companies or learned about new jobs they'd never heard of before

67% had a positive experience, meeting company volunteers

73% had a positive experience, (loved it, really good, ok)

77% said they discovered or confirmed things they're good at.

Pupils were also asked about their future:

1/3 pupils were positive (have a plan, or can't wait)

2/3 pupils were not sure (too many positions, don't know where to start or don't want to think about it)

2/3 of pupils needed more help.

5 Go for It

The current Business Start-Up Programme is regionally known as the 'Go for It' Programme and is an 11 partner Councils collaboration across Northern Ireland.

Participants receive the following support:

- Up to 6 hours of bespoke mentoring support delivered by a business adviser through a series of 1-1 meetings, group workshops and phone calls to assess and develop their business idea and to develop their bespoke business plan;
- Finance and business planning workshops;
- Tailored mentoring, guidance and support covering everything from sales and marketing to accessing funds and securing premises;
- Best practice tools, videos and more to help the participant get started.

The Table below shows *Go For It* Stats for Council April 2022 - March 2023

April 2021-March 2022 End of Programme Performance	Achieved No.
Enquiries	349
Initial Assessment Meetings (IAM)	219
Business Plans Approved	169
Jobs Created*	101

101 jobs created versus statutory target (statutory target is 85)

The programme was managed centrally by LCCC on behalf of the 11 councils. The main elements of the programme consisted of delivery (Enterprise NI), marketing

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(Derry Strabane District Council contract), Enquiry Handling (Teleperformance) and MIS (Belfast City Council Contract). The programme is being extended with the current delivery agents up to September 2023 to ensure that there is no gap in service between GFI ending and the new Enterprise Support Service starting.

6 SHINE Programme

The SHINE Programme was Ards and North Down Borough Council's principal business support and growth programme providing 1:1 specialist business advice and tailored workshops to take businesses to the next level of growth. It was part funded by Invest Northern Ireland and the European Regional Development Fund under the Investment for Growth and Jobs Northern Ireland (2014-2020) programme. The delivery/mentoring element of the programme was delivered by Brilliant Red, and marketing delivered by Directus. The delivery and marketing of the programme ended on 31st March 2023. Monitoring of job creation will continue for another 6 months.

Programme deliverables on mentoring and marketing – The table below lists the SHINE Programme Delivery main objectives and outputs to date.

Objectives/targets	Outputs to date
360 individual businesses engaging in the Programme	192 businesses have completed a diagnostic form for the Programme, 188 appointed onto SHINE.
330 businesses recruited for mentoring support	154 businesses completed the Programme in full, using all allocated mentoring hours. 34 businesses did not complete the programme.
Deliver at least 6250 hours of "one to one" mentoring to at least 330 participating businesses by 31 March 2023.	Total of 3,222.08 hours since the beginning of the programme up to 31 March 2023.
280 jobs to be created within 3 years by 31 December 2023	Total number of FTE jobs created since start of programme is 176.69 jobs (119 F/T 43.49 P/T 14. contract)
30 businesses referred to Invest NI (the pipeline)	9 quality business referrals added to portal and emailed to INI Executive, 7 referred.
70 businesses referred to other sources of support and assistance.	38 participants have been referred to other business support providers, excluding Invest NI financial Support. A total of 74 referrals to business support services.
6 per annum Economic Development Business topic half day workshops/events	24 workshops/webinars delivered since start of programme, on business development support topics. Sales & Marketing, Bookkeeping, Finance & Cashflow, HR Solutions

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with minimum of 12 participants	Digital Marketing (the most common support since Covid); <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social Media - Facebook - Instagram - TikTok - Website, (SEO)
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The recruitment under the SHINE programme was challenging, partly due to the pandemic and the economic crisis.

When applying for ERDF funding for the SHINE Programme, the Council had to meet the tight requirements of creating jobs for less than £1,000 per Full Time Equivalent position. In addition, all ERDF applications had to be higher than £250,000 in value to qualify for funding.

In order to be considered for funding by the Department for the Economy, the council had to submit a proposed job creation figure of 280 which was always going to be very challenging to meet.

The fact that the programme has created 177 jobs, in the midst of a cost-of-living crisis and recovery from a pandemic, is very positive despite not being in line with the programme's target. Further evaluation of jobs is to continue until 31 December 2023.

The Economic Development Section is to carry out a final independent programme evaluation report to be completed by 30 September 2023 measuring progress towards job creation target and quality referrals to Invest NI.

The table below outlines promotional activity delivered by Directus Consulting and the Economic Development Section:

PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITY	DETAILS OF EVENTS	DATES OF EVENT
Monthly Ezine	Ezines issued by the ED Unit	86 SHINE ezine items featured, and stand-alone ezines to promote SHINE Programme and workshops
Social media	Social Media marketing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - posts on Facebook - posts on Instagram - posts on Twitter - posts on LinkedIn 	A social media plan for remainder of the programme up to March 2023 delivered by agents Directus. Marketing content created from August – March 2022 with new images/content. Regular posts on council Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and tagged to other support

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		organisations, i.e. Ards Business Hub, NDDO.
Inclusion in Business Support Programmes	The SHINE advert was included in our Business Support Programmes as part of the overall programme of activities run by the Council. The advert adheres strictly to the publicity guidelines.	Businesses that are attending other events run by ED are being contacted post event. All enquiries received by ED. Promoted to chambers of Commerce, and the LEAs to communicate with their networks.
Videos	Promotional Videos from existing participants.	Four promotional videos were made using SHINE participants and an end of programme video with four participants.
ANDBusiness Website SHINE Page	Detailing SHINE programme with access to download application, dates of webinars and testimonial videos.	The website page was a useful tool to promote and provide up to date information on the programme. Quarterly reporting on unique views to the page and its contents, i.e. application.

7 AND Social Entrepreneurship Programme

The third ANDSEP Programme launched in June 2021 for a one-year period with an extended additional 12 months up to March 2023.

The aims of the programme were to:

- Support social economy business start-ups at pre and post-start stages
- Provide guidance and business development support
- Clearly identify financial sustainability attainment for social enterprises through traditional and innovative means
- Build capacity and skills of the social entrepreneurs
- Provide post start-up mentoring to ensure optimum economic impact on the community and increase survival rate
- Link social entrepreneurs with appropriate networks
- Evaluate Strategic Added Value of projects in the area
- Increase engagement with other council departments and external agencies for effective signposting and improve levels of awareness within such departments of the social enterprise sector in the borough
- Create an easily accessible multi-media toolbox for applicants which can be used during all phases of the programme and beyond

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- Provide ongoing support for existing Social Enterprises as they scale up and start to consider future investment and funding
- Promote Social Enterprises in the Ards and North Down Borough Council area that showcase the social impact of social enterprises through 'buy social' week
- Identify and introduce Local Social Enterprise champions

ANDSEP 2022-2023 Programme Targets and outputs:

Targets	Outputs/Outcomes
25 separate individuals / groups participating in the programme per annum and receiving one to one mentoring	Achieved 29 groups/individuals 18 recruited at Preparatory stage 8 groups/individuals recruited at Core stage 3 groups/individuals recruited at Strategic stage
5 Workshops based on business needs	5 Workshops Delivered as follows: Workshop 1 – planning your Social Enterprise 6th October 2022 @ Signal Centre - 18 Attendees Workshop 2 – Show me the Money (with NICVA) 19th October 2022 @ Online - 13 attendees Workshop 3 – Measuring Social Impact 17th November 2022 @ Online - 13 attendees Workshop 4 – Knocking Doors 15th February 2023 @ Online - 10 Attendees Workshop 5 – Social Media 15th March 2023 @ Online - 8 attendees
15 Jobs Created in Year 2	Jobs to date: 11 (excluding those participants that decided to go down a private venture route) 21 projected jobs in the next 12 months
20 New Products / Services developed in Year 2	12 (a number of others at Strategic stage are also considering new products / services which will be accounted for during the 12-month follow-up period)
£300,000 Group /Enterprise Annual Turnover	Year 1 £269,005 Year 2 £109,181
£450,000 funding levered through existing sources of funding (grants, gift aid and loans)	Year 1 £113,790 Year 2 £235,000

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8 Mind Body Business

Mind Body Business is a joint initiative by the Public Health Agency and Ards and North Down Borough Council that aims to benefit business owners and their employees. MBB aims to encourage employers to put "health" at the centre of their business agenda to the benefit of employers and their employees.

This year's activity offered information on health and wellbeing initiative, a survey to identify the needs of the businesses in relation to health and wellbeing and a small grant scheme. The Grant Scheme offered financial support, up to £250 (per business), to businesses based in Ards and North Down Borough who were interested in providing a workplace health and well-being initiative for their employees.

Mind, Body, Business programme of activities and outputs included:

Activities	Outputs
To increase sign up to MBB by an additional 10 businesses by end March 2023	13 businesses signed up to MBB
MBB website updated	Regularly updated with MBB activities and health and wellbeing promoted material
Regular MBB e-zines and emails to connect with businesses and promote activities and health messages.	12 ezine 100 unique clicks to MBB link
Survey undertaken to assess the needs of businesses and employees, to inform the MBB programme	Survey carried out in May 2022, 14 responses
Distribution of employee health & wellbeing boxes for businesses.	5 provided
To provide a small grant of financial support for businesses to complete a wellbeing initiative within their business relating to the Take 5 Approach to Wellbeing	24 participated representing 916 employees

As part of the Grant Scheme, the Council encouraged businesses to use local providers and to use the services offered by the Business Researcher to avail of contact lists of local providers.

A small example of the types of funded activities businesses carried out included:

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- encouraging healthier snacking choices and healthy breakfast and lunches;
- mental awareness training;
- outdoor activity with a local provider;
- Pilate classes and a 'calm' area in the office to allow staff to unwind.

9 Tender Accelerator Programme

Tender Accelerator Programme (TAP) was specially targeted at fifteen micro-business/SME enterprises that seek to maximise the full potential of the combined strengths within their supply chain to secure new public sector contracts via procurement tendering. Organisations preparing to submit a tender may do so as an independent business or as lead partner on behalf of a cluster or consortium. This is primarily, but not exclusively, public sector contracts (may also include PLC tenders).

A key element of this TAP programme was the development of the micro-business/SME enterprise leadership skills and knowledge in:

- Accessing buyer on-line portals; IT systems required to access them
- Preparing competent procurement tenders suitable for submission (pre-qualifications, tender assessments, bid preparation, bid pricing, tender awards)
- Exploring how to maximise the potential within their supply chain as a critical component in their procurement tender response readiness
- Developing robust procurement policies and procedures for managing a successful contract award

Targets	Outcomes/Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Market the TAP programme in the ANDBC region and recruit 15 micro-businesses/SME Enterprises to participate 	15 Eligible Enterprises recruited
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a template and establish a Baseline Audit value (tender readiness checker) 	Baseline established
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the development of a TAP Action Plan for each participating business 	Mentoring plans developed and implemented
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a <u>minimum</u> of three full days mentoring support per participating business. ▪ Five ½ day themed workshops. ▪ Deliver or arrange participation in a Meet the Buyer/Supplier event for the programme participants. 	45 days of mentoring completed 5 Masterclasses delivered, including specialist guest speakers representing buyers at different threshold levels Meet the buyer event was replaced with targeted/focused additional mentoring to sign-post to specific buyers

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase business growth through awareness of, and participation in, procurement tendering processes 	Completed and reported via the end project evaluation report. Participant enterprises gained significant knowledge in Tendering process and prepared/submitted bid proposals where relevant.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase employment opportunities 	To be evaluated March 24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review progress and provide an end of programme evaluation of distance travelled per participating business 	Full end programme report submitted within 30 days of end of project
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain operational reporting on progress with council representative 	Participated in 3 Project Steering Group meetings and maintained an ongoing dialogue via email, phone and during masterclass workshops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up with a post project evaluation (+12 months) 	Due to be completed March 24

TAP project achieved its full targets.

10 Green Business Programme

The Green Business Programme (GBP) aimed to deliver an innovative best practice model in the four key areas above and in doing so make an impact with participating businesses. In the first instance businesses were looking to reduce their own consumption (energy and waste) and may also have been seeking to identify lower carbon solutions for their business. By developing and implementing sustainable low carbon actions businesses will eventually benefit from at least one from:

- Reduced energy costs (energy efficiency)
- Reduced waste (reduce-reuse-recycle)
- Reduced carbon footprint (supply-chain, carbon off-setting)

GBP was specially targeted at businesses that had an ambition to reduce their energy and/or waste in their manufacturing or production systems to achieve 10%+ savings in either area. Alternatively, businesses sought to achieve a 10% saving in reducing their carbon footprint.

Targets	Outcomes/Outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase business awareness and participation in climate action targets 	Promotion of GBP programme to businesses in ANDBC region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market the GBP programme in the ANDBC region and recruit 10 SMEs to participate 	10 Eligible Enterprises recruited

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a template and establish a baseline value (energy, waste or carbon footprint) 	Baseline established
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the development of a sustainable low carbon Green Business Action Plan for each participating business 	Mentoring plans developed and implemented
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a minimum of three full days mentoring support per participating business. 	30 days of mentoring completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four ½ day themed workshops, and two online sessions with local case study/keynote speakers 	4 Masterclasses delivered, including specialist guest speakers in renewable, sustainable sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review progress and provide an end of programme evaluation of distance travelled per participating business 	To be submitted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain operational reporting on progress with council representative 	Participated in 3 Project Steering Group meetings and maintained an ongoing dialogue via email, phone and during masterclass workshops
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up with a post project evaluation (+12 months) 	Due to be completed March 24

GBP project achieved its operational targets and we are awaiting a final evaluation report.

11 NI Apprenticeship Week Programme 2023

Northern Ireland Apprenticeship Week 2023 was held from 6 to 10 February 2023. The programme was led by the Department for the Economy (DfE) and aimed to raise the profile of apprenticeships across NI by working collaboratively with the South Eastern Regional College (SERC) and the Council.

The project's objective was to produce a video to showcase one Ards and North Down business that had participated in South Eastern Regional College (SERC) apprenticeship training programmes.

Economic Development contracted Greenhouse Film NI to film and produce 1 x 3-minute video & 3-4 short social media clips highlighting the success of the Apprenticeship Programme.

The video showcased SERC and a local Health Care Home, Camphill Community Glencraig, one apprentice studying level 2 Health and Social Care at SERC

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employed at Camphill Community Glencraig. Both shared their experiences of apprenticeships and how this transformed 'Tomorrow's Talent Today' as part of the Northern Ireland Apprenticeship Week.

The videos and social media content were promoted on ANDBusiness website and social media channels, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram.

Social Media Insights For messages shared on ANDBC channels in February 2023:

18 posts were shared across ANDBC social media channels. This included both picture and video posts:

- 8 Facebook posts
- 3 Instagram posts
- 4 Tweets
- 3 LinkedIn Posts

The video was also circulated through Ards and North Down Business Ezine issues:

- 18 Jan – weekly ezine - 33.8% open rate. 7 clicks, 3 unique clicks.
- 1 Feb – weekly ezine - 36.5% open rate. 9 clicks, 7 unique clicks
- 7 Feb – NIAW stand-alone ezine. 33.8% open rate. 14 clicks, 10 unique clicks.

Press coverage included:

- organising a photocall with the participating business owners and their apprentice, representatives from SERC, Department for the Economy and the council.
- A press release was issued in the local paper during the week of #NIAW2023.

The Northern Ireland week-long event and lead up to it consisted of virtual events, promotional activity on social media that demonstrated the benefits of becoming an apprentice, and how apprenticeships can work to strengthen businesses, communities and the wider economy.

12 Job Fair 2023

The Department for Communities (DfC) contacted the council informing of their plans for Regional Job Fair Programme in 2022/23. The Council Economic Development Team and DfC Employer Services Branch (ESB) held its first in person event since 2019 on Tuesday 24 January 2023 in Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex.

The event had 39 employers and supporting organisation offering up to 383 employment opportunities. The event was an opportunity for people seeking employment to talk to employers and other support organisations to get career advice. Participants were able

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to apply for job opportunities on the day of the event. The job opportunities came from a variety of sectors such as Health and Social Care, Retail, Hospitality, Catering and Public Security.

Support organisations on the day offered one-to-one support, together with advice on finding a job.

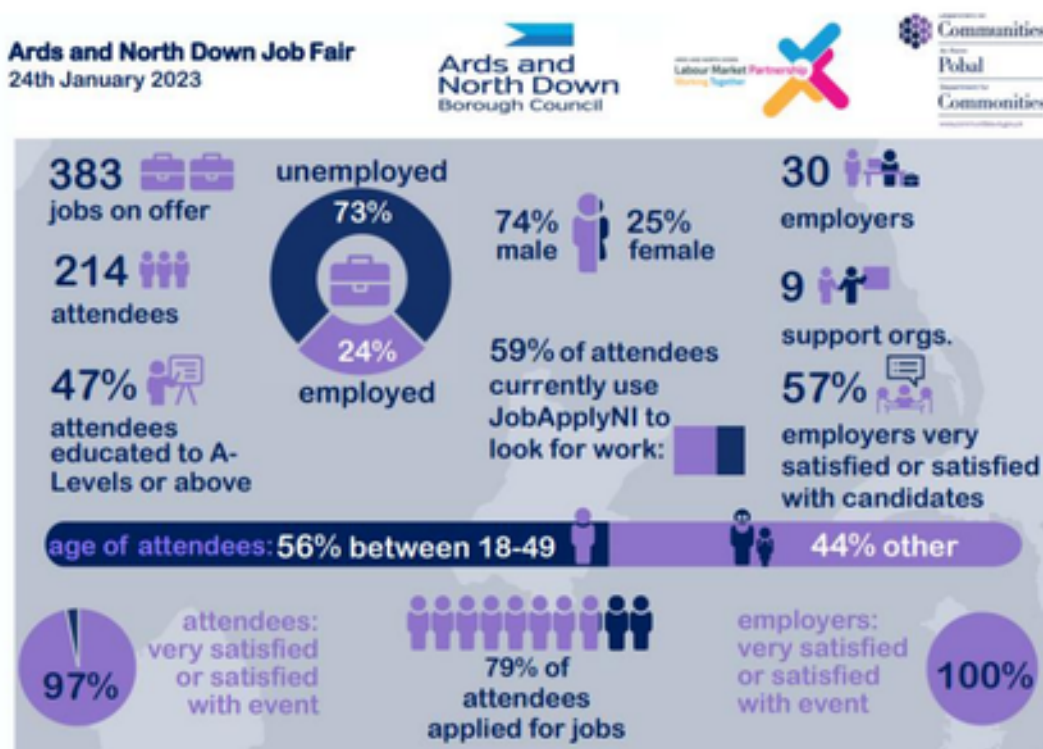
Support organisations were as follows:

- Department for the Economy Careers Service
- DfC Jobs Search Services
- Specialist disability organisations
- Local Enterprise Agencies offered advice on setting up a business and local college on training programmes.

Event attendee turnout was satisfactory, with up to 214 attendees. The Council and DfC worked collaboratively to promote the event in the lead up to the Job Fair with many social media posts on both organisation's Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter sites.

A large marketing campaign was organised using billboards in Bangor and Newtownards, Adshels at bus shelters and digital screen at different locations throughout the borough, leaflet drops at all towns and villages and press adverts in local press papers.

The infographic below summarises the outcomes of the day:



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Employment Outcomes Survey

All attendees were invited to complete an exit survey as they left the event. The survey results are detailed in the infographic above. The above record shows 79% of attendees applied for jobs on the day.

The DfC Employer Services Branch DfC Team conducted a subsequent survey 6 weeks following the event to further assess the impact of the job fair.

The Employer Services Branch made contact with all the employers who exhibited at the Job Fair. This resulted in 25 out of the 30 employers responding (83%) to the request for employment outcomes.

The table below outlines the results:

No. of Employers	No. of employers who responded	% of Employers who responded	No. of Jobs Available for employers who responded	No. of Job offers made	No of positions filled
30	25	83.3%	345	16	8

The survey indicated that 8 positions/jobs were filled, which did not meet the council's expectations given the number and range of jobs offered on the day. Comments from employers indicated that they could not find the right calibre of people to fill their jobs.

The DfC had contacted the Council to host another Job Fair in 2024. These plans may be impacted by the budgeting issues within the Labour Market Partnership.

13 Women in Leadership Programme

The Economic Development section contracted the South Eastern Regional College (SERC) to work in partnership in the delivery and support of a Female Business Support and Accredited Training Leadership Programme.

The programme provided one-to-one mentoring, an accredited Level 5 qualification in leadership and management and two networking events at the start and end of the programme. The programme was offered to female business owners and/or nominated female employees and entrepreneurs. The programme's aim was for female business owners, employees, and entrepreneurs to become leaders and managers using techniques to help address many of the barriers that women must overcome in order to pursue their ambitions in leadership and management roles.

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The table below provides the programmes targets and outputs achieved:

Targets	Outputs
Brand and market the Female Business Support and Accredited Training Leadership Programme 2022-23 in ANDBC	<p>The 'Women in Leadership' brand and associated assets with which female business owners/ employees/ entrepreneurs could identify were created to raise awareness of the programme.</p> <p>A unique landing page was created on the Ards and North Down Borough Council's website: Women in Leadership AND Business</p> <p>A photo launch with associated press release was communicated to the local and regional press including The County Down Spectator, Newtownards Chronicle and Belfast Telegraph.</p> <p>Organic social media on all council and SERC Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter pages.</p>
Recruit 30 female business owners and/or nominated female employees and entrepreneurs	32 Women signed up to the programme 26 completed the course, mentoring and network events.
Provide 5 hours of one-to-one mentoring to each participating company/individuals to address business needs and their challenges. The number of places was restricted to two per company	130 hours of mentoring were completed
Provide an approved and recognised accredited training Leadership & Management qualification between level 3 and 5, this should be split 50/50 between levels	16 candidates achieved CMI Level 5 Award Management and Leadership. 10 Candidates are currently waiting to receive their certificate.
Provide two networking events pre and post qualification	Network event 1 "Engage and Collaborate" delivered 28 November 2022 Network event 2 "Next steps on your journey" delivered 27 March 2023
Follow up with end of programme evaluation (contract complete date) and a post project report (+6 months after contract complete).	A plan is in place to deliver the required impact reporting with all participants by end of September 2023. This will assess the 'distance travelled' and assessment of how the programme has impacted on job creation, confidence, and other outcomes.

Appendix 1: Economic Development Annual Activity Summary Report 2022-23

Programme Successes:

- Participants engaged well on all aspects of the programme and the group dynamics, with diverse backgrounds and experience, contributed to the learning experience
- Networking events with break out rooms were particularly well-received and the opportunity for peer learning and to share experiences proved successful with participants commenting that more networking events would be advantageous
- Participants have been able to implement lessons learned from the mentoring sessions gaining quick wins and developing longer term positive impacts
- The format of the course allowed practical skills development to improve personal and business efficiency and productivity.

Challenges overcome by the team:

- Despite the comprehensive marketing activity, recruitment was initially slow. The feedback from enquiries which were not converted to enrolments was due to the fact that other work and personal commitments did not fit in with the programme schedule. In order to accommodate more learners with caring responsibilities etc. and meet the target, a third cohort was scheduled in the evening.
- Completing the mentoring within the timeframe has been challenging given the work/life commitments of the participants but mentors have been flexible to suit.
- Those participants who had been out of education for some time lacked confidence, but the patience and positive delivery of the tutors and support of the mentors has resulted in 100% achievement to date.
- A level 3 qualification was originally proposed but following the marketing and promotional campaign the interest was clearly in the Level 5 qualification and, therefore, to meet this demand, two courses were run with a third to increase the numbers.
- Feedback from the tutors and participants indicated that some introductory training on MS Teams would have been useful to help those with no or limited experience as time had to be allocated to support some learners to navigate the system.
- Given the successful learner outcomes to date and armed with the experience gained from the programme, SERC would be keen to host another in the near future.

14 Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership 2022-23

Ards and North Down Labour Market Partnership (LMP) was established on 17 August 2021. The LMP has been working to its 2021-23 Action Plan which has been approved by Council and the Department for Communities. Council provides the secretariat to the LMP.

Appendix 1: Economic Development Annual Activity Summary Report 2022-23

Update on the work of the LMP

Structure:

LMP Members and Sub-committees

Membership of the LMP, as previously reported, consists of approx. 30 members from sectoral bodies, voluntary and community organisations and Council representatives.

The three subcommittees relate to the themes within the 2022-23 Action Plan. The three themes are as follows:

- **Theme 1** – Supporting people into employment and employment enhancement
- **Theme 2** – Young People with employment challenges
- **Theme 3** – Covid-19 related labour market disruption

The subcommittees report back to the full LMP.

Action Plan – Year 2

Thematic Group 1 - Supporting people into employment and employment enhancement

1. Upskill unemployed people with disabilities and help them gain employment through Job Focused Academies.

Delivery Agent was appointed and attended an initiation meeting on Monday 16th January. The delivery agent has recruited the full 40 participants onto the Academies. The four academies being delivered were:

- Customer Service
- Business Administration
- Health and Social Care
- Progression into Employment

At the Full LMP Meeting on 14th February 2023 it was agreed that a 10% uplift would be applied to the Academy for people with Disabilities to utilise an underspend in other projects. The recruitment figure was increased to 44 participants.

Outcomes to date:

Participant Outcomes:

Outcome	Target	Progress
Work Placements	18	22
Paid Jobs	10	3*

3 People have progressed into employment:

- 1 person has been employed out of the HSC Academy by Littlewoods
- 1 person has been employed by Mount Charles (Catering/hospitality).

Appendix 1: Economic Development Annual Activity Summary Report 2022-23

- 1 person has been employed by Positive Futures (HSC Academy). This person has had his confidence increased during the course and has been able to interact more as a result of the Training in the Disability Academy.

*Jobs to be achieved within 6 months of academy completion. Jobs will also be tracked for 6 months to obtain a sustainment rate.

2. Upskill unemployed people and help them gain employment through Job Focused Academies.

A procurement process took place for this project, however we were unable to secure a delivery partner to deliver within this financial year.

3. Job Fairs.

The Labour Market Partnership hosted four Employability Roadshows that took place in January 2023 in locations across the Borough. There were four events in Comber, Bangor, Kircubbin and Donaghadee. Across the 4 events there were 47 people that attended, 8 of which then went on to attend the Ards and North Down Job Fair on 24th January 2023.

4. Third level education student enterprise academy focusing on business start.

Quotations for the delivery of the Third Level Education Student Enterprise were sought and the contract awarded on 23rd January 2023. The Third Level Student Enterprise Academy was quoted for and awarded in January 2023. After extensive recruitment and planning for delivery of the programme, the Delivery Agent cited problems recruiting and was not able to make any progress in attracting people to the Academy.

A decision was made to terminate this programme by the delivery agent as per the conditions of the Funding agreement that was in place resulting in this project not being delivered. No costs were incurred for this project.

5. Industry-Led Training Bursary Scheme

LMP Members agreed to submit a request for funding under an Easement Fund, however we were unsuccessful in receiving funding for this project with the Easement Fund Bid but rather we were asked to use our underspend from other unsuccessful projects. We submitted a Change Request to be able to do this, which was received on 1st March 23. With this approval we have been permitted to run the bursary scheme until the end of June 23.

Expressions of Interest were sought from interested businesses for Industry related training. We received 37 Expressions of Interest of the 37 EOIs. 13 were approved and moved on to the second stage of application process and asked to complete an application form with 2 comparable quotes to ensure value for money.

Appendix 1: Economic Development Annual Activity Summary Report 2022-23

After a review of the budget with DfC we applied to use underspend from the Job Fairs and the Leadership Academy to uplift the budget to fund an the additional EOIs.

A request was submitted and subsequently accepted to DfC as to whether we could reassign our submitted easement bid and utilise underspend from other projects. Training is anticipated to complete by the end of June 2023.

Thematic Group 2 - Young People with Employment Challenges

6. 10 School Videos produced.

10 videos have been produced featuring different sectors and employers across the borough to highlight routes to employment and opportunities that are available within various sectors. These videos will be distributed to the 13 post primary schools/education providers across the Borough.

7. Enterprise Skills Programme for 16-24-year olds through Regional Colleges to support self-employment.

An Enterprise Skills Academy is being delivered through SERC, the only regional college in our borough. The Academy was designed to encourage young people to consider self-employment and potentially setting up their own business. The Academy had recruitment channels and recruited 20 participants against a target of 30 by 31st March 2023.

It was agreed to run a fast-track academy to deliver the academy for the full 30 participants by the end of June 23.

It should be noted however that 9 of the participants that have completed the programme are planning to set up their own business against a target of 8.

Thematic Group 3 - Covid 19-related Labour Market Disruption

8. Reskilling for Job Vacancies – Health and Social Care Academy.

A delivery agent has been appointed for the delivery of 3 Health and Social Care Academies for 50 participants. The Academies were:

- Health and Social Care – Entry Level
- Health and Social Care – Upskilling
- Childcare – Entry Level and Upskilling Combined

Appendix 1: Economic Development Annual Activity Summary Report 2022-23

Academy 1	Health and Social Care Entry Level	17 Enrolled	14 Completed
Academy 2	Health and Social Care Upskilling	20 Enrolled	17 Completed
Academy 3	Childcare Entry Level and Upskilling	8 Enrolled	5 Completed

Due to recruitment challenges and a recognised demand for upskilling, the delivery agent promoted, recruited, and delivered a Level 3 CMI Qualification aimed at developing the skills and knowledge of aspiring team leaders within the H&SC sector.

- Additional Academy/Academy 4 – Health and Social Care Level 3

Academy 4	Health and Social Care Level 3	10 Enrolled	Yet to Complete
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To date we have not reported any employment outcomes from this Academy. However, contact will be maintained, and a 6 month follow up of participants to monitor into employment or better employment outcomes.

9. Reskilling for Job Vacancies – HGV Training and Employment Academy.

An e-tender was prepared and advertised with a closing date of 23rd March 2022. Tenders were assessed on 25th March 2022 in line with Council procurement processes and DFPF (People 1st and Henderson Wholesale Ltd) were appointed as the delivery agents.

Due to underspend in other areas and the success of the Academy, the partnership agreed to uplift the budget and targets for the HGV academy to recruit an additional 15 people. The additional places will be filled from the waiting list that was drafted after the first round of recruitment.

Overview as follows:

- 30 out of 30 candidates now through medical stage
- Awaiting 3 candidate licence
- 19 candidates given 25 hours online learning for theory, this has been sent with information attached from Henderson
- 3 candidates at theory stage (booked and confirmed)
- 24 candidates completed 3 elements
- 24 candidates at practical testing stage (booked and confirmed)
- 16 candidates completed training

Appendix 1: Economic Development Annual Activity Summary Report 2022-23

- **15 candidates employed with local companies** as a result of their involvement in the academy
- 4 examinations pending

Additional 15 candidates:

- Interview and initial assessment complete
- Candidates informed they have been selected
- Training plan provided to participants
- 4 candidates medical booked, 11 candidates sent to training partner for licence confirmation.

Summary of outcomes (2021-23 LMP Plan)

Activities	Numbers of attendees/participants
Events such as mini job fairs and the main job fair	261
Participants in activities and programmes	263 (220 completers – 84%)
Employers engaged with across all programmes	148 (target exceeded)
Work placements (part of the disability Academy)	33
Post-primary career videos produced	10
Employment	26 (12%)
New qualification	129 (59%)

Action Plan for 2023-24

An initial meeting/workshop with LMP members presented the findings of a Strategic Assessment, two further planning meetings of LMP members and Council Officers, facilitated by appointed Consultant were conducted to decide on key themes and interventions to address those themes. The 2023-24 Action Plan was agreed by the Partnership and submitted by the February deadline to DfC after a presentation in person to the Regional LMP.

The LMP Secretariat is waiting for a Letter of Offer to confirm the budget to progress delivery of the Action Plan during the financial year 2023-24. However, the proposed Action Plan will be impacted by the decision on reduction in funding made by DfC in respect of the LMPs and will be reported on separately.

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ITEM 7

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Economic Development
Date of Report	25 May 2023
File Reference	ED79
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	SHINE- End of Programme report
Attachments	

Background

The SHINE Programme is the Council's principal business support and growth programme. It was funded by Invest Northern Ireland and the European Regional Development Fund under the Investment for Growth & Jobs Northern Ireland (2014-2020) Programme. The SHINE Programme was officially launched in February 2019.

The SHINE Programme aimed to create new jobs and improve the competitiveness of existing SMEs operating in the Ards and North Down Borough Council area. The Programme offered mentoring to develop the capacity and capability of small business owners/managers to prepare growth strategies that can drive new investment, increase sales turnover and profitability, improve efficiency, and create employment to increase job creation in the borough.

The Economic Development section reported to the Regeneration, Development and Planning Committee in February and November 2021 with a recommendation to note the SHINE Programme Mid Term Evaluation Report, programme progress and to agree to continue with the programme delivery until the end of the Programme in December 2022.

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At its August Council meeting, Council agreed to approve the request from Invest NI to extend the SHINE programme's delivery period by a further 3 months up to 31 March 2023 and to authorise Officers to liaise with CPD and Invest NI in relation to making the necessary amendments to the Letter of Offer and contract with the delivery agent. This was carried out to maximise the funds available under the programme and ensure that more companies could benefit from the programme.

SHINE Programme Mentoring Delivery

The SHINE Programme Delivery main objectives and outputs to date are listed below:

Objectives/targets	Outputs to date
360 individual businesses engaging in the Programme	192 businesses have completed a diagnostic form for the Programme, 188 appointed onto SHINE.
330 businesses recruited for mentoring support	154 businesses completed the Programme in full, using all allocated mentoring hours. 34 businesses did not complete the programme.
Deliver at least 6250 hours of "one to one" mentoring to at least 330 participating businesses by 31 March 2023.	Total of 3,222.08 hours since the beginning of the programme up to 31 March 2023.
280 jobs to be created within 3 years by 31 December 2023	Total number of FTE jobs created since start of programme is 176.69 jobs (119 F/T 43.49 P/T 14. contract)
30 businesses referred to Invest NI (the pipeline)	9 quality business referrals added to portal and emailed to Invest NI Executive, 7 referred.
70 businesses referred to other sources of support and assistance.	38 participants have been referred to other business support providers, excluding Invest NI financial Support. A total of 74 referrals to business support services.
6 per annum Economic Development Business topic half day workshops/events with minimum of 12 participants	24 workshops/webinars delivered since start of programme, on business development support topics. Sales & Marketing, Bookkeeping, Finance & Cashflow, HR Solutions Digital Marketing (the most common support since Covid); <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social Media - Facebook - Instagram - TikTok - Website, (SEO)

The COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed from 2020 to 2022, Brexit and the cost-of-living crisis affecting businesses had a significant impact on the

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recruitment and delivery of the SHINE Programme. Officers saw a decrease in demand for the programme from March 2020 and a few businesses failed to fully complete the mentoring. The Delivery Agent communicated with participants and recorded the reasons for not continuing with the programme.

Some of the reasons were as follows:

- 'Not trading any more'
- 'No further intervention required'
- 'Don't want to continue'
- 'Too many hours, don't know what to do with them'
- 'Non-Starters - Have no time'
- 'Non-Starters' – businesses allocated hrs (incl extra hrs) and client with no time to use them.

The Council tried to meet the targets based on reasonable endeavours through a range of different mechanisms to assist with recruitment and mentoring.

In 2020 after consulting with Invest NI, it was decided to move the one-to-one mentoring online through ZOOM or equivalent platforms. The interactive workshops were delivered on ZOOM to allow the programme to continue. Mentoring continued at the choice of the participant, either via in person or online with their mentor.

In 2021 the creation of an on-line application platform offered clients the opportunity to complete an application on-line. Seventy-two clients completed the online application.

Although targets were not met by the end of programme, the ED Team used the principle of best endeavours to deliver as many mentoring hours as possible to local companies. This was done via a rigorous recruitment drive by telephone contact and a marketing campaign on social media and council.

SHINE Marketing and Recruitment

The table below outlines promotional activity:

PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITY	DETAILS OF EVENTS	DATES OF EVENT
Monthly Ezine	Ezines issued by the ED Unit	86 SHINE ezine items featured, and stand-alone ezines to promote SHINE Programme and workshops
Social media	Social Media marketing: - posts on Facebook - posts on Instagram - posts on Twitter - posts on LinkedIn	A social media plan for the duration of the programme up to March 2023 delivered by agents Directus. Marketing content created from August – March 2022 with new images/content. Regular posts on council Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and tagged to other support

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		organisations, i.e. Ards Business Hub, NDDO
Inclusion in Business Support Programmes	The SHINE advert was included in our Business Support Programmes as part of the overall programme of activities run by the Council The advert adhered strictly to the publicity guidelines.	Businesses that were attending other events run by ED were being contacted post event. SHINE was promoted to chambers of Commerce, and the LEAs to communicate with their networks.
Videos	Promotional Videos with existing participants	Four promotional videos were made using SHINE participants and an end of programme video with four participants was created.
ANDBusiness Website SHINE Page	Detailing SHINE programme with access to download application, dates of webinars and testimonial videos	The website page was a useful tool to promote and provide up to date information on the programme. Quarterly reporting on unique views to the page and its contents, i.e. application as also recorded.

A coordinated approach with Council Communications Team and the programme marketing delivery agent was used to develop a marketing and social media portfolio, with the development of posters, newspaper advertisements, radio ads, ads on buses circulating the borough video production (4 video case studies), dedicated website page on ANDBusiness.co.uk to promote the SHINE Programme.

Funding

The total value of the Programme, which ran from 2018 to 2023, was £343,450, resource grant (not exceeding £274,760) at a rate of 80% funded by Invest Northern Ireland and the European Regional Development Fund under the Investment for Growth & Jobs Northern Ireland (2014-2020) Programme. The remaining 20%, funded by Ards and North Down Borough Council, came from existing budgets, and amounted to £68,690 over the duration of the Programme.

As the targets were not fully met, the programme was underspent. SHINE's total claim was £166,915 for the full programme, £158,917 for mentoring delivery and £7,998 for the marketing campaign.

The SHINE programme mentoring and marketing ended 31 March 2023. A final evaluation is due 6 months after end of programme delivery: 30 September 2023. A report on the programme's final evaluation will be brought to Council in October 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council notes the content of this report.

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ITEM 8

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Economic Development
Date of Report	05 May 2023
File Reference	DEVP25
Legislation	N/A
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Digital Projects Update
Attachments	N/A

Purpose and Background

This report details an update summary on the ongoing digital projects:

1. FFNI (Full Fibre Northern Ireland)
2. The Digital Growth Programme
3. Digital Transformation - Digital Surge
4. Digital Transformation Flexible Fund
5. IoT (Internet of Things) in ANDBC
6. Innovation Hub

1. FFNI PROJECT UPDATE**Summary**

Members will be aware from previous reports, that Ards and North Down Borough Council is a key partner within the Full Fibre Northern Ireland (FFNI) Consortium. The Consortium is made up of 11 partners (including 10 Councils) and has successfully secured total funding to the value of £24 million through the Local Full Fibre Networks

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(LFFN) and Rural Gigabit Connectivity (RGC) programmes, for the purpose of installing ultrafast gigabit capable fibre broadband to public sector buildings.

Background: What are LFFN and RGC?

The Local Full Fibre Networks (LFFN) programme and Rural Gigabit Connectivity (RGC) from the DCMS were designed to stimulate commercial investment in full fibre networks in rural and urban locations across the whole of the UK.

The aims were to:

- Stimulate more commercial investment to deliver more gigabit-capable connectivity.
- Directly maximise the availability and benefit of gigabit-capable broadband services to public sector, business and residential users.
- Improve commercial investment conditions in local areas.

Ultimately the outcome of these schemes was to stimulate the telecoms market to invest in more fibre connectivity for homes and businesses.

The schemes have important long-term benefits, although it is likely to directly improve availability of high bandwidth connectivity in some areas, the main impact will be felt more slowly through the commercial investment that will follow in time.

Final Outcomes – Ards and North Down

In total, the FFNI project drew down £751,936.80 from DCMS for the purposes of broadband connection to council sites across the Borough. The total number of council sites that have been connected by the FFNI project sits at 53 out of a potential total of 57. The outstanding four sites currently sit in Openreach's Commercial Plans.

This long-term infrastructure will bring in next generation connectivity technology that will be incorporated in Council's WAN (Wide Area Network) services through the future network services contract which Council's Business Technology Service Unit has procured alongside the other nine NI Councils.

Beyond the long-stop date and next step

In order to address the four outstanding sites, ANDBC continues to maintain contact with Openreach via a communication provider to determine when these sites will be addressed. Council will also investigate what products are offered and are currently supplied by Openreach and the potential costs outside of the FFNI contract to address the outstanding sites.

The FFNI consortium was set up in 2018 specifically to draw down funds from the Department of Culture Media and Sport funding mechanism LFFN (Local Full Fibre Network). This funding has now ended.

The FFNI consortium mechanism is now playing a role in the delivery of a Northern Ireland wide Digital Transformation Flexible Capital Fund. More details in regard to this programme are noted further on in this report.

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Project Gigabit

Council is continuing to play a part in the both the UK Project Gigabit updates via BDUK and through the DfE (Department for the Economy) updates. Under project Gigabit, DfE has completed an Open Market Review (OMR) with digital infrastructure providers and officers have informed they are in the process of collating these results. The next phase will be a Northern Ireland wide public review.

This formal process will aim to validate the outcome of the OMR and ensure that it correctly represents the information provided by suppliers and ensure that the right areas are targeted with government investment. Council is awaiting an update on the results of the OMR and we have agreed to promote where possible the upcoming public review. DfE will update when the review goes live.

Project Stratum

The overall Project Stratum project across NI is now 67% complete, with Ards and North Down being one of the next councils to receive intervention in the coming months. Latest reports show we currently have 87 sites passed with 3,994 still to be passed by the rollout of fibre broadband via Project Stratum. DfE has confirmed that the OMR will act as a useful mechanism to determine any gaps that this phase of Project Stratum will leave. Council officers will ensure they continue to monitor the progress and feed in to support any interventions to enhance broadband connectivity across the Borough.

2. Digital Growth Programme**Summary and Background**

The Digital Growth Programme was a collaborative programme between Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and Ards and North Down Borough Council with Newry, Mourne and Down as the lead partner. This is an ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) project and is now in its final completion and review stages.

The project was cross sectoral and aimed to contribute to business growth through addressing specific digital skills within the applying business. This was achieved through a combination of one-to-one mentoring, workshops and masterclasses delivered by a dedicated pool of procured mentors with the relevant digital skills.

Programme Outputs

This programme has now finished, and the key target outputs of the programme have been achieved as outlined below. Outputs delivered over the lifetime of the programme are:

- 104 AND businesses recruited onto DGP programme receiving mentoring support
- Over 1,764 hours delivered of 1:1 mentoring.
- 18 one-to-many ½-day Digital Growth workshops
- 4 Master Class Events

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3. Digital Transformation - Digital Surge

Background

This project was developed out of the engagement between SOLACE and Invest Northern Ireland and named *Digital Surge*. Subsequently, following the receipt of the letter of offer and appointment of a delivery agent consortium, the project is now in the final stage of delivery throughout all 11 NI Council regions with the final mentoring sessions wrapping up in June 2023.

Current Status

Digital Surge is led by Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council.

The project held workshops to engage with potential businesses for the purposes of driving digital innovation and demystifying digital technologies amongst SMEs. The programme aim was to really drive *new* innovations and to stimulate productivity and offer businesses a unique chance to tap into new knowledge bases and networks.

Throughout the duration of the programme 30 masterclasses, in addition to 24 innovation workshops, have been held.

13 Ards and North Down businesses, from the sectors summarised below participated on the programme:

Construction
Health and beauty
Food and drink
Consultancy
Craft
Designers

No more businesses are being accepted on to the programme; programme review process is planned to begin in June 2023.

4. Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF)

Background

As Members will be aware, supporting digital innovation is a key priority in the development of the spectrum of projects emerging through city and growth deals across Northern Ireland.

The Digital Transformation Flexible Fund (DTFF) concept was initially developed in response to the low levels of innovation and digital transformation taking place across the region - particularly among the small business community. The DTFF aims to address the financial barrier that small businesses face when seeking to digitally transform by establishing a capital grant fund that will support investment in the types of capital equipment considered critical to their strategic digital transformation ambitions (e.g. hardware, software, bespoke system development).

To date £6m of funding for this project has been ring-fenced through the NI City & Growth Deal Complementary Fund. The Department for Agriculture, Environment and

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Rural Affairs (DAERA) has committed a further £1.1m. Due to its ineligibility for the Complementary Fund, the Derry City & Strabane Growth Deal is currently also in the process of securing an additional £450k to create a total capital grant fund of £7.5m.

Outline Business Case (OBC) Development

Over the past six months Councils have participated in a process to develop the outline business case required to release this government funding. The business case has been informed by detailed and continuous engagement with a range of stakeholders including more than 40 businesses and organisations such as Digital Catapult, Catalyst, Innovate UK, Intertrade Ireland and Invest NI.

Following a robust business case process the delivery and management of the DTFF project is as summarised below.

- **Business Eligibility:** micro and small businesses and social enterprises (up to 50 employees) across all sectors, with the exception of primary agriculture and fisheries. Eligible businesses must be able to demonstrate at least one year's trading history;
- **Grant funding levels:** will range from £5,000 - £20,000 with a grant subvention rate of 70% of total project costs;
- **Eligible expenditure:** will be limited to the purchase of capital equipment and/or resources for software or bespoke system development. It will be aligned to advanced digital technologies;
- **Application Process:** Up to seven funding calls will be opened across the three-year delivery period of this Fund. Pre-application workshops will be held in local council areas in advance of calls to help stimulate demand. Businesses will be required to submit a digital transformation plan to demonstrate the strategic fit and economic return of their proposed investment projects through a competitive application process. There is an imperative to progress the business case process at pace to ensure alignment with the Councils' Digital Surge programme which is likely to lead to business plans that will require financial investment to which the DTFF is directly aligned to support;
- **Management of the Fund:** the project will be managed on a cross council basis through existing governance structures created through the existing Full Fibre NI Consortium, led by Newry, Mourne & Down District Council. Whilst the centralised management structure will deliver economies of scale for managing the overall fund, its operation will be managed through cross council governance structures. Local council Economic Development teams will play a key supporting role to animate and promote the Fund, assess funding applications etc.

Current Status

The OBC for the project was submitted to Invest Northern Ireland on 5 April 2023 and the second assessment was on 10 May 2023. Invest Northern Ireland is scheduled to present the project to the Department of the Economy on 8 June 2023.

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Financial Implications

As previously agreed through the Council estimate process, the total revenue contribution from Ards and North Down Borough Council to support delivery of DTFF is £60,938 over 4 years. This will be met through existing budgets and is broken down as follows:

Financial Year	Contribution £
2022 / 23	£7,672
2023 / 24	£21,582
2024 / 25	£23,682
2025 / 26	£8,002

5. IoT (Internet of Things)**Background**

IoT is the application of networked sensors (things) within a specific context. These sensors measure specific variables, record this data and then through network communication and purpose-built software will present this data in a meaningful way to the user.

Digital Strategy - Digitally Connected

The Ards and North Down Borough Council Digital Strategy "Digitally Connected 2019-2022" recommended that Council adopt an IoT (Internet of Things) focus.

Subsequently, Council has sought to identify potential IoT use cases within the Borough. One of the obstacles facing the development of IoT in Ards and North Down (and elsewhere in the UK) is the very low level of awareness of the technology and its applications. This has presented a significant barrier to bringing together the stakeholder groups required to develop IoT use cases for various sectors.

To provide a practical step in addressing this issue within the Borough, a short series of targeted online seminars were held which brought together the key stakeholder groups in the following areas: Agriculture, Tourism, Manufacturing, and the delivery of Public Services.

One of the key recommendations from the seminars was that: *"The Council should seek to adopt IoT as a strategic approach to delivery of Council services. We recommend a pilot project be conducted to demonstrate the power of IoT and to raise awareness of the potential within Council."*

IoT within Council Services

Following this recommendation, a delivery agent was procured who achieved the following outcomes:

1. Business cases for two IoT use cases identified within Council services.

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2. Design and implementation of an IoT project within Council services for a nominated use case.

IoT Use Case 1: Automated Street Light Monitoring Project

Ards and North Down Borough Council is responsible for 43 car parks across the Borough; 28 of these include car park lighting. To ensure health and safety standards are being met and minimise the risk to car park users, Council staff regularly visit each of the car parks throughout the Borough. As part of the visits, an inspection of each light takes place to ensure they are functioning correctly.

IoT Use Case 2: Automated Meter Reading

Council is responsible for over 300 utility meters across the Borough. These include a mix of modern 'pulse' meters, which provide a digital output and traditional analogue meters that have to be read visually. The meters can be broken down as 170 electric – 75% of which are pulse meters (128).

Meter readings are currently taken annually by a Council employee and recorded onto a central Estates Management System.

A business case has been developed to demonstrate the potential benefits and savings of providing an IoT solution for both these scenarios.

Officers are currently engaging with external funders to investigate potential funding streams for these projects. Engagement is also taking place with the Belfast Region City Deal team to investigate the possibility of funding through the Digital Pillar of BRCD.

Design and Implementation project: IoT in the North Down Museum, Bangor **Project Background**

Within the North Down Museum there is a current requirement to measure the light levels, humidity and temperature of various exhibit cases in addition to the rooms. To date this has been a manual process which could be more prone to human error and time consuming.

An IoT solution has now been installed with the Museum using 19 IoT sensors, each of which records light, humidity and temperature levels in real time and which can be accessed at any time by the Museum Manager.

Having an automated solution in place provides consistent and reliable data on the environmental conditions in the museum and exhibit cases. This data is viewed via an online dashboard, enabling staff to identify trends and peaks in the data, thus enabling staff to rapidly gather the information they need to answer relevant questions and save staff valuable time.

IoT project outputs

The outputs of this overall IoT project can be summarised as follows:

- An effective IoT solution in place and operational in the Museum.

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- Adding value to existing roles, by providing the opportunity to develop skills in line with emerging technologies and an understanding of the application and savings of an IoT solution.
- Allowing the museum to easily demonstrate an ability to meet standards set by Museum Ireland regarding exhibits.
- Freeing up resources within the Museum.
- Clear demonstration of cross department effective collaboration between Development Projects, North Down Museum and Assets and Property.
- Two business cases that detail IoT solutions that could potentially save money for Council should funding be secured.

This IoT use case is connecting the installed networked sensors (things) in the Museum with the specific context or goal of collecting meaningful data. This data is allowing the Museum to better manage resources such as staff, heating and humidifiers whilst allowing the museum to better position itself to attract subsequent exhibits.

6. Innovation Hub

BRCD Background

The vision of the Belfast Region City Deal to create 20,000 jobs through a £1 billion capital investment programme across a number of projects, under the four key themes: Digital and Innovation, Tourism and Regeneration, Infrastructure, Employability and Skills.

Innovation Hub Background

Officers have previously reported that work is being done to develop an outline business case for the creation of an Innovation Hub aimed at the Film/TV and Digital Technology sectors. Following discussion and review of an initial Innovation Hub OBC draft with the Department for the Economy and Invest NI, work is progressing to update the OBC, working with the appointed consultants to reflect the identified demand and sector preference for the location of the Innovation Hub in Holywood, where a creative cluster already exists.

The initial vision and concept remain the same, but as previously reported to Council, following an Expression of Interest to identify potential sites in Holywood, one response was received from the developer of the land at Hibernia Street in Holywood. LPS has been instructed to enter into discussions with the site owner to assess how the site can be taken forward. Engagement with businesses, Studio Ulster and other key stakeholders is ongoing and work to complete the OBC to present for casework and BRCD funding is currently being progressed.

This work continues and subsequent update reports will be brought forward in due course as work on the OBC develops.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes:

- 1) the updates on the Digital Support Interventions.
- 2) the further development of the OBC for an Innovation Hub in Holywood.

Unclassified

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ITEM 9

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Economic Development
Date of Report	23 May 2023
File Reference	DEVP23
Legislation	N/A
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	East Border Region (EBR) PEACE Plus concept note submission
Attachments	N/A

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the recent concept proposal submission by East Border Region to Special European Union Programmes Body (SEUPB) under the PEACE Plus funding mechanism.

The East Border Region collective is made up of the three Northern Ireland Councils (Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and Ards and North Down Borough Council) and the three border Councils of the Republic of Ireland (Monaghan County Council, Louth County Council and Meath County Council).

PEACE Plus

The upcoming new European Union funding programme is designed to support peace and prosperity across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland. It has been divided into six themes each of which have several investment areas. Under theme 2 "Delivering Socio-Economic Regeneration and Transformation" one of the strategic priorities is "Smart Towns and Villages".

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SEUPB has invited potential applicants to submit concept notes for review and to be considered for the PEACE Plus fund. Feedback will be provided by SEUPB based on the concept note submissions with a view to assisting the application process once the call opens. It is anticipated that the call will open in September 2023 however, this is awaiting confirmation.

Ards and North Down concept note submission

Ards and North Down Borough Council's concept note, which has been worked up, is for a potential project and has been submitted through the East Border Region.

The concept note, which falls under the Smart Towns and Villages priority, is to develop visitor trails characterised by digital augmented reality underpinned by a network of sensors throughout the Council areas. The concept has been given the name C.H.A.R.I.O.T. (Communities Harnessing Augmented Reality and Internet of Things). The project aims to enhance visitor experiences and to support measures to attract and measure increased footfall to Ards and North Down.

The project concept is aligned to the Economic Development Service Unit Plan for 2023 – 2024 and also the corporate vision as outlined in the Corporate Plan 2020-2024, The Community Plan (The Big Plan) Outcome 4: All people in Ards and North Down benefit from a prosperous economy, and the Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development 2018-2030 (ITRDS).

In addition to the wider Council Plans and Strategies, the project is aligned to the ANDBC Digital Strategy "Digitally Connected" which specifically recommends that Council adopts an IoT (Internet of Things) focus.

Outcomes

It must be noted that the current submission is only a concept note and is not at full application stage. Following feedback from SEUPB with regard to the concept note, and the call opening for the PEACE Plus funding, there will be the opportunity for Council, in partnership with EBR, to make a full application. It is currently estimated that the call will open in August/September 2023 with a project start date of Spring 2024 and completion date as May 2027.

Financial Implications

Should the project be worked up, submitted, and successful, it will be fully funded by PEACE Plus for both capital and revenue expenses.

Final details of the full project application are yet to be determined; however, it is anticipated that a successful project may require three members of staff to ensure successful delivery. These fully funded roles will relate to the disciplines of Administration, Finance and Communications.

Next steps

Officers will continue to work up the concept note to full application stage following the SEUPB feedback which is anticipated soon. The submission of a full application will involve developing the full project revenue costs which will include specific staff members appointed for the purposes of project delivery across the project partner regions. It will also detail that all costs are drawn down from the PEACE Plus

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funding and will be at no cost to council. Further update reports will be brought to Council as plans emerge under the different priorities of PEACE Plus.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

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ITEM 10

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Tourism
Date of Report	31 May 2023
File Reference	TO/MAR4/160167
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other X If other, please add comment below: Performance Report
Subject	Q4 Tourism Performance Report 2022/23
Attachments	None

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 (for publication 30 September 2022)
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2022)

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.

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Reporting approach

The Service Plans will be reported to relevant Committees on a quarterly basis as undernoted:

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Quarter 1 (Q1)	April – June	September
Q2	July – September	December
Q3	October – December	March
Q4	January - March	June

The report for Quarter 4 2022-23 is attached.

Please note that, unfortunately, due to the timing of reports, some financial information has not been updated.

Key points to note:

- This was the first full operational season for the tourism service since the global pandemic.
- Tour operator familiarisation trips have predominately moved back to in person. The number of opportunities has therefore decreased and the 2023 target has been adjusted.
- The impact of the cost-of-living crisis has meant that spend by customers at events has been reduced.
- Destination awareness campaigns have been delivered during spring and autumn via multi-channel integrated marketing.

Key achievements:

- Additional funds of £27,130 were secured from Tourism NI (TNI) to deliver a series of 9 new pilot concept experiences. These were successfully delivered in March with 116k reach with 7k social media engagements.
- Out of borough % of visitors to both events and experiences was above target.
- The events programme exceeded its target for attendees.
- Additional funds of £19,000 were secured from TNI to assist the delivery of the spring destination campaign.
- Digital platforms for visitor servicing and promotion are a key focus for the service. Digital social channels followers (increase by 52%) and ezine sign-ups (increase by 23%) have increased as well as the blog content on visitardsandnorthdown.com.

Emerging issues:

- Reduced budgets and increase in costs will likely present challenges in event planning, delivery and stakeholder expectations in season 2023.
- Partnerships are increasingly important for the Tourism service.
- Latest consumer sentiment, reported by TNI, indicates that consumers of NI and ROI will be less likely to engage in paid activities and more likely seek out free activities.

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Action to be taken:

- Continue to work with stakeholders to agree mutually satisfactory event programme for 2023.
- Continue to develop relationships and partnerships across programming and service delivery.
- A balanced approach is required for the promotion of the area with key messaging on value and breadth of available activity.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council note the report.

Unclassified

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Quarterly Performance Report - Tourism

Generated on: 31 May 2023

Last Update Q3 2022/23




















Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	% spend against budget	97.31%	100%

Last Update Q4 2022/23

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	No. of maintained TIPs across the Borough	38	38
	Number of visitor servicing outreach activities	15	15
	No of Tourism/food webinars/seminars (cumulative)	3	3
	Event Grant Programme cost per attendee	£1.01	£1.04
	Market Research Plan implemented at key tourism events	1	1
	% customer satisfaction at events	89.9%	85%
	% staff attendance	93.8%	95%
	% staff receiving team briefings	100%	100%
	No of event organisers and volunteers receiving support/training (cumulative)	30	20
	Borough Marketing Strategy – No of campaigns (cumulative)	2	2

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Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	Increase VAND social media audience by 10% annually	52%	10%
	Borough Marketing Strategy – No of PR pieces	19	10
	Borough Marketing Strategy – Visitor focussed printed publication	1	1
	Borough Marketing Strategy – No. of Blogs	21	10
	% Out of Borough Visitors on Experience Walks and Tours	17%	10%
	No. of Experience Walks and Tours (cumulative)	25	15
	% of Out of Borough sales of bookable Experiences	49%	35%
	% of Out of Borough visitors on Taste of AND Food Tours/showcases	41%	33%
	No of Taste of AND Food Tours/Showcases (cumulative)	11	8
	Tour Operators – Delivery of in person and virtual familiarisation tours (cumulative)	6	10
	Creation of online coastal driving route	1	1
	Number of attendees to grant assisted events	81,484	78,175
	Number of Tourism and Food and Drink Clusters/Networks supported	3	3
	Completion of updated Food and Drink Destination Plan	Yes	Yes
	Average engagement rates from e-zine to tourism trade and consumer database	45%	25%
	Enhance new VAND web platform – story and event submission sections	1	1
	Visit Belfast Partnership – SLA	1	1
	Management of Open House Contract – monitoring of SLA	100%	100%
	% of Out of Borough Visitors attending events	26.7%	20%

Unclassified

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
✔	% of Ex NI Visitors attending events	1.3%	1%
●	Event Visitor spend per attendee	£10.02	£16.00
✔	Number of attendees at Tourism events (cumulative)	94,804	75,000

Unclassified

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Tourism
Date of Report	25 May 2023
File Reference	TO/EV121
Legislation	Local Government Act (1994)
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Annual Tourism Events Programme Evaluation Report 2022
Attachments	Item 11.1 - Tourism Events 2022 Evaluation Summary Item 11.2 - Tourism Events Programme 2023

Background

In March 2022, Council agreed the following Tourism Events programme:

Event	Date (2022)	Budget
May Day, Holywood	02 May	£10,000
Ards and North Down Pipe Band Championships, Castle Park, Bangor	14 May	£21,500
Sea Bangor/Queen's Platinum Jubilee	04 & 05 June	£80,000
Summer TASTE Food Festival including Comber Earlies Food Festival (Saturday 25 June)	20 June – 03 July	£71,500
Autumn TASTE Food Festival incorporating Tide and Turf, Portavogie (Saturday 24 September)	10 - 25 September	£71,500
Bangor Switch On	19 November	£15,000
Newtownards Switch On	26 November	£15,000
TOTAL		£284,500

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In addition to the figures in the table above, an additional budget of £30,000, approved by Council for Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, contributed towards the Sea Bangor budget. This allowed an enhanced programme to include the Jubilee lunch and hosting of Royal Visitors. Contributions from both Newtownards and Bangor Chambers of Trade also supplemented the Switch On budgets.

This report presents an evaluation of the seven events delivered in the period from May to November 2022.

The 2022 Tourism Events Programme delivered a total of 94,804 attendees against a target of 75,000. There were no reportable health and safety or anti-social behaviour matters.

This was the first year since Covid-19 that a full programme of events 'without restrictions' was able to be delivered. The public's enthusiasm and desire to attend these events was noticeable both in attendance numbers and in anecdotal feedback received by staff.

All tourism events had independent market research undertaken. Sample sizes for each event ranged from 107-201 surveys. Results should be interpreted by the reader accordingly. A summary is included in Item 11.1.

May Day Event – Monday 2 May 2022

This was the first May Day event delivered in partnership with Holywood and District Community Council (HDDC) in three years. The usual programme, a mixture of community events, such as Bonnie Baby and fancy-dress competitions were organised by HDDC. Two Maypole dancing sessions were a very popular attraction, with many spectators.

As a new aspect to the event, all commercial stalls were moved to the car park at Hibernia Street. Feedback to staff suggested that this was well received by both traders and visitors. Additional entertainment at this market area created a festival atmosphere with the extra space allowing the creation of a large seating area.

Art on the Rails along Church Road had 20 arts and crafts stalls which created variety and encouraged longer dwell time and opportunities for local artists.

Considerations for 2023

- Significant reliance on gazebos – no alternatives possible for May Day as over 70 traders/exhibitors are in attendance. Limits mitigations for weather events occurring and event cancellation.
- Successful use of Hibernia Street car park and Art on the Rails. To include in 2023.

Ards and North Down Pipe Band Championships – 14 May 2022

The Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association Northern Ireland (RSPBANI) Pipe Band Championships were held at Castle Park, Bangor. This was the first full competition in the Borough since Covid-19. In addition to the Pipe Bands, a Highland Dancing

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competition took place. The event was well attended by participants and visitors, which consisted of 41 bands competing and visitor numbers were recorded at 5000.

Feedback from RSPBANI was positive with only one challenge from the day, which was identified as the requirement for additional toilet facilities at the Castle site.

Considerations for 2023

- Traffic management and parking for vehicles requires additional investment and planning.
- A park and ride service will be implemented in 2023 to ensure movement of spectators from the Airfield to town centre. This site has ample parking.

Sea Bangor celebrates the Platinum Jubilee – 4 and 5 June 2022

Sea Bangor was used as a platform to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022. All activities were themed to mark the occasion. These included a Platinum Palace, Jubilee Jukebox, cookery demonstrations with celebrity chef Jean-Christophe Novelli, and a specially created urban beach. A Big Lunch was hosted by SERC and Jean-Christophe Novelli and attended by competition winners. A range of food stalls lined Eisenhower Pier with an artisan bar at the far end, extending attendees' dwell time at the event.

The Council was honoured to host the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh on the Saturday morning of the event. The weather was very favourable with the special occasion attracting large crowds.

Considerations for 2023

- The footprint of this event using a mixture of stretch tents and self-contained trucks worked well with minimal reliance on gazebos. A similar layout is proposed for the event in 2023.
- The event budget has been reduced and it will be important to manage customers' expectations. However, the Events Team will work with local providers to produce a high-quality experience.

Summer TASTE Food Festival 18 June – 3 July 2022

Incorporating Comber Earlies Food Festival

The Festival aims to celebrate authentic food and drink. 15 events combining 'AND delivered' and third-party events occurred during the period. Activity included food tours, restaurant themed nights (such as 'meet the maker' and bespoke 'local produce' menus), artisan markets in local establishments and experiences on and off the water incorporating food/drink as a key element.

Comber Earlies Food Festival – 25 June 2022

Comber Earlies Food Festival is identified in the Borough Events Strategic Direction 2021 – 2026 (BESD) as a 'Growth' event. Officers worked very successfully with several local stakeholders in 2022 to extend the length of the programme with local premises hosting their own complementary programme, such as No. 14 at The Georgian House, Indie Fude, McBride's and Horner's Farm Shop.

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Two additional elements were added to the Comber Earlies Food Festival to extend the duration of the programme. These were Open Farm Tours (Friday 24 June); an event to be held at the farm of an Earlies grower, with a demonstration and talk by Paula McIntyre followed by a 'potato pizza' in No.14 at The Georgian House. In addition to this a family picnic event was scheduled for Sunday 26 June at Island Hill. Unfortunately, both events had to be cancelled, the Farm Tours due to low ticket sales and the picnic due to poor weather conditions.

The main Comber Earlies Food Festival event on Saturday was adversely affected by strong winds, forecasted as 'dangerous gusts'. This had a direct impact on the use of gazebos, which cannot be used in wind weather conditions above 14 mph. At short notice, officers had to install a stretch tent to house traders, which unfortunately resulted in some late cancellations as some traders (hot food) could not be accommodated due to this change. However, the change enabled the event, albeit in a slightly reduced footprint, to proceed with 31 traders.

Another new and very successful addition to the event was an artisan bar, both in terms of numbers attending and feedback from traders. Using local suppliers, McBrides on the Square worked with Indie Fude and offered a selection of paired local beers and cheeses.

Theo Randall and Paula McIntyre were the celebrity chefs at the event, supported by SERC, who cooked a range of different dishes featuring Comber Earlies.

Considerations for 2023

- All outdoor events are now severely impacted by changeable weather; on this occasion the Events Team was unable to use any gazebos and had to source alternatives at very short notice and additional cost. The dependence on use of gazebos at events carries the high risk of event cancellation.
- The use of Comber Square presents some event set-up restrictions. The site cannot be 'set up' until the morning of the event due to the timed road closure and the open site allows cars to park overnight presenting difficulties for site clearance in the morning. Accommodating a Tesco early morning delivery also delays site 'set up'.
- Since last year's event the Events Team has completed a consultative exercise with local businesses and stakeholders. In 2023, the event will be hosted at the car park beside Comber Leisure Centre. This will enable earlier site set-up, negate the need for/expense of road closure, use of wooden chalets, accommodate partnership arrangements and provide a larger footprint which should encourage longer dwell time.

Autumn Taste Food Festival - 10-24 September 2022 Incorporating Tide and Turf, Portavogie

This Festival aims to celebrate authentic food and drink focussing on meat and fish and sustainability. Eight events occurred combining 'AND delivered' and third-party

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events. One Council event was cancelled due to the national mourning period for Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth II.

Tide and Turf Festival, Portavogie – 22-24 September 2022

Also identified as a 'Growth' event in the BESD, officers added two additional activities to this programme to extend the event as follows.

Stargazing at Burr Point – Thursday 22 September

This pilot ticketed event was organised in conjunction with The Northern Ireland Amateur Astronomy Society (NIAAS) and was attended by 100 visitors with all tickets sold. Transport was provided by bus from Millisle car park to alleviate car parking issues and create a more sustainable event. Volunteers from NIAAS set up eight telescopes and offered customers instruction on how best to view the planets. Customers were able to clearly see Jupiter and Venus. At the end of the evening all visitors were given a complimentary hot chocolate.

Dine at the Dock - Friday 23 September

The vision for this event was to transform the Fish Market at Portavogie into a temporary space offering a high-end 'restaurant quality' food experience. Officers worked with Theo Randall and SERC to devise an attractive menu, showcasing the best of local produce (based on the Tide and Turf theme). SERC also provided front of house staff with a mixture of staff and students.

Theo Randall started preparation and worked with the students from the day before the event to event delivery, and whilst the students had only been in college for three weeks, it was a once in a lifetime experience for all involved.

60 tickets priced £60 per person, which included transport to the event and five course meal, sold out within a week of being released.

SERC students set up the 'restaurant', dressed the table and operated a very professional service at the event.

Tide and Turf Event - 24 September 2022

Successful additions to the programme in 2022 included a music stage and bar area. Both were popular with good attendance recorded for the performances from the String Ninjas and a Beach Boys Tribute act, both extending attendees' dwell time. There were two kitchens at the event compered by two celebrity chefs, Theo Randall and Suzie Lee. Both were well attended throughout the day long programme.

A children's area was created at the entrance of the harbour hosting 'The Beach', which had been created for the Platinum Jubilee, along with other children's small-scale activities.

Unclassified

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To mitigate potential adverse weather, wooden chalets were trialled at the event. The chalets created a 'festival feel' while ensuring trading could take place in most weather conditions.

Considerations for 2023

- Consideration in management planning for the extended distance to the site for deliveries, set up, site meetings, plus challenges setting up in a working harbour and commercial requirements. Good communication and agreed timings required.
- Introduction of wooden chalets mitigates potential impact of unfavourable weather conditions. The new footprint with music stage and bar were successful and the intention is to repeat the model.

Bangor Christmas Switch On – 19 November 2022

Working in partnership with Bangor Chamber of Commerce, this event took place on Saturday 19 November. Working in partnership, Officers and the Chamber reviewed alternatives for programming elements, to ensure a safe and secure event, while taking cognisance of potential changeable weather conditions. It was decided to pilot the use of the vacant TK Maxx building. After discussions with the Department for Communities (DfC) colleagues, it was agreed this could be facilitated by agreeing a 'Licence to Occupy on Short Term Basis'. DfC worked very hard to ensure that the building was available to the Council. The large space housed 41 stalls with an entertainment space populated by local choirs and groups. This element of the event took place on Saturday and Sunday with a total of 8,000 attendees recorded across the two days (5,000 and 3,000 respectively).

Additional entertainment and hot food stalls were placed at the McKee Clock, with shows by 'The Elf on the Shelf' and the 'Real Princesses' proving popular with a family audience. Local businesses including Boom Studios, Seacourt, the Geek Retreat and YMCA took part in the Switch On programme. Trinity Presbyterian Church also ran a musical programme outside the church.

Based on previous year's unexpected high number of attendees, extensive work was carried out by officers on traffic management, with a road closure required for a short period of time only.

Considerations for 2023

- Weather is an ongoing challenge and use of other areas such as vacated TK Maxx site require health and safety considerations and traffic management.
- The use of the vacated TK Maxx building was well attended and provided an additional 'market type' space.
- Successful partnerships with the Chamber, local businesses and stakeholders added to the entertainment offering and programming.
- It is anticipated that McKee Clock Arena will not be available for 2023, therefore discussions have commenced with Bangor Chamber regarding the use of Bangor Castle grounds. This is currently a work in progress.

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Newtownards Christmas Switch On – 26 November 2022

Organised and managed in partnership with Newtownards Chamber of Trade this event was held on Saturday 26 November. The format included a road closure with a market comprising a combination of the traditional Ards Saturday market, food kitchen demos and local artisan stalls and businesses.

During planning meetings with the Chamber, it was agreed that concerns about event cancellation (as happened in 2021 due to adverse weather conditions) meant a range of measures should be implemented to enable the event to proceed in strong winds. This included the introduction of stretch tents to house an artisan market. To facilitate this, a road closure had to be implemented on Friday night to allow for early event opening on Saturday morning. The Chamber's request to facilitate the extended entertainment programme and stretch tent required an increase in its contribution of budget.

A total of 23 stalls from Ards Saturday Market were in attendance, with an additional 27 local artisan suppliers. The Chamber managed and delivered a successful community entertainment programme.

Unfortunately, the weather on the day of the event was very poor, with very strong winds meaning the programmed musical acts could not take place. The main Switch On event had to be limited to a speech from the Mayor and an appearance by Santa.

Considerations for 2023

- Ongoing challenge with event delivery and requirement to weatherproof the event finale.
- Positioning of stretch tent requires an installation time of six hours. Additional lighting is a requirement and significant resource required for set up for all market elements.
- Successful partnership with the Chamber who can provide excellent community programming and engagement. Good number of local businesses taking part in the event.
- Discussions have commenced with Newtownards Chamber of Trade to develop the Switch On event, acknowledging the challenges presented in previous years and the incoming year.

Market Research

Independent market research was carried out at all the events. The methodology from the previous year was revised, due to the ease in Covid-19 restrictions, with face-to-face surveys undertaken along with the collation of email addresses for post event research.

The research carried out at the events delivered a positive economic impact into the Borough by varying degrees for each event. The indicative spend generated by the seven events is based on attendee spend at the event such as main meals, snacks, shopping and sightseeing.

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Additional data showed an average of 89.9% of respondents rating a positive customer satisfaction at the events. Social media is still the most effective way to reach our audiences with an average of 33.6% attendees reported finding out about the events via Facebook.

A full summary is included in Item 11.1.

Emerging Issues Facing Tourism Events Delivery in 2023

- The overall budget for Tourism Events 2023 has been reduced. The impact may result in more limited programming at events, with more reliance on partnership working and local producers. See Item 11.2.
- The cost-of-living crisis has led to an increase in many event budget items, including materials, delivery charges, first aid requirements and wages both internal and external (security requirements).
- Some events were overspent in 2022. This occurred due to a range of reasons including unexpected increases in prices, additional legal requirements in terms of road closures, additional expenses attached to unpredictable weather, additional security requirements and a decrease in anticipated external funding. The overspend has been covered by underspend in other areas of the Events Service. Contingency budget planning will likely prove challenging for 2023.
- Sustainability is a key aspect of event delivery. This year, the focus will be on using local performers and service providers where possible. It is the intention to maintain free public transport, at certain events, to decrease the numbers of cars travelling to the site. The amount of printed marketing material will continue to be reduced. Ongoing work with stallholders continues with requirements for them to use compostable materials.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

Item 11.1 – Tourism Events 2022 Evaluation Summary

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Event	Date	Sample Size	Budget	Actual Net cost	Target Attendees	Actual Attendees	Cost per Attendee	Total Estimated Attendee Spend	Estimated Average Spend per Attendee	OoB % of attendees	Ex NI % of attendees	% Customer Satisfaction
May Day	2 May 22	107	£10,000	£8,213	5,000	8,000	£1.03	£95,693	£11.96	33	1	93
AND Pipe Band Festival	14 May 22	128	£21,500	£15,583	5,000	5,000	£3.12	£105,995	£21.20	52	5	100
Sea Bangor celebrates the Platinum Jubilee	4 & 5 June 22	156	£80,000	£99,144	30,000	50,000	£1.98	£460,324	£9.21	29	2	96
¹ Summer Food Festival	18 June – 3 rd July 22	201	£71,500	£54,886	10,000	10,500	£5.23	£76,620	£9.58	33	1	85
² Autumn Food Festival	10 – 24 Sept 22	139	£71,500	£95,788	8,000	8,304	£11.54	£75,254	£9.41	15	0	90
Bangor Switch On	19 Nov 22	160	£15,000	£21,019	10,000	8,500	£2.47	£88,571	£10.42	5	0	84
³ Newtownards Christmas Switch On	26 Nov 22	160	£15,000	£23,017	7,000	4,500	£5.11	£47,686	£10.60	20	0	81
TOTAL		1,051	£284,500	£317,650	75,000	94,804	£3.35	£950,143	£10.02			

¹ 8,000 attendees CEFF & 2,500 at Ward Park Picnic. Total estimated attendee spend, av. spend, OoB, ex NI attendees and customer satisfaction data CEFF only

² 8,000 attendees T&T & 106 Star Gazing, 60 Dine at the Dock and 138 at experiences. Total estimated attendee spend, av. spend, OoB, ex NI attendees and customer satisfaction data T&T only

³ Additional budget from Tourism Development at £4k for Food Demo Kitchen included in income

Item 11.2 – Tourism Events Programme 2023

Date 2023	Event	Budget	Target attendance
Mon 1 May	May Day, Holywood	£10,000	5,000
Sat 3 & Sun 4 June	Sea Bangor	£75,000	30,000
Sat 17- Sat 24 June	Summer Food Festival including Comber Earlies Food Festival (Sat 24 June)	£65,000	10,000
Sat 22 July	Ards and North Down Pipe Band Championships, Ards Airfield	£33,850	5,000
Thurs 31 Aug – Sun 10 Sept	Autumn Food Festival, incorporating Tide and Turf, Portavogie (Sat 2 Sept)	£65,000	8,000
Sat 18 Nov	Bangor Switch On	£15,000	10,000
Sat 25 Nov	Newtownards Switch On	£15,000	7,000
TOTAL		£278,850	75,000

Unclassified

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ITEM 12

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Tourism
Date of Report	25 May 2023
File Reference	TO/EV67
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Annual Tourism Events Grant Scheme Report 22/23
Attachments	Item 12.1 - Events Grants Summary

Background

The Tourism Events Grant Scheme 2022/23, for events taking place from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, opened on Thursday 21 October 2021 and closed on Friday 12 November 2021, with 16 applications received.

Council approved a report detailing the Tourism Events Grant Scheme awards for 2022/23, supporting 10 applications in January 2022. Two appeals were further upheld and reported to Council in April.

The Events Manager and Events Officer met with all 12 successful applicants and agreed the final terms and conditions within the Letters of Offer, which were subsequently issued in late March 2022.

Final budget

A total budget of £81,750 was approved by Council to fund the 2022/23 events, with no contingency budget for appeals. However, due to event cancellations and some events not drawing down the full amount, the actual amount drawn down by

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applicants was £82,661. The overspend was accommodated across the overall Events service budget.

- The Narrows Regatta, Portaferry Sails and Sounds and Ards Peninsula Kite Festival's actual eligible expenditure was less than its original grant offer. Therefore, the grants paid out were reduced accordingly.
- Irish Sailing Youth Nationals did not meet all elements within its Letter of Offer, resulting in an agreed reduction in award.
- The Carol Ship on Strangford Lough and Songs of the Big Blue were cancelled by promoters.

The table in Item 12.1 summarises the events with approved awards, plus targets contained within the Letters of Offer, and the applicants' post event evaluation figures.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes the report.

Item 12.1 – Events Grants Summary 2022/23

Organiser	Name of Event	Event Date	Funding request	Grant		Attendees		Bednights	
				Award	Paid Out	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Ballyholme Yacht Club	Irish Sailing Youth Nationals	21-24/4/22	£10,000	£10,000	£9,000	3,120	4,850	2,120	1,560
Ards Comhaltas Ceoltoiri Eireann	Columbanus Community Folk Festival	12-19/06/22	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000	1,900	2,100	210	225
Peter Corry Productions	Songs of the Big Blue	16-18/06/22	£10,000	£10,000	0	Cancelled		0	0
Open House Festival	Music in the Park	3/07/22 to 28/07/22 (Sundays only)	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	20,000	30,800	135	135
Royal Ulster Yacht Club	Bangor Town Regatta	23-26/06/22	£9,500	£9,500	£9,500	600	450	750	782
Portaferry Sailing and Social Club	The Narrows Series Regatta	8-11/07/22	£5,000	£5,000	£4,231	2,500	4,300	288	238
Portaferry Gala Festival	Portaferry Gala Festival	16-22/07/22	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	24,000	19,500	770	645
Portaferry Community Services Limited	Portaferry Sails and Sounds Festival	4-7/08/22	£10,000	£10,000	£9,900	14,000	11,547	440	390
Ards Peninsula Village Partnership	Ards Peninsula Kite Festival	29/08/2022	£4,590	£4,590	£2,295	5,000	7,000	10	0
Ultimate Strongman Productions ¹	Ultimate Strongman and Woman 4 Nations	18/03/2023	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000	1,000	380	350	100
Portico of Ards Ltd ²	Comedy Arts Festival	23 – 24/9/22, 4/11/22 and 3/12/22	£9,735	£9,735	£9,735	1,000	557	50	50
Portaferry and Strangford Trust	The Carol Ship of Strangford Lough	2-4/12/22	£4,425	£4,425	0	Cancelled	0	0	0
		TOTAL	£101,250	£101,250	£82,661	72,120	81,484	5,123	4,125

¹ Date of event changed from application. The applicant changed the time of year of event to weatherproof it. However, on the day, it rained for the entire duration of the event. The applicant was successful in securing RTE2 coverage for the event.

² Dates and line up of the event changed due to national period of mourning and performers contracting Covid-19. Actual attendee numbers did not meet the target in the Letter of Offer, due to the period of national mourning and a series of other issues relating to programming and transport.

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ITEM 13

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Tourism
Date of Report	25 May 2023
File Reference	TO/VIC4
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: Not applicable
Subject	Visitor Information Centres Annual Report 2022/2023
Attachments	Item 13.1 - VIC summary

Background

The Tourism unit manages two permanent Visitor Information Centres (VICs) located in Bangor City and Newtownards. Both Centres open daily, Monday to Saturday, servicing visitor and local enquiries, encouraging longer dwell time, and more spend in the Borough. The VICs service both those who make contact prior to visiting, and those who do so during their time here. They also offer information on "what's on" locally and a retail/box office ticket service for events – services used by both visitors and residents.

In 2022/23, both Centres remained open to the public for the full year, with no periods of closure related to Covid restrictions. Unfortunately, the Centres had a number of ad hoc closures as a result of Covid-19 impacts related to staffing e.g. extended secondments and sickness.

This report provides an overview of the activity at Bangor and Newtownards Visitor Information Centres from April 2022 – March 2023.

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Visitors and Enquiries

The numbers of visitors and types of enquiries changed radically during the global pandemic. However, evidence now shows that NI is slowly returning to pre-pandemic trends. Locally, in the VICs, the profile of visitors continued to be dominated by the 'Staycation' and 'Day trip' market.

Council events, other events, experiences and tours all returned during this reporting period. The VIC has the role of the primary point of contact for information and ticket sales relating to these.

Almost 91% of VIC customers, whose enquires were serviced, visited the centres in person, highlighting the importance of face-to-face interaction.

Excluding self-service visitors or "browsers", a total of 19,970 customers were serviced via various platforms - direct engagement at the counter, telephone, post and email. These enquiries cover a wide range of topics from what's on in the area, where to stay or eat locally and across NI, directions, local history, activities and attractions, and ticket sales. The VIC team acts as ambassadors for the local area.

Bangor and Newtownards VICs	April 22 - March 23
Total footfall to the Centres	19,245
ENQUIRY TYPE	
Face to face enquiries	17,484
Self-service visitors/browsers	1,761
ENQUIRIES Post/Fax/Email	533
ENQUIRIES Phone	1,953
TOTAL SERVICED	21,731

In comparison to last year, this is an increase of 18% in overall total of customers serviced.

Enquiries by origin (where known)	April 22 – March 23 % of total
NI	83%
GB & ROI	10%
Rest of the World	7%
TOTAL	100%

In comparison to the previous year's visitor profile, the VICs serviced over 3,000 more visitors from outside NI and had a 4% increase in Rest of World visitors.

See Item 13.1 for summary of enquiries and retail for VICs.

Income

Whilst visitor information provision is the core function of the VICs, both provide a retail space, comprising mainly of locally produced gifts, souvenirs and books as per customer demand. Both VICs encourage sales via special promotions, for example Christmas, Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, with themed displays and regularly

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change/restock merchandise to attract new customers and offer something different to returning visitors.

The VICs also actively advertise a ticket agent service for local events and operate as a sales agent for external events. This allows third parties such as drama groups and musical events to be bookable on the VisitAND website. Commission on ticket sales covers administration costs and is an additional source of income. The positive return to ticket events, in the last year, has generated almost £1,500 in commission.

Retail sales increased substantially on 21/22, due to all restrictions being lifted. This allowed Bangor VIC to permit more customers to access the centre at any one time, rather than the previous traffic light system. Overall, income increased by almost 20% in comparison to the previous year. Customers visiting the VICs continued to support the retail element with an average spend in Newtownards of £1.75 and £2.07 in Bangor respectively per customer.

Income type	April 22 - March 23
Retail sales	£32,680
Ticket sales commission	£1,482
Total income	£34,162
Total income ex vat	£28,341

VIC Performance Summary

It should be noted that while, not unexpectedly, footfall and enquiries remained below pre-pandemic figures, there has been a positive increase in the number of enquiries serviced (over 3,200). Aligning with visitor behavioural changes, phone calls and correspondence were down on last year, likely serviced by the increasing traffic on the VisitAND website and social channels, but positively face to face interaction increased.

Throughout the year, members of the VIC team were allocated local tourism businesses to renew and develop 'client' relationships. A monthly trade ezine was introduced to highlight the existing services and remind them of the full complement of support available from the Tourism Service.

The VIC team was also active in supporting the wider Tourism team with 'call outs' to trade for campaigns, experiences and food and events programming, and the ticketing of the walks, tours, and experiences.

Visitor Information Advisors (VIAs) worked alongside marketing, maintaining and updating content of the VisitAND website, as well creating digital content for social media. The VIC also participated in activity with both Ards Chamber of Trade and Bangor Chamber of Commerce.

Portaferry Local Visitor Information Office

The Local Visitor Information Office (LVIO), in the reception area of Exploris, offered visitor servicing 10am – 5pm daily, seven days per week, all year (except for limited

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Exploris closure at Christmas). With a footfall of circa 118,000 per year, the exposure to visitors is significant.

The Council provided brochures on the local area and key attractions across NI. There is also an interactive touch screen for visitors to explore the Borough and extended tourism information in digital format. Exploris staff are trained by ANDBC on the local tourism product and FAQs to enable them to address visitor enquiries directly.

The LVIO has been well used by self-service visitors making use of the tourism literature on display and the touch screen. The Council's VIC staff has provided visitor servicing support at peak periods during July and August, Hallowe'en and on Bank Holidays (a total of 14 days). On these dates a Council VIA engaged with 2,390 visitors in total. Total customers serviced is more than four times last year's total.

Exploris LVIO	
ENQUIRY TYPE:	
Exploris Face-To-Face Enquiries	1137
Exploris Phone Enquiries	496
ENQUIRIES supported by ANDBC Staff (14 Peak Visitor Days)	6,529
TOTAL SERVICED	8,162

Cockle Row Cottages

Due to the nature of the cottages, this facility remained closed during the summer of 2022, with small scale outdoor family entertainment delivered in front of the Cottages once a month between June-October attracting approximately 770 attendees.

The cottages will open for the summer of 2023 Thursday–Sunday (11am–5pm) and will include weekend entertainment.

Outreach Activity

The production of VisitAND literature and its distribution commenced in 2022, after the restrictions of the pandemic which allowed for more engagement opportunities with the use of new visitor guides and visitor maps. Outlets include Visit Belfast, Bangor Train Station, Pickie Fun Park, The Ark Farm and other tourist honey pots, with regular requests for top up stock. The VIC teams also created and distributed bedroom packs for the accommodation sector. An additional 1,980 visitor enquiries were serviced at manned pop-up information stands at Portaferry Market on a number of dates throughout the season, Comber Earlies Food Festival, the Europro NI Masters Golf Tournament and Tide and Turf, Portavogie.

Summary

The Council's VICs had a vital role emerging from the pandemic, engaging with visitors, and reminding locals of the Ards and North Down offer – from miles of coastline and outdoors spaces to award winning attractions. Staff engaged with over 23,000 customers via its VICs, Outreach and LVIO, promoting the region for holidays, short breaks, day trips and events.

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The VIC statistics demonstrate that visitors still seek the 'trusted' and 'personalised' service offered at VICs with face-to-face enquiries dominant at the centres. In the ever-changing/uncertain travel atmosphere in 2022/23, the knowledgeable staff helped put customers at ease with up-to-date information, ideas and itineraries.

In 2023/24 the VICs will

- build on the communication and relationships with the local trade; through regular contact, ezines and the reintroduction of familiarisation visits;
- deliver seasonal promotions and advertising campaigns, to encourage increased footfall;
- identify new suppliers to enhance the retail offering in both locations;
- deliver a monthly programme of exhibitions at the established 'Discovery Hub' in Newtownards VIC; and
- reopen Cockle Row Cottages (reopened in 2023 on Easter Sunday).

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

Item 13.1 - VIC Summary 2022/23

Ards VIC

Enquiries increased by 9% and total sales increased by 13% on 21/22.

NEWTOWNARDS VIC	22/23	21/22	COMPARISON
ENQUIRIES TYPE			
ELECTRONIC EYE	12,696	10,962	+ 16%
COUNTER	10,978	9,666	+ 14%
NON-ENQUIRIES	1,718	1,296	+ 33%
CORRESPONDENCE (post, email)	309	519	- 40%
PHONE	748	1,141	- 34%
TOTAL	13,753	12,622	+ 9%
INCOME £S			
RETAIL SALES	£19,232.32	£16,991.87	+ 13%
TICKET SALES COMMISSION	£111.00	£98.20	+ 13%
TOTAL	£19,343.32	£17,090.07	+13%
AVERAGE SPEND PER VISITOR	£1.75	£1.76	- 0%

Bangor VIC

Enquiries increased by 37% and total sales increased by 58% on 21/22.

BANGOR VIC	22/23	21/22	COMPARISON
ENQUIRIES TYPE			
ELECTRONIC EYE	6849	4,507	+ 52%
COUNTER	6506	4,493	+ 45%
NON-ENQUIRIES	43	14	+ 207%
CORRESPONDENCE (post, email)	224	360	- 38%
PHONE	1205	976	+ 23%
TOTAL	7,978	5,843	+ 37%
INCOME £S			
RETAIL SALES	£13,447.95	£8,879.03	+ 51%
TICKET SALES COMMISSION	£1,371.48	£502.85	+ 173%
BOOKING FEES	£0.00	£0.00	0%
BUREAU	£0.00	£0.00	0%
TOTAL	£14,819.43	£9,381.88	+ 58%
AVERAGE SPEND PER VISITOR	£2.07	£1.98	+ 5%

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ITEM 14

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Tourism
Date of Report	25 May 2023
File Reference	TO/EV89
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	PGA EuroPro Tour, Northern Ireland Masters 24-26 August 2022
Attachments	N/A

Background

In March 2022, Council was presented with a report on the above event and approved a maximum of £34,900 towards the delivery of the PGA EuroPro Tour Northern Ireland Masters on 24-26 August 2022. This was funded via the Council's Tourism Event Bid for Fund. The 2022 event was the second year of a three-year contract with EuroPro to host the event at Clondeboye Golf Club.

The Event

The EuroPro Tour was an official satellite tour of the European Tour. Its season started in May and completed in September running a series at 12 UK golf clubs. Clondeboye Golf Club (CGC) was one of the 12 chosen clubs and one of only two in Northern Ireland. The EuroPro team manages the event, the PGA manages the tournament, and the Club provides the facilities, course, clubhouse complex and extras, e.g. volunteers, buggies, food and beverages, plus local knowledge. Unfortunately, the PGA announced on 28 September 2022 that the EuroPro Tour had been cancelled, therefore the event that took place in August 2022 was the last EuroPro Tour event at the Club.

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2022 Post Event Information

The event was launched on 22 June 2022 at Clandeboye Golf Club, with attendance by the Mayor and local MLAs.

Coverage of the launch included:

- UTV 6pm news
- Local newspapers
- PGA and Council social media

The Club had also organised a pre-event reception at the then Bangor Town Hall on 22 August 2022, to welcome EuroPro team and players to the Borough before the official event began on 23 August.

Marketing

All social media included reference to the support from ANDBC such as use of hashtags, showing venue dressing/logo and verbal acknowledgement. U105 ran a social media competition that reached 23,225 people. The Club also ran several radio ads on U105 with a listenership of 185,000 per week. The Club negotiated with golfing publication Tee to Green, and the event featured in the magazine in the lead up to the event and post event. It also featured online, where they have 6,500 followers.

The event received reach through the Club's social media channels promoting the event, as well as things to do in the Borough while visiting.

Television coverage

Sky Sports – two-hour programme repeated four times during the week on Sky Sports Golf and available via YouTube (footage included Council signage/branding, an interview with the Mayor and verbal acknowledgement of Council support). Sky Sports Golf has up to 250,000 viewers with the potential to reach 500 million homes in up to 150 countries.

The Club took the opportunity to have some drone footage of the event made and they plan to use this to assist with bidding for future championships and tournaments.

Participants, Spectators and Economic Impact

The event was free to attend and reported 4,432 attendees.

The Club employed an independent company to undertake market research at the 2022 event. The findings of the market research include:

- 91% of visitors came from Northern Ireland, breaking down further with 25% of these attendees were from out of the Borough
- 6% were from Great Britain
- 3% from Republic of Ireland

Visitors attended on average two days, therefore (using Tourism NI's economic calculator) the spend by these visitors was £25,326.

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The Club indicated that approximately 323 visitors stayed overnight in paid accommodation for an average of two nights, generating 646 bednights and £35,530 revenue for the accommodation sector (again, using Tourism NI's economic calculator).

The Club indicated 349 Participants broken down as 146 Golfers, four EuroPro staff, eight PGA staff, 150 volunteers, six vendors, four ANDBC, four Covid bus staff, 26 Club employees and one Tourism NI representative. These participants were at the event on average four days. 162 of these participants came from Outside of the Borough and generated approximately £11,664 spend. There were 149 participants staying an average of five nights in paid accommodation which generated £40,975 into the accommodation sector.

The food village was well received with six traders in total, all local.

The final amount paid out to the Club was £28,689, based on eligible invoices submitted. Using the information supplied to Council by the Club, and the market research findings, the event generated the following indicative economic impact:

Total visitor spend	£60,856
Total participant spend	£52,639
Total	£113,495

Using Tourism NI's economic calculator, deducting out of NI spend (£7,700), the event generated a total Direct Economic Impact of £105,795, which is a Return on Council Investment of £3.69 : £1.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes the report.

Unclassified

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ITEM 15**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Tourism
Date of Report	30 May 2023
File Reference	TO/TD68
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: Screening in process
Subject	TASTE AND Food and Drink Destination Development Plan 2023-2027 Report
Attachments	Item 15.1 - TASTE AND Food and Drink Destination Development Plan 2023-2027

Background

In 2018, Council adopted the Food Destination Development Plan (FDDP) 2018-2021 in parallel with the Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy (ITRDS) 2018-2030 and was launched by the Mayor in September 2018.

The FDDP set out to consolidate the Ards and North Down food tourism offering by delivering against key outcomes. These included:

- Positioning the local food sector as a key economic driver for the borough and increasing visitor awareness of the food offer and identity
- Visitor experiences which support the Borough's food and drink identity and key propositions
- An innovative, creative sustainable food sector
- Supply chains and distribution networks responsive to sector needs
- A local community with access, and appreciation of, of the local food offer
- A sector which significantly contributes to the targets within the ITRDS

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A series of steps to delivery were agreed. The first of these tasks was to recruit a Food and Drink Officer, with the second step to establish a Food and Drink Development Network to help shape the development of the food destination. The Network was formalised in September 2019 with 42 members, and a Network Committee, comprising sector representatives, was subsequently created in January 2020.

Unfortunately, progress on the FDDP came to a halt in March 2020 due to the global pandemic. Advisory and recovery support continued during this very challenging time for the sector, along with some activity in accordance with government restrictions. Although the Network could not continue in its intended form, support to members was provided by Officers as restrictions allowed. All plans for Food activities/experiences/events during 2020 were effectively cancelled until further notice. The FDDP was undeliverable in its original 'form' for the following 18 months. Some trade activity was able to be established in 2021, along with the development of pilot showcases, experiences food activity and events (within appropriate restrictions). The Network was reconvened formally in May 2022 and a Committee re-established in summer 2022. This provided a platform to review the FDDP and engage on the new Plan. It is acknowledged that the sector has changed considerably during this time.

The TASTE AND Food and Drink Destination Development Plan (FDDDP) 2023-2027

In December 2022, Council was advised that consultation on a revised FDDDP 2023-2027 was underway. The consultation phase included engagement with Network members, the wider tourism and business sector, internal Council services and other external agencies such as Food NI, Hospitality Ulster, Tourism NI, NI Food and Drink Association and Ulster University. The discussions have informed the plan.

It is assumed that the sector will continue to face issues regarding recruitment, supply chain and supplier costs. It is also assumed, that for the incoming year and beyond, it is likely that the general population will reduce frequency and/or value of spend on higher cost food and food activities. It is acknowledged that businesses will need to continue to be adaptable to the economic climate and customer behaviour. Therefore, the resources, both financial and human throughout the term of this Plan are potentially limited. Feedback from consultation indicated that any actions set, were to be realistic within the four-year timeframe.

Outcome and Key Actions

Ards and North Down will continue a path to achieve its goal of developing a recognised and vibrant Food and Drink sector that is sustainable for businesses, showcased to visitors and supported by the local community.

TASTE AND Food and Drink Destination Development Plan Actions 2024-2027

Action	Lead	Timeline
1. A fully embedded calendar of food and drink events and activities.	ANDBC	By 2027

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2. An increase in bookable food and drink experiences within the Borough.	ANDBC/Sector	Annual activity
3. Development of Taste AND into a locally recognisable brand/identity (with accompanying brand guidance for implementation).	ANDBC/Sector	By 2027
4. Restaurants clearly signposting local suppliers and utilising a range of local produce.	Sector/ANDBC	Annual activity
5. RAI Food Destination Accolade.	ANDBC	By 2027
6. Investigation into the creation of resource platform for the sector e.g., online resources.	ANDBC with industry partners	By 2027
7. Exposure of 'Taste AND' via trade shows.	ANDBC/Sector	Annual activity
8. Delivery of annual awards lab (training session on Award applications) and winners' recognition event.	ANDBC	Annual activity
9. Delivery of trade and careers engagement week.	ANDBC with industry partners	Annual activity
10. Development of working relationships with industry e.g., Invest NI, NFIDA, HU, TNI, Food NI Visit Belfast, SERC, Ulster University, AFBI.	ANDBC with industry partners	Annual activity
11. Food journalists/bloggers content, food familiarisation trips - delivered annually.	ANDBC	Annual activity
12. Sustainability development (Sustainable Food Places, WRAP, training courses delivered annually by ANDBC or in partnership).	ANDBC/sector and industry partners	Annual activity
13. Delivery of 'Markets' future' planning report.	ANDBC	By 2024

Subject to approval by Council, the intention is to formally launch the new TASTE AND Food and Drink Destination Plan 2023-2027 in September 2023.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council adopts the attached TASTE AND Food and Drink Destination Development Plan 2023-2027.



**Food and Drink Destination
Development Plan 2023 – 2027**

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Glossary

AFBI	Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute
ANDBC/AND	Ards and North Down Borough Council/Ards and North Down
DEFRA	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EAGS	Embrace A Giant Spirit
FHRS	Food Hygiene Rating Scheme
FSA	Food Standards Agency
HU	Hospitality Ulster
ITRDS	Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy
NIFDA	Northern Ireland Food and Drink Association
NI	Northern Ireland
PGI	Protected Geographical Indication
RAI	Restaurants Association of Ireland
SERC	South Eastern Regional College
TNI	Tourism NI

Executive summary

Introduction

Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC) published its first Food Destination Development Plan in 2018 (2018-2021), followed by the appointment of a Food and Drink Officer in early 2019, to deliver the Plan.

What followed was a tumultuous time for the food and drink sector: from Brexit's impact on the island, the global pandemic, followed by the global energy and cost of living crises. The impacts for businesses have been deep, affecting supply chains, distribution, staffing and running costs. For implementation of the initial Plan, these factors posed many challenges with adaptation necessary throughout the period in question.

Contained within the 2018-21 Plan were eight steps to delivery. Five steps have now either been implemented or are underway. The remaining, impacted by the issues noted, alongside available internal resources and those controlled by third party sectors and outside of Council control, remain incomplete.

Appendix 1: Food Destination Development Plan 2018-21 – 8 Steps to Delivery

Whilst the factors mentioned put massive pressures on the industry, it has demonstrated resilience and determination. Key now is how the local sector can emerge, with ANDBC working alongside the sector to establish a solid path to recovery, fostering development and growth over the lifetime of the revised plan, 2023-2027, and continuing, *“To establish Ards and North Down Borough as a leading Food and Drink destination which will be locally and nationally recognised”*.

What is Food Tourism?

The UNWTO Global Food Tourism Report defines Food Tourism as: *“The pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experiences.”*¹

¹ UNWTO Global Food Tourism Report – 2018 (*“The pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experiences.”* – *Tourism and Development (wordpress.com)*)

Destinations now realise the sector offers additionality to diversify their tourism offering and stimulate economic development with food and drink becoming fundamental economic drivers of tourism with Tourism NI (TNI) identifying Food Tourism as a significant contributor to grow visitor spend to £2 Billion by 2030.²

ANDBC's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy (ITRDS), 2018-2030, highlights food and drink as key components in the development of this destination.

Food tourism is no longer a niche segment of the tourism industry. The Fáilte Ireland Food and Drink Strategy 2018–2023 estimates food and beverage consumption accounts for 35% of all international tourism revenues, with a worth of €1.7billion in 2017, equating to approximately €2.3 billion in 2023 on current multiplier models.

The Food Destination

Tourism in NI was on a significant upward trajectory pre-pandemic. In 2019, visitors to NI spent £968 million, with 30% of this being on food.

The Fáilte Ireland Food and Drink Strategy, 2018–2023, states that a density of "foodie" experiences *"is what makes a successful food destination"*. The overall aim of its strategy is to *"consistently enhance the visitor experience through food and drink and make a strong contribution to overall tourism revenue growth"*.

Research by the World Food Travel Association Food Travel Monitor concurs, and that exploration into the culture and local traditions of the area, gives the food tourists a more in-depth and whole experience.³

The TASTE AND Food and Drink Offering

When the first Food Destination Plan was drafted, it was acknowledged that the Borough had significant potential as a leading food and drink region. At that stage however, the nature of our local food and drink offering and key strengths were not articulated. Five years on, we now better understand the characteristics and the key strengths.

Seafood

The historic port of Portavogie is one of the three Northern Ireland fishing ports. It is considered the specialist port for shellfish and crustaceans, with the Portavogie prawn famed in the local culinary scene.

Bangor Bay crab and creel-caught Strangford Lough langoustines are amongst the finest of local delicacies found in restaurants across County Down and Belfast.

² <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/101636/html/>

³ Food tourism - nibusinessinfo.co.uk

Beef and Butchery

Beef production has been recast within the area, with farmers opting to take innovative and alternative paths to supply the local market with award winning and exceptionally high-quality product; many of these farmers driven by a focus on sustainability, nature friendly farming and the highest traceability standards. This alongside local farmers working to bring the breed back from the brink of extinction such as Irish Dexters and The Irish Moiled breeds.

The heritage of our butchery sector is hugely significant with local butchery families surviving the arrival of the national supermarkets in the 1990s and proceeding to win national awards.

Dairy

Glastry Farm Ice Cream and Clandeboye Estate Yoghurt are now established as two of Northern Ireland's most recognisable dairy produce brands. Newtownards is home to Young Buck Blue Cheese, one of Northern Ireland's four local producers. These businesses have inspired other farms to reinvent their business models, with several farms producing exceptional quality pasture-fed organic milk direct to the public and local independent retailers.

Distilling and Brewing

Irish distilling and brewing have both been re-born in this area in recent years. Echlinville Distillery became the first newly licensed distillery in Northern Ireland for over 125 years in 2013 and The Copeland Distillery followed in 2016.

Ards Brewing Company, established in 2011 in Greyabbey, brought beer production back to the Peninsula after an absence of half a century and further new nano-breweries have since developed.

Chillies and Hot Sauce

Hot sauce production is the most recent chapter in our local food story. In recent years, a clutch of new companies began producing chilli sauce products that draw on local culture and character, winning national and international awards.

Bread and Baking

The north of the Ards Peninsula was once the breadbasket of Ulster and labelled 'Little Holland' with windmills dotting the countryside. Bread production has enjoyed a recent resurgence, with artisanal producers flourishing, and adding to the local family-run baking companies that have been custodians of local baking traditions for decades. They are ensuring continued customer loyalty on the high streets of our city, towns, and villages.

Comber Earlies and the Strangford Lough Vegetable Giants

The exceptional soil and climate found in Ards and North Down allows local farmers to grow the unique Comber Earlies potato, with its PGI status, and provides the theme of one of our two annual local food festivals. The micro-climate means the Borough has a thriving sector which supplies supermarket chains with seasonal fresh vegetables.

Restaurants, Hospitality and Chefs

The last four years have been undeniably tough for the entire sector. Despite this, many of our eateries have persevered, winning accolades at both national and international level, ensuring our culinary reputation grows including, MICHELIN Bib Gourmand selection for 2023, the 2023 Michelin Guide and Sunday Times (Ireland Edition and the McKenna's Guide) listing Top 100 for 2023.

Rising star chefs have earned their stripes at local restaurants and made appearances on national TV cooking shows, joining established local chefs as key ambassadors of Ards and North Down as a food and drink destination.

Independent Food Retailers

Ards and North Down is home to over 20 quality farm shops and artisanal grocery stores, including national award winners, in most settlements in the Borough. These businesses have played a key part in increasing the visibility of local food and drink produce to residents and visitors.

Award Winning Borough

ANDBC is fast becoming known as a top award-winning borough for food and drink on the island, with businesses collecting international, national, and local awards across the sector.

To recognise these achievements the TASTE AND Local Food and Drink Hero Awards provide a yearly retrospective of awards won throughout the previous calendar year by local businesses.

Appendix 2: Food and Drink award winners (2022/23)

The Pathway to the TASTE AND Food and Drink Destination Development Plan 2023-2027

Methodology

In developing the plan for the next four years the following methodology was employed.

- Desk Research.
- Consultation and Engagement – AND food and drink sector.

- Consultation and Engagement – external food and drink sector organisations and educational bodies.
- Integration and alignment to existing ANDBC strategies and policies.
- Competitive Territorial Analysis (Destination Audit).
- Comparative Analysis (Benchmarking).
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Appendix 3: Methodology of Taste AND Food and Drink Plan 2023-2027 development

Timeline

Following a two-year hiatus during the pandemic, the TASTE AND Food and Drink Network reconvened in May 2022. Research and engagement was undertaken between September 2022, when the Network Committee agreed an outline for a new four-year plan, and June 2023, when the Committee recommended the Plan to Council.

Appendix 4: Timeline - Taste AND Food and Drink Plan 2023-2027

Engagement

Consultation during development of the plan took place with the local food and drink industry, sectoral bodies and internally within ANDBC. This was conducted via an online survey, face to face and online meetings.

The results have shaped the Plan and key actions over the four years.

These include:

- Development of Taste AND into a locally recognisable brand/identity.
- Developing more food and drink experiences and tours.
- Development of working relationships with sectoral bodies.
- Delivery of trade and careers engagement week.
- Sustainability development.

Appendix 5: Consultation feedback

Taste AND Food and Drink Hubs and Assets

A competitive territorial analysis (Destination Audit) was carried out on the sector to identify both the make-up of the 'hubs' within ANDBC and its sectoral tourism assets. It examined the strengths of towns and villages within ANDBC, as either established or emerging food and drink hubs in a tourism and production sense.

Similarly, the Borough's key food and drink tourism assets, including markets, events and experience/visitor attractions within the sector were audited as part of the development plan.

Sustainability in the Food and Drink Sector

Sustainability, which did not feature within the initial Plan, is now a key focus. From reducing food waste to encouraging healthy and sustainable food production and

placing food entrepreneurs and enterprises at the heart of local economic development, it is a topic that has increasing importance to the sector, public and Council.

ANDBC's Roadmap to Sustainability (March 2021), outlines Council's commitment to the global Sustainable Development Goals including actions specifically relating to the food and drink sector. Additionally, ANDBC has joined an ambassador for WRAP – Guardians of Grub and a member of 'Sustainable Food Places' and over the four-year period of this Plan the aim is to work towards improvement of sustainability across the sector.

Appendix 6: Sustainability objectives within ANDBC

Environmental Health within the Sector

Alongside the quality of our produce is the importance of safety. ANDBC's Food Safety Officers will continue to work alongside the sector to protect the health of residents and visitors in a variety of ways. This includes the provision of information and training, ensuring that compliant businesses are not disadvantaged by non-compliant traders. In addition, the promotion/enforcement of schemes such as the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) providing customers hygiene standards which is a legal requirement.

Appendix 7: Environmental Health and the Food Sector

Markets

Markets can be viewed as 'community events' that bring consumers and producers together to learn, be seen as a key part of a successful food and drink destination, and as short chain distribution channels, provide economic benefits to participating producers as well as educating consumers.

The Borough has three monthly food and drink markets with a strong theme of local/artisan produce at Market Fresh, Bangor, Portaferry's Market on the Square and Comber Farmers' Market. Additional weekly markets in Bangor and Newtownards have less artisan produce.

It is important to note the Borough markets operate under a wide range of conditions with only the smallest, Bangor, operated by the Council. Success and sustainability are important to the development of the local food and drink sector and as an element of the visitor destination.

Food and Drink Experiences and Events

Experiences

A density of 'foodie' experiences "is what makes a successful food destination"⁴. Consultation echoed this, highlighting the strong desire to see a continued development and expansion of food and drink tours and experiences, such as those

⁴ Fáilte Ireland Food and Drink Strategy, 2018–2023

that have proved successful within the sector in recent years. These include both ANDBC run and independently operated food and drink tours or experiences, either food and drink specific, or food and drink as the 'add on' to an existing experience to create something unique.

Appendix 8: Food and Drink Experience Development

Events

Events have been identified within the research as a must within the development of a food and drink destination, including the need for an established annual calendar of activity. The ANDBC Borough Events Strategic Direction (2021-26) identified food and drink as a key theme for events development. One-off or bespoke food and drink events, either Council or independently run, are all crucial to destination development showcasing the sector, supporting businesses, and providing visitors and locals with the opportunity to enjoy local food and drink.

Appendix 9: Food and Drink Events

Trade Shows

Attendance provides the opportunity for TASTE AND to showcase produce at a national level and offer local providers opportunities for trade buyer engagement, both at national and local level. Maintaining presence at the shows is deemed valuable going forward within budgetary limitations.

Appendix 10: Trade Shows

Building the Food and Drink Community

Established following the initial development plan, the TASTE AND Food and Drink Network now includes 99 businesses (January 2023) from across the sector. Success in delivering the aspirations of the TASTE AND Food and Drink Destination Development Plan (2023-2027) will be the commitment and drive of the local food and drink sector working alongside ANDBC to achieve the measures of success.

Appendix 11: Taste AND Food and Drink Network

The Food and Drink Development Framework

The combination of tourism and territory assets, capacity factors and local food and drink experiences build the components of the local food and drink sector. Initially evaluated in 2018, these have been adapted and re-assessed for 2023-2027. These cover the following elements.

- **Territory Assets** - Natural Resources, Identity, Provenance, Community.
- **Sectoral Capacity** - Enablers, Collaboration and Innovation, Supply Chain, Local Produce, Skills and Education, Export, Ambassadors.
- **Tourism Assets** - Attractions, Landscapes, Hospitality, Connectivity/Accessibility.

- **The Food Experience** – Gastronomy, Retail Visibility, Resident Buy-in, Local Brand Recognition, Events, Bookable and Accessible Activity, Tourism Facilitates Local Food.

The Food Destination Proposition

Set within the wider destination proposition of the ITDRS, the food and drink destination proposition will continue to reflect quality, innovative artisan food and drink based on authenticity and tradition; quality, authentic eating, dining and food and drink experiences, that are 'of the place'; quality, fresh, sustainable produce and quality, award winning businesses.

Key Markets and Segments

Within the period of the plan the following are identified as the key markets and segments that will be the focus across the plan's actions by way of residents, visitors, and buyers.

- Local - ANDBC residents and businesses.
- Domestic – Rest of NI visitors and trade buyers.
- ROI and GB - visitors and trade buyers.
- Mainland Europe and North America – visitors.

Where will we be by 2027?

Ards and North Down will continue a path to achieve its goal of developing a recognised and vibrant Food and Drink sector that is sustainable for businesses, showcased to visitors and supported by the local community.

At the time of writing this Plan, it is acknowledged actions need to be realistic in respect of lead delivery partner/s, resources (both physical and financial), collaborators, agency, and central government interventions. The findings of the research and consultation have shaped the development of the actions. The below actions are deliverable, through collaboration, during the lifetime of the Plan 2023-2027.

Key Actions

Action	Lead	Timeline
1. A fully embedded calendar of food and drink events and activities.	ANDBC	By 2027
2. An increase in bookable food and drink experiences within the Borough.	ANDBC/Sector	Annual activity
3. Development of Taste AND into a locally recognisable brand/identity (with accompanying brand guidance for implementation).	ANDBC/Sector	By 2027

4. Restaurants clearly signposting local suppliers and utilising a range of local produce.	Sector/ANDBC	Annual activity
5. RAI Food Destination Accolade.	ANDBC	By 2027
6. Investigation into the creation of resource platform for the sector e.g., online resources.	ANDBC with industry partners	By 2027
7. Exposure of 'Taste AND' via trade shows.	ANDBC/Sector	Annual activity
8. Delivery of annual awards lab (training session on awards applications) and winners' recognition event.	ANDBC	Annual activity
9. Delivery of trade and careers engagement week.	ANDBC with industry partners	Annual activity
10. Development of working relationships with industry e.g., Invest NI, NFIDA, HU, TNI, Food NI Visit Belfast, SERC, Ulster University, AFBI.	ANDBC with industry partners	Annual activity
11. Food journalists/bloggers content, food familiarisation trips - delivered annually.	ANDBC	Annual activity
12. Sustainability development (Sustainable Food Places, WRAP, training courses delivered annually by ANDBC or in partnership).	ANDBC/sector and industry partners	Annual activity
13. Delivery of 'Markets' future' planning report.	ANDBC	By 2024

Monitoring

The Plan will be reviewed regularly to adapt to changes and ensure it remains relevant. This is particularly important for the sector, as it continues to emerge from the impact of the global pandemic, and additional issues highlighted within the Plan. At the two-year stage of the plan a review will be carried out and the Plan updated accordingly.

Taste Ards and North Down Food and Drink Destination Development Plan 2023 – 2027

Introduction

Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC) published its first Food Destination Development Plan in 2018 (2018-2021), followed by the appointment of a Food and Drink Officer in early 2019, to deliver the Plan.

What followed was a tumultuous time for the food and drink sector: from Brexit's impact on the island, the global pandemic, followed by the global energy and cost of living crisis. The impacts for businesses have been deep, affecting supply chains, distribution, staffing and running costs. For implementation of the initial Plan, these factors posed many challenges with adaptation necessary throughout the period in question.

Contained within the 2018-21 Plan were eight steps to delivery. Five steps have now either been implemented or are underway. The remaining, impacted by the issues noted, alongside available internal resources and those controlled by third party sectors and outside of Council control, remain incomplete.

Appendix 1: [Food and Drink Destination Development Plan 2018-2021](#)

Whilst the factors mentioned put massive pressures on the industry, it has demonstrated resilience and determination in the face of such challenges. Key now is how the local sector can emerge, with ANDBC working alongside the sector to establish a solid path to recovery, fostering development and growth over the lifetime of the revised plan, 2023-2027, and continue, *"To establish Ards and North Down Borough as a leading Food and Drink destination which will be locally and nationally recognised"*.

What is Food Tourism?

The UNWTO Global Food Tourism Report defines Food Tourism as: *"The pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experience"*¹

It is a creative and dynamic segment of tourism that has grown exponentially in recent years. Visitors demand authentic experiences to form a real connection to a place. There is no better way to do this than through food and drink. Destinations now realise the sector offers additionality to diversify their tourism offering and stimulate economic development with food and drink becoming fundamental economic drivers of tourism.

¹ UNWTO Global Food Tourism Report – 2018 (*"The pursuit of unique and memorable eating and drinking experiences."* – *Tourism and Development* (wordpress.com))

As the 'Experience Economy' has flourished, supported by national initiatives such as Tourism NI's (TNI) 'Embrace the Giant Spirit', it has seen food and drink experiences become more important in tourism, both stand alone or, as part of an unrelated sector experience, providing an authentic insight into local food and drink, culture, creativity, and landscapes.

TNI identifies Food Tourism as an important component of the wider tourism offer and a significant contributor to ambitious targets for Northern Ireland to grow visitor spend to £2 Billion by 2030.²

ANDBC's Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy (ITRDS), 2018-2030, highlights that food and drink are a key component in the development of this destination and that embracing our quality food and drink product, something integral to our visitor proposition, enables us to offer "*visitors an authentic taste of place*". It notes that,

"When done well, food tourism can become a primary driver for a destination and make a valuable contribution to the economic and social development of the community."

TNI was a major contributor to the 'Year of Food and Drink', 2016, which focused the nation on the sector throughout that year. Following this, Northern Ireland (NI) won 'World's Best Food Destination' at the International Travel and Tourism Awards and at World Travel Market 2018, showing where NI had positioned itself globally within this sector. Other national sector bodies continued development including, prior to pandemic, Food NI creating the 'Our Food, Power of Good' strategy, recognising the focus on sustainability and health. This campaign aimed to promote the message that food and drink from Northern Ireland was good for one and the planet.

Long-term trends show that the quality of food and drink and food and drink experiences is increasingly a motivator for travel. Indeed, Food Tourism is no longer a niche segment of the tourism industry. The Fáilte Ireland Food and Drink Strategy, 2018–2023, defines Food Tourism as including,

"Any tourism experience in which one learns about, appreciates and/or consumes food drink that reflects the local cuisine and culture of a place."

It estimates food and beverage consumption accounts for 35% of all international tourism revenues, with a worth of €1.7billion in 2017, equating to approximately €2.3 billion in 2023 on current multiplier models.

It states Food Tourism can play a significant role in creating this 'destination' by increasing visitor demand for local food and drink and that Food Tourism contributes to the long-term sustainability of local agriculture, food systems, communities, and culture.

² <https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/101636/html/>

The Food Destination

Tourism in NI was on a significant upward trajectory pre-pandemic. In 2019, visitors to NI spent £968 million, 30% of this being on food, a similar percentage to that reported by Fáilte Ireland.

The Fáilte Ireland Food and Drink Strategy, 2018–2023, states that a density of "foodie" experiences *"is what makes a successful food destination"*. The overall aim of its strategy is to *"consistently enhance the visitor experience through food and drink and make a strong contribution to overall tourism revenue growth"*. This is a view backed by the Culinary Food Alliance noting that a destination is one, *"which seeks to maximize the economic potential of its local food system through tourism-related activities."*³

Research by the World Food Travel Association Food Travel Monitor estimates that 96% of travellers can now be classed as food travellers due to there being more emphasis on food and drink which cannot be experienced in their own country. Food tourists are also keen spenders within the local economy being visited, spending between 25%-35% of their overall budget on food on average, again backing the earlier findings. The main types of experiences that are attracting customers include:

- Visiting local artisan producers and growers.
- Exploring breweries and distilleries.
- Food tours.
- Food festivals and events.
- Cookery schools or taking part in the production of artisan food products.

The appeal of these is not solely about the food and drink, but the history of and story that revolves around these products. It allows for exploration into the culture and local traditions of the area, all in all creating a deeper connection than mere food consumption. It gives the food tourists a more in-depth and whole experience, which will create a lasting impression on them.

(Food tourism - nibusinessinfo.co.uk).

Destinations around the world are positioning themselves as food hubs and actively promoting their food and drink offering. In 2017 VisitBritain and DEFRA classified such in three categories:

- Heritage food destinations: cities or regions that have long had a reputation for high quality food.
- Emerging or recently emerged destinations: lesser-known destinations, but which are now building a solid reputation.
- "With potential" destinations: in many parts of the world, the food products, traditions, and climate provide the conditions for developing a rich, interesting food offer, and are becoming increasingly well known.

3. Culinary Food Alliance 2020 (www.culinarytourismalliance.com)

The latter remains the case for Northern Ireland as a whole, and where 'Taste Ards and North Down' (Taste AND) can look to grow as an entity in its own respect.

The latest data from Tourism NI highlights the importance of food and drink to the domestic visitor. For both NI domestic and Republic of Ireland (ROI) visitors, "*enjoying the food & drink experience was one of the key motivators for their NI trip*". The food and drink experience was highly rated by both NI domestic and ROI visitors, with the vast majority saying it met or exceeded their expectations. (*Tourism NI consumer sentiment, April 2023*).

The Taste AND Food and Drink Offering

In 2018, when the first Food Destination Plan was drafted, it was acknowledged that the Borough had significant potential as a leading food and drink region. At that stage however, the nature of our local food and drink offering and key strengths were not articulated. Five years on, with the development of the Taste AND Food and Drink Network, which has steadily connected the various elements of our food and drink sector, we now better understand the characteristics of our local food and drink offering and the key strengths on which to shape development.

Seafood

The epicentre of our seafood sector is focused on the historic port of Portavogie which is one of the three Northern Ireland fishing ports. It is considered the specialist port for shellfish and crustaceans, with the Portavogie prawn famed in the local culinary scene and a much-loved seafood staple within processed scampi across Northern Ireland.

Portavogie homes a cluster of seafood processing and specialist merchants who supply hospitality providers and chefs from Belfast to London. Its seafood merchants can be found at food markets across NI bringing fresh quality seafood direct to customers well away from our coastline. Several companies have invested in new facilities in the village in recent years, highlighting the port has a sustainable future in this sector.

Bangor Bay crab and lobster is a niche local supplier to nearby restaurants, whilst creel-caught Strangford Lough langoustines, landed in Kircubbin, are amongst the finest of local delicacies found in restaurants across County Down and Belfast.

Beef and Butchery

Beef production has been recast within the area with farmers opting to take innovative and alternative paths to supply the local market with award-winning and exceptionally high-quality product; many of these farmers driven by a focus on sustainability, nature friendly farming and the highest traceability standards.

Ards and North Down is home to two of the smaller 'rare breed' cattle that are symbolic of our agricultural past; five Irish Dexter herds are now well-established after local farmers led the mission to bring the breed back from the brink of extinction 30 years ago, succeeding in taking Irish Dexters off the UK "rare breed watch list". The Irish Moiled breed is following the same path to recovery, with established herds in Millisle,

Ballywalter and Portaferry. Traditional breeds that are symbolic of Ulster-Scots culture, such as Belted Galloways and Aberdeen Angus, thrive in the Craigantlet Hills and on Ards Peninsula.

The heritage of our butchery sector is hugely significant, with local butchery families surviving the arrival of the national supermarkets in the 1990s and have helped lead the revival of our independent high-street food retailers in recent years. McWhinney's of Bangor has been producing award-winning sausages for 125 years, H & J Carnduff, Wrights and Corries on the Farm lead on national awards, whilst beef farmers in Greyabbey, Donaghadee, Portaferry, Ballywalter and Comber running their own UK Guild outlets support increased direct local sales to residents and visitors.

Dairy

Glastry Farm Ice Cream and Clandeboye Estate Yoghurt have led the charge and are now established as two of Northern Ireland's most recognisable dairy produce brands. Newtownards is home to Young Buck Blue Cheese, one of NI's four local producers, which has grabbed international attention. Kearney Blue also originates from the Ards Peninsula.

These businesses have inspired other farms to reinvent their business models with several farms producing exceptional quality pasture-fed organic milk direct to the public and local independent retailers as an alternative to national chains. The sector is increasingly adapting from issues surrounding the wholesale milk market by adding value to their quality milk via creation of artisanal quality produce.

Distilling and Brewing

Irish distilling and brewing have both been re-born in this area in recent years. Echlinville Distillery became the first newly licensed distillery in Northern Ireland for over 125 years when it began production in 2013. It has since established itself at the forefront of Ireland's spirits renaissance and is home to some of the Ireland's best-known spirits including Dunville's Irish Whiskey, Jawbox Gin, Echlinville Gin, Weavers Gin and Bán Poitín.

The Copeland Distillery followed three years later in the summer of 2016, when it was founded by a successful crowdfunding project. This business has continued to grow with its distillery based in the heart of Donaghadee producing a range of Whiskey, Gin, Rum, and Vodka inspired and shaped by the history of the town and nearby Copeland Islands.

Ards Brewing Company, established in 2011 in Greyabbey, brought beer production back to the Peninsula after an absence of half a century. Further new nano-breweries have since developed during the pandemic, with several more currently in development.

Chillies and Hot Sauce

Hot sauce production is the most recent chapter in our local food story. In recent years a clutch of new companies began producing chilli sauce products that draw on local culture and character, winning national and international awards. Rockadoodle produce Snow Patrol, Banshee and Dunville's Whiskey ranges, Habanero Steve's and Totally Hot NI produce a range of artisanal chilli jams and condiments. PEPPUP fuses traditional Italian recipes with local preferences which are increasingly found in supermarkets across the island. Rich Sauces of Newtownards is now a national supplier of food-service curry sauces and condiments to hotels, restaurants and takeaways in NI and ROI. ANDBC currently organises a Chilli Plant Festival at its Bangor Walled Garden venue over several days each September. This event showcases local products and an exhibition that includes many different varieties of chilli plants from across the globe, in all different shapes, sizes and colours.

Bread and Baking

The north of the Ards Peninsula was once the breadbasket of Ulster and labelled 'Little Holland' with windmills dotting the countryside. Bread production has enjoyed a recent resurgence with artisanal producers flourishing. As with the heritage of local butchers, local family-run baking companies have been custodians of local baking traditions for decades, ensuring continued customer loyalty on the high streets of our city, towns, and villages.

Knotts and Pattons in Newtownards, and Bangor's Heatherlea are three of our most successful baked goods businesses providing a wide range of product found in local and regional retail chains alongside their own local outlets. In recent years, a raft of new talent has opened bakeries such as Counterculture in Bangor, Knead in Newtownards and Fjord and Forge on the Peninsula, offering award-winning and specialist produce. Olive Tree Bakes of Bangor and Bara Bakehouse of Comber have triumphed at the World Bread Awards and high-end patisserie start-ups are experiencing success and growing reputations.

Comber Earlies and the Strangford Lough Vegetable Giants

The exceptional soil and climate found in Ards and North Down allows farmers to grow the unique Comber Earlies. Protection offered by the Ards Peninsula to the east and the Craigantlet Hills to the north, along with the south/east location mean that the microclimate of the designated area is both warmer and drier than other parts of Northern Ireland. The Comber Earlies Growers Cooperative works collaboratively to promote and protect the PGI status (protected geographical indication) and this "humble spud" itself provides us with the focus of one of our two annual local food festivals.

The unique characteristics of soil, climate and topography also mean we are the kitchen garden of Ulster with a thriving sector which supplies supermarket chains with seasonal fresh vegetables. Mash Direct stands out as one Northern Ireland's greatest food stories supplying ready-to-cook vegetable dishes found on shelves across the UK and Ireland. Roy Little and Company, Windwhistle Farm, Willowbrook Foods,

Freshfields, and Millbank Farm are other success stories supplying our supermarket chains with a large range of brassicas and root vegetables.

Restaurants, Hospitality and Chefs

As highlighted at the outset, the last four years have been undeniably tough for the sector. Despite this, many of our eateries have persevered, winning accolades at both national and international level, ensuring our culinary reputation grows. Noble of Holywood has made the MICHELIN Bib Gourmand selection for 2023, one of four restaurants in NI. No 14 The Georgian House in Comber and Fontana in Holywood were listed in the 2023 Michelin Guide, two of only 11 venues across NI. Three restaurants made the Sunday Times (Ireland Edition) Top 100 listing 2023, which is also the McKenna's Guide, these being Frae, Linchpin and Noble, all in Holywood.

Donaghadee has emerged as a rising restaurant destination with Harbour & Co, Bull & Claw and Grace Neill's each achieving national awards. In Bangor, Bokhara, Bangla, Tuk Tuk and Underground Dining also regular winners of national and local recognised awards.

Rising star chefs such as Andy Scollick, John Hollywood and Tim Brunton have all earned their stripes at our local restaurants and made appearances on national TV cooking shows in recent times. They join established local chefs such as Saul McConnell, Jim Mulholland and Joery Castel as key ambassadors of Ards and North Down as a food destination.

Independent Food Retailers

Ards and North Down is home to over 20 quality farm shops and artisanal grocery stores across every settlement in the Borough. Leading the way is Blas na hEireann All Ireland Local Food Champion, Indie Fude, and has been followed by award winners Grattan's Fine Foods in Donaghadee. Rural farm shops in locations including Greyabbey, Craigantlet, Comber, Portaferry, Lisbane and Donaghadee have become a key part of creating visibility of local food and drink of artisanal quality to residents and visitors.

Award-Winning Borough

The area is fast becoming known as a top award-winning borough for food and drink on the island with the sector businesses regularly achieving accolades at the top international, national and local awards including Blas Na hEireann, Great Taste, International Wine and Spirit Competition, World Gin Awards, World Whiskey Awards, Irish Quality Food Awards, British Quality Food Awards, World Bread Awards, UK Bakery Awards, UK Butchery Awards and the UK Food Manufacturing Excellence Awards.

To recognise these achievements the Taste AND Local Food and Drink Hero Awards, inaugurated in 2022, act as the main annual celebration of local food and drink success and provide a yearly retrospective of awards won throughout the previous calendar year by local businesses. *Appendix 2: Food and Drink award winners (2022/23)*

The Pathway to the Taste AND Food and Drink Destination Development Plan 2023-2027

Methodology

In developing the plan for the next four years the following methodology was employed.

- Desk Research.
- Consultation and Engagement – AND food and drink sector.
- Consultation and Engagement – external food and drink sector organisations and educational bodies.
- Integration and alignment to existing ANDBC strategies and policies.
- Competitive Territorial Analysis (Destination Audit).
- Comparative Analysis (Benchmarking).

Appendix 3 – Methodology of Taste AND Food and Drink Destination Development Plan 2023-2027 development

Timeline

In May 2022, after a two-year hiatus during the pandemic, the Taste AND Food and Drink Network reconvened. Its first action was to reconnect the membership and build momentum towards a new Plan and way forward, via the sector-based member committee of 13 and free-to-join open membership. Between September 2022, when the Network Committee agreed an outline for a new four-year plan, and April 2023, when the Committee recommended the Plan to the Council, research and engagement was undertaken, culminating in the 2023-2027 'Taste AND Food and Drink Destination Plan'.

Appendix 4 – Timeline - Taste AND Food and Drink Destination Development Plan 2023-2027

Engagement

Key Views from Consultations – AND Food and Drink Sector1

An online survey was issued to local sector businesses in November 2022. Primarily respondents originated from membership of the Taste AND Food and Drink Network.

The following provides a sample of responses:

- Primary ambition: *"We aim to be a leading food and drink destination on the island of Ireland."* (100% of respondents).
- Secondary ambition: *"We strive for a strengthened local food and drink supply chain that is robust, where local food is easily sourced and accessed by consumers, visitors and businesses."* (100% of respondents).
- *"Our residents strongly embrace the call to "support local" and this is evidenced with vibrant markets, successful independent retailers and thriving restaurants."* (88% of respondents).

In respect of Operational Priorities, responses were as follows:

1. Signposting residents on where and how to buy/support local food & drink - 77%.
2. Developing the 'Taste Ards and North Down' identity into a local brand - 70%.
3. Signposting a career pathway for young people into the local food & drink sector - 65%.
4. Developing more food and drink experiences and tours - 58%.
5. Celebrating local food and drink innovators and award winners - 58%.
6. Facilitating meet the buyer events for retailers and local hospitality - 52%.

133 surveys were received. 29 members from a network of 114 (2022-2023 membership)

Key Views from Consultations – Food and Drink Sectoral Bodies

Food and drink organisations were consulted on opinions and views impacting on the sector and where, in their opinion, the Plan should focus and where ANDBC could play a notable role. It was stressed by all that the Plan needed to be realistic as to what level ANDBC alone could impact. Many issues surrounding the sector needing to be dealt with on a national level by central government and multinationals and therefore outside the influence of Council and placed alongside the vital input and contribution from the local sector itself towards delivery. It was stressed that internal resource provision, both budgetary and staffing, was key in delivery of objectives. Engagement with such organisations saw affinity with those of the local sector across many areas.

Top line feedback included:

- Branding: could prove impactful on a local level to support "buy local" initiatives", but less so on a national scale, focus on "local recognition of local product".
- Training: education and mentoring opportunities are vital, even more so in the current climate, to bring people into the industry, one which many incorrectly see as low wage and unskilled.
- Awareness building of local produce amongst distributors and local hospitality businesses is lacking nationally, education of industry is necessary.
- Good News stories: nationally we do not shout about our success - Recognition breeds success and should be highlighted.
- Trade needs to proactively buy into initiatives and provide a level of measurables as to the importance of the sector to the local economy to back support provision from external bodies - Such statistics and input are lacking.
- Need for a national strategy: "The Year of Food and Drink" was a success but not capitalised on long term and momentum has been lost. National organisations. need to be lobbied to take a lead.

Appendix 5 – Consultation feedback

Taste AND Food and Drink Hubs and Assets

A competitive territorial analysis (Destination Audit) was carried out of the sector to both identify the make-up of the "hubs" within ANDBC and its sectoral tourism assets.

FINAL DESIGNED PUBLICATION TO INCLUDE MAP/MAPS HIGHLIGHTING LOCATION OF HUBS AND ASSETS (COLOUR KEY)

Food and Drink Hubs

1. Holywood - Emerging Food Tourism Hub
2. Bangor – Emerging Food Tourism and Production Hub
3. Donaghadee – Food Tourism Hub
4. Newtownards – Food Production Hub
5. Comber – Food Tourism Hub
6. Greyabbey – Emerging Food Tourism Hub
7. Portavogie – Food Production Hub
8. Portaferry – Emerging Food Tourism Hub

Key Food Tourism Assets

1. Comber Farmers' Market
2. Portaferry Market
3. Bangor Market Fresh
4. Ballywalter Park
5. Walled Garden Helen's Bay
6. Bangor Walled Garden
7. Ballycopeland Windmill
8. Open House Bangor*
9. Tide and Turf, Portavogie*
10. Comber Earlies Food Festival*
11. Sea Bangor*
12. Comber Earlies PGI Area
13. Strangford Lough ASSI
14. Echlinville Distillery
15. Copeland Distillery
16. SERC Bangor (key collaborator)

**Denotes annual event/festival*

Sustainability in the Food and Drink Sector

Sustainability, not featured within the initial Plan as a topic, is now a key element within this updated Plan due to increasing importance to both the sector, public and Council.

Taking food waste as one example which impacts all, from businesses to individuals, as of 2020, UK trends, whilst showing a downward trajectory, acknowledged much is

to be done as part of the sustainability discussion. Within the supply chain, food waste makes up 30% of the total UK food waste, post-farm gate, with a value of £5billion, with the hospitality and food service sector sitting at 18% waste levels. For every 1kg of food waste generated, there are 3kg of co2 created. Research indicates that 81% of the UK population care about climate crisis, with almost a third (32%) directly linking food waste to having impact on the environment.⁴ For us all there is much to do.

As a local government authority and following its declaration of a Climate Emergency in February 2019, ANDBC launched its Roadmap to Sustainability in March 2021. This outlines the Council's commitment to the global Sustainable Development Goals including actions specifically relating to the food and drink sector. Its goal is to

"Promote and support a Sustainable Food System by considering the influence we have in using our buying power and community relationships to encourage healthy and sustainable food production, and consumption and encouraging the use of seasonal, local produce, promoting ways to reduce food waste, providing land and support where possible for community growing."

It goes on to state:

"We believe that to make good food a defining characteristic of where you live depends, ultimately, on ensuring healthy and sustainable food businesses - from producers and processors to retailers and caterers - are mainstreamed as part of a revitalised local food economy. Putting good food entrepreneurs and enterprises at the heart of local economic development and promoting them to consumers not only ensures that buying healthy and sustainable food becomes the easy choice but also creates jobs, businesses and prosperity while regenerating high streets and city centres".

ANDBC is a member of 'Sustainable Food Places' and a key goal of the Council's Community Plan (The Big Plan) is to ensure the longevity of Sustainable Food in the borough. Additionally, ANDBC has joined as an ambassador for WRAP – Guardians of Grub, to promote and assist sustainability within the sector.

Within our Community Planning Partnership, we are keen to take a 'sustainable development approach' to sustainable food. We have aligned our sustainable food priority with priorities aimed at addressing economic inequality (poverty) and health inequalities (healthy weight). We want people in Ards and North Down to have access to good quality, high nutritional value, local, low cost, low waste and environmentally sustainable food.

Over the four-year period of this Plan the aim is to work towards improvement of sustainability across the sector; encouraging and identifying where it can be sustainable across a variety of areas and support moves to more sustainable practices. It will also seek to clarify, where possible, what sustainability means within the sector as 'one shoe fits all' is not the case. This was further highlighted in consultations with external trade bodies. *Appendix 6 – Sustainability objectives within ANDBC*

⁴ WRAP 2020 UK trends survey

Further to this the Council's Sustainable Food Growing Strategy 'Let's Grow Together' 2021 -32 recognises the wide-ranging benefits of community growing and through this strategy seeks to inspire, promote and support community growing across the Borough.

Environmental Health within the Sector

Alongside the quality reputation of our produce is the importance of safety. ANDBC's Food Safety Officers will continue to work alongside the sector to protect the health of residents and visitors in a variety of ways.

At present ANDBC supports 2210 registered food businesses (including approx.145 home caterers/artisan food producers). This is achieved through the provision of information and training thus ensuring that compliant businesses are not disadvantaged by non-compliant traders. In addition, promotion/enforcement of schemes such as the Food Standards Agency (FSA) national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS), provides information to customers about establishments' hygiene standards which is a legal requirement.

Appendix 7: Environmental Health within the Food Sector

Markets

Markets can be viewed as 'community events' that bring consumers and producers together to learn, share and enjoy local and regional produce as well as value-added food products. However, they are also seen as a key part of a successful food and drink destination.

As short-chain distribution channels, local food and drink markets provide economic benefits to participating producers as well as opportunities to develop value-added products and educate consumers about farming and local, seasonal, and sustainable foods.

The Borough has three food and drink markets, with a strong theme of local/artisan produce, that play a key role in our local food and drink scene. These are Market Fresh in Bangor, Portaferry's Market on the Square and Comber Farmers' Market. All run monthly, with additional seasonal/twilight markets, and/or participate in ANDBC's seasonal festival activities via producer attendance. Additional markets are held weekly in Bangor and Newtownards with a lesser level of artisan produce.

Approximately 25% of the current 100 strong Taste AND food and drink network members regularly attend markets within the Borough and neighbouring districts. Within the Borough, Market Fresh in Bangor has established itself as the largest monthly market for artisan producers with around 20 network members attending. Portaferry and Comber both have regular patronage of eight to 10 members, with both these markets pulling artisanal traders from across County Down. Saintfield and Banana Bloc market (East Belfast) are two examples of external markets with significant attendance from Ards and North Down businesses/producers.

It is important to note that the Borough markets operate under a wide range of conditions. Only the smallest, Bangor, is operated by the Council, with all others under

differing independent structures. Overall, success and sustainability are important to the development of the local food and drink sector and as an element of the visitor destination. It should be highlighted that the pandemic lockdowns yielded the development of around a dozen highly successful new producers who began trading at our food and drink markets and continue to operate and grow as a result.

To determine a way forward for Borough markets, consultation with representatives from each market took place in January 2023. The primary outcome of this consultation was the need for an independent exercise to be undertaken to assess existing markets, and scope best practice, with the aim to determine the most suitable development for markets within the Borough, and the resources necessary to do so.

Food and Drink Experiences and Events

Experiences

As noted in the Fáilte Ireland Food and Drink Strategy, 2018–2023, a density of “foodie” experiences “is what makes a successful food destination”. Consultation undertaken as part of the Food and Drink Destination Development Plan echoed this, highlighting the strong desire to see a continued development and expansion of food and drink tours and experiences. The delivery by ANDBC, with local eateries and producers, of initiatives such as ‘Local Food Showcases’, ‘Meet the Makers’, ‘Food and Drink Showcases’ and food and drink tours, many that developed and were delivered whilst exiting from pandemic lockdowns, have repeatedly proved successful within the sector, and have seen strong customer uptake.

Support from ANDBC should continue, where required, for example within the creation of independently operated food and drink tours or experiences alongside experiences where food and drink is an ‘add on’ to an existing activity to create new stand-alone experience. This approach anchors food and drink within visitor activity whilst extending the portfolio of experiences within the Borough.

Appendix 8 - Food and Drink experience development

Events

Events have been identified within the research as a must within the development of a food and drink destination, including the need for an established annual calendar of activity. The ANDBC Borough Events Strategic Direction (2021-26) identified food and drink as a key theme for events development. Comber Earlies Food Festival and Tide and Turf Portavogie were categorised as ‘Growth’ events with potential development as Borough Food Festival/s.

One-off or bespoke food and drink events, either Council or independently run, are all crucial to destination development. Events showcase the sector, support businesses, and provide visitors and locals with the opportunity to enjoy local food and drink on days out. The Council will continue, subject to budget, to develop the two key festivals: the Comber Earlies Food Festival (summer), and Tide and Turf Portavogie (autumn) with supplementary activity in and around the key event date(s) including the Chilli Plant Festival in September. Local food and drink should be a key feature of content where appropriate across other Council event activity. The opportunity to link growing

(and catching) food, cooking it and eating (and sharing) it has room for expansion using local venues to showcase producers.

Appendix 9 - Food and Drink events

Trade Shows

Attendance at events, such as Balmoral Show, provides the opportunity for Taste AND to showcase our quality produce at a national level and offer local providers opportunities for trade buyer engagement, both at national and local level. Since trade show Covid-19 restrictions were uplifted, Taste AND has had presence at five shows, proving successful for both attendees through sales and leads, and ANDBC developing the Taste AND recognition. These opportunities have effectively turned these participant artisan traders into ambassadors for the food and drink destination and have grown relationships among producers, helping create new collaborations and product development. Maintaining presence at the shows is deemed valuable going forward within budgetary limitations.

Appendix 10 - Trade Shows

Building the Food and Drink Community

The aspirations of the Food and Drink Destination Development Plan (2023-2027) will not be deliverable by the Council alone. Key to success will be the commitment and drive of the people from the local food and drink sector. The necessity of building a network from across the local food and drink sector was recognised in the first plan as key to achieving this.

In 2019 the Taste Ards and North Down Food and Drink Network was established with 42 members. The Network met four times in late 2019/early 2020, before the national pandemic effectively cancelled in-person interaction, where it was agreed a Network Committee, representative of the Network, would form to guide key developmental decisions and priorities. The Committee and Network have now reconvened and are scheduled to meet a minimum of four to maximum six times annually.

Despite a two-year hiatus of meetings during Covid-19, annual Network registration continued to grow between 2020 and 2022. In January 2023 registration membership was recorded as 99 businesses (44 producers, 35 restaurants and hospitality, nine independent retailers, eight attractions/tour guides and three markets). It is anticipated that Network membership will stabilise at around 90-120 annually with their input over the next four years key to achieving the measures of success.





Appendix 11 – Taste AND Food and Drink Network

The Food and Drink Development Framework



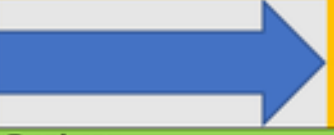
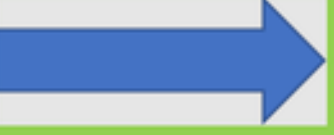


The combination of tourism and territory assets, capacity factors and local food and drink experiences build the components of the local food and drink sector. Initially evaluated in 2018, these are adapted and re-assessed as follows for 2023-2027 within the following framework.

Territory Assets

Green	On track/progress
Amber	More progress needed
Red	Poor improving/not improving

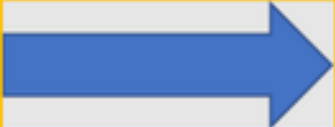
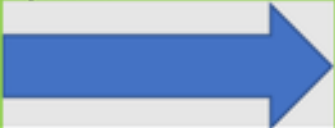
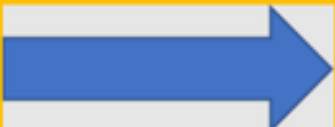
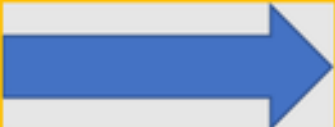
<p>Natural Resources Resources; landscape, agricultural base, and climatic conditions.</p> 	<p>Very Strong and improving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The natural and agricultural resources of the borough continue to be strong. • Many businesses are engaged in the Sustainable Tourism and Sustainable Food Places groups, both part of ANDBC's Roadmap to Sustainability and The Big Plan (Community Plan). • Nature friendly farming is fast growing and led by key network members.
<p>Identity Extent of identity in the territory; cultural identity: local character is imprinted on the local food and drink offer.</p> 	<p>Average with an improving picture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two distilleries and two breweries lead on local identity. • Taste Ards and North Down identity is helpful but needs to become a more usable local brand. • Food and drink festivals are helping to shape identity on local food heritage.
<p>Provenance Provenance: core food offer of the area is of authentic to origin.</p> 	<p>Average with positive signs of improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is more to Ards and North Down than the key strengths of Portavogie seafood and Comber Earlies PGI. • Local beef production and butchery is now highly reputable at a NI and increasingly Ireland/GB level. • Bread and health food innovation are increasingly stronger year by year.
<p>Community There is a group of key food and drink professionals and players to build a network around.</p> 	<p>Strong with marked Improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The food and drink Network has grown from 46 members to approx. 100. Members have increasingly engaged in the strategic development of the food and drink sector; they have also formed a food and drink committee. • Local chefs are increasingly visible at a NI and GB level. • Farmers and producers increasingly participate in local food and drink media programmes. • Businesses are increasingly active as leaders in other non-borough food and drink groups. • Links to the Council's community growing strategy 'Let's Grow Together' could be strengthened.

Sectoral Capacity

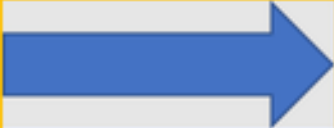


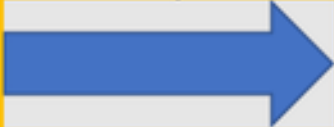
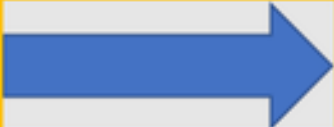
<p>Enablers Government/Agency support for local food and drink stakeholders.</p> 	<p>Average and limited</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Businesses are exposed by energy crisis and inflationary pressures. • Limited ability of local authorities to fill the re: gap of lack of regional government. • Good technical support from bodies such as FoodNI, NIFDA, HU etc.
<p>Collaboration & Innovation Innovation across the sector.</p> 	<p>Average and improving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing evidence of collaboration between producers re: product creation. • Healthier food and drink produce from many companies. • Number of food and drink awards points to more innovation.
<p>Supply Chain* Links between producers, retailers and restaurants that facilitate local food finding its way to customers.</p> 	<p>Average and improving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of farm shops and quality independent food retailers across the borough indicate an increased pathway to consumers. • Restaurant members of network increasingly skilled at signposting use of local produce.
<p>Local Produce: The range and quality of local produce available to locals.</p> 	<p>Strong and Improving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant number of new start-up companies since 2018 particularly with "lifestyle products" involving coffee roasting, granola, luxury confectionery and high-end baking. • Increased range from pre-pandemic success stories in drinks and dairy.
<p>Skills & Education* Skilled labour locally available for producers and hospitality trade.</p> 	<p>Poor with recent marked decline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU staff exit issues coupled with pandemic, especially younger cohort, conspired to cause sectoral problems. • Hospitality deeply impacted by inability to attract and maintain staff. Result, reduced opening and increased 'burn out'.
<p>Export* Pathway to export markets/regional marketplace.</p> 	<p>Average with breakthroughs at regional and international level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties with Brexit and new trading landscape being overcome. • Success for distilleries in international markets. • Clear evidence of Regional and RoI supermarket success amongst sauce, dairy and beef producers. • Difficulty for new producers to scale up and make the leap to 'supermarket ready' production where a desire.
<p>Ambassadors Local chefs, "makers" and other professionals exist to develop the area into a food hub.</p>	<p>Average with an improving picture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restaurant talent increasingly recognisable on local scene. • Key players in beef and baking sectors growing.


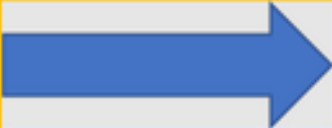
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Big names' behind some produce, particularly sauce producers and local dairy. • Food and drink champions via key local independent retailers.
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Tourism Assets

<p>Attractions Range of food and drink attractions/places of interest.</p> 	<p>Average with developing increase in range</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Echlinville and Copeland Distilleries have developed popular new visitor facilities and range of experiences. • New food related attractions have opened at the Walled Garden Helen's Bay and Ballycopeland Windmill. • There is a perceived lack of opportunity and funding to develop new attractions.
<p>Landscapes The opportunities provided by our landscape to enjoy quality food and drink in the outdoors and in unique places.</p> 	<p>Strong</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key areas of strength: the eastern shore of Strangford Lough, Castle Espie, Mount Stewart, Donaghadee, Greyabbey and Helen's Bay to Bangor. • Improved facilities at 'honey pot' sites to picnic are notable.
<p>Hospitality Range and quality of hospitality establishments.</p> 	<p>Average with evidence of improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Michelin Guide listed restaurants; Noble (Holywood), Balloo House (Killinchy) and No. 14 at The Georgian House (Comber). • Donaghadee's restaurant scene continues to thrive with growth ahead of other towns. • Recent new restaurants in Greyabbey and Portaferry. • Significant investments in existing and new restaurants/hospitality in Holywood, Bangor and Crawfordsburn.
<p>Connectivity/Accessibility Accessibility to producers and places to experience local food and drink production.</p> 	<p>Average with limited opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Producers have had limited opportunity/funding to incorporate facilities to accommodate visitors. The exceptions, Ballyboley Dexters and Flavour First, who run small experiences and tours. • On site farm shops have increased in number, pointing to a potential route to more accessibility. • The borough has lost two independent cookery schools in recent years. Potentially a small school to open in Helen's Bay in the near future.

The Food Experience

<p>Gastronomy Area's reputation for quality gastronomy.</p> 	<p>Moderate but gradually improving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reputation of around a dozen local restaurants in Holywood, Donaghadee and Comber, growing regionally. • Numbers of special gastronomic activities have increased.
<p>Retail Visibility Presence of local produce in markets and retailers.</p> 	<p>Moderate and rapidly improving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approx. 20-30 artisanal producers in the borough are regularly found at local markets in Comber, Bangor and Portaferry. • Increase in farm shops and high-quality local delicatessen outlets particularly in Bangor, Donaghadee and Holywood, providing more access to local produce as alternatives to supermarkets.
<p>Resident Buy-in Local produce is recognised and supported by residents.</p> 	<p>Moderate but needs improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shift to support local produce during pandemic has stalled due to inflationary pressures. Recognition that locally there is an increase in the use of food banks. • Market footfall has declined, partly due to inflationary costs and artisanal producers being selective about market attendance. • Ability to extensively sign post is limited.
<p>Local Brand Recognition Local produce has a recognisable brand/identity.</p> 	<p>Moderate but lacking improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Taste AND identity is limited and needs further exploration/development. • Plan required for scope of implementation including criteria and roll out of Taste AND identity. • Some larger local brand names have established household names, but smaller producers struggle.
<p>Events Visibility of local produce in food festivals/experiences.</p> 	<p>Moderate and improving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The continuation of Comber Earlies Food Festival and rebranding of Tide & Turf Portavogie present significant opportunities for local producers. • A 'local first' approach and consistency of events schedule in the events calendar is needed for development. • Opportunity to link growing (and catching) food, cooking it and eating (and sharing) it has room for expansion using local venues to showcase producers.
<p>Bookable and Accessible Activity Visitors can access local produce through experiences.</p>	<p>Moderate and improving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow progress through Covid-19 years. • Number of experiences is edging up year on year, most notably through restaurants and distilleries. • Opportunities to dine in unique locations received well during 2022 pilots.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local food showcases are popular. • Local City/Town Food and Drink Tours received positively and growing.
<p>Tourism Facilitates Local Food Tourism enables reach and growth of local produce.</p> 	<p>Moderate and Improving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism has facilitated a local first policy in events and experiences. This will take time to embed. It also requires loyalty from local producers to attend local events. • More partnership required with restaurants to embed the local produce message via planned activity.

The Food and Drink Destination Proposition

Set within the wider destination proposition of the ITDRS, the food and drink destination proposition will continue to reflect:

- Quality, innovative artisan food and drink based on authenticity and tradition.
- Quality, authentic eating, dining and food and drink experiences, that are 'of the place'.
- Quality, fresh, sustainable produce.
- Quality, award winning businesses.

Key Markets and Segments

Within the period of the plan the following are identified as the key markets and segments that will be the focus across the plan's actions.

- Local - ANDBC residents and businesses.
- Domestic – Rest of NI visitors and trade buyers.
- ROI and GB - visitors and trade buyers.
- Mainland Europe and North America – visitors.

Where will we be by 2027?

Ards and North Down will continue a path to achieve its goal of developing a recognised and vibrant Food and Drink sector that is sustainable for businesses, showcased to visitors and supported by the local community.

At the time of writing this Plan, it is acknowledged actions need to be realistic in respect of lead delivery partner/s, resources (both physical and financial), collaborators, agency, and central government interventions. The findings of the research and consultation have shaped the development of the actions. The below actions are deliverable, through collaboration, during the lifetime of the Plan 2023-2027.

Action	Lead	Timeline
1. A fully embedded calendar of food and drink events and activities.	ANDBC	By 2027
2. An increase in bookable food and drink experiences within the Borough.	ANDBC/Sector	Annual activity
3. Development of Taste AND into a locally recognisable brand/identity (with accompanying brand guidance for implementation).	ANDBC/Sector	By 2027
4. Restaurants clearly signposting local suppliers and utilising a range of local produce.	Sector/ANDBC	Annual activity
5. RAI Food Destination Accolade.	ANDBC	By 2027
6. Investigation into the creation of resource platform for the sector e.g., online resources.	ANDBC with industry partners	By 2027
7. Exposure of 'Taste AND' via trade shows.	ANDBC/Sector	Annual activity
8. Delivery of annual awards lab (training session on awards applications) and winners' recognition event.	ANDBC	Annual activity
9. Delivery of trade and careers engagement week.	ANDBC with industry partners	Annual activity
10. Development of working relationships with industry e.g., Invest NI, NFIDA, HU, TNI, Food NI Visit Belfast, SERC, Ulster University, AFBI.	ANDBC with industry partners	Annual activity
11. Food journalists/bloggers content, food familiarisation trips - delivered annually.	ANDBC	Annual activity
12. Sustainability development (Sustainable Food Places, WRAP, training courses delivered annually by ANDBC or in partnership).	ANDBC/sector and industry partners	Annual activity
13. Delivery of 'Markets' future' planning report.	ANDBC	By 2024

Monitoring

The Plan will be reviewed regularly to adapt to changes and ensure it remains relevant. This is particularly important for the sector, as it continues to emerge from the impact of the global pandemic, and additional issues highlighted within the Plan. At the two-year stage of the plan a review will be carried out and the Plan updated accordingly.

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Appendix 1

Food Destination Development Plan 2018-21 – 8 Steps to Delivery

[Food Destination Development Plan AND 2018-2021](#)

Step to delivery	Status in 2023
Appointment of a Food and Drink Development Officer	In post from April 2019.
Establishment of a Food and Drink Development Network	Established September 2019.
Investigation of setting up a Food and Drink Resource and Innovation Hub	Considered as duplication of external food and drink organisation/bodies and improved collaboration on training to be developed.
Creation of Local Food and Drink Groups	Determined to be a dilution of the wider single food and drink network format. Non-council local sub-groups organically exist in specific areas and will continue.
Design and rollout of a Food and Drink Branding Strategy and Communications/Promotional Plan	Taste AND "logo" created. Development of forward path underway with network committee with brand guidance to follow.
Delivery of a comprehensive, three-year Action Plan, addressing amber and red areas on the Food Destination Framework for Ards and North Down.	As a result of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the sector this was not possible. Several areas individually addressed within the constraints of pandemic. RAG status re-assessed as part of the 2023-2027 Plan.
A tailored programme of support for sector capacity building linking to related Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy actions.	As a result of the impact of the Covid -19 pandemic on the sector support was tailored as appropriate through this period. Annual support, by way of training, development, awards labs, for example continue to be provided and adapted for sector development.
Contribution to Integrated Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development Strategy targets of 7,500 jobs created, a 10% increase in share of overnight trips to Northern Ireland and visitor expenditure of £82 million in the Borough, by 2030.	Ongoing.

Appendix 2

Food and Drink Award Winners (2022)

Company	Award(s)	Product
Copeland Distillery	International Wine & Spirits Competition	The Copeland Distillery Irish Gin, The Copeland Distillery Jones 1778 Navy Strength Gin, The Copeland Distillery Smugglers Reserve Rum, The Copeland Distillery Smuggling Nun Irish Poitin, The Copeland Distillery Vodka
	The Spirits Business Awards: Design and Packaging Master Awards 2022	Master Award for Smugglers' Reserve Rum
Totally Hot NI	Blas na hÉireann	Carolyn Stewart's Jamaican style Vegetable Patties (bronze), Carolyn Stewart Jamaican style Beef Patty (finalist)
Bow Bells	Blas na hÉireann	Raspberry and chocolate granola (bronze), Chicken & ham pie (finalist), Pork & apple sausage roll (finalist)
Counterculture Bakeries	Mckenna's Guide	Best in Ireland Award
Ballyboley Dexters	Great Taste Awards	Dexter beef pasture fed ribeye steak (2 stars), Dexter beef pasture fed steak sausages (1 star)
	Farming Life Awards	Agrifood Business Impact of the Year 2022
Indie Fúde	Blas na hÉireann	Blas na hÉireann producers' champion for 2022
	Great Taste Awards	Own Label All Butter Irish Shortbread (1 star), Own Label Onion Marmalade (1 star)
Papas Mineral Company & Longbridge Drinks Company	Blas na hÉireann	Papas Mineral Company Winterberry Cordial (gold), Longbridge Drinks Company Belfast Raspberry & Rose (gold), Longbridge Drinks Company Traditional Belfast Tonic (finalist)
Olive Tree Bakes	Tiptree World Bread Awards	Traditional Irish Wheaten (gold), Guinness & Treacle Wheaten (silver)
Springmount Farm	Great Taste Awards	Springmount Farm Honey (1 star), Springmount Farm Class A Free-Range Eggs (2 stars)
Grattans Fine Foods	Mckenna's Guide	Best in Ireland (Fine Food Retailer)
	Belfast Telegraph Business Awards	High Street Retailer of the Year
Hellbent	Scottish Retail Awards	UK producer of the year 21-22
	Irish Quality Food Awards	Chakalaka Sausage (Category Winner)
Corries on the Farm	Great Taste Awards	Corries Luxurious Steak & Onion Pie (2 stars),

		Corries Mince, Carrot & Onion Pie (1 star)
Clandeboyne Estate Yoghurt Company	Blas na hÉireann	Deluxe Natural Greek Yoghurt 450g for Lidl (Finalist), Blueberry & Granola Pot – Strained Greek Style Vanilla (Bronze)
	Great British Food Awards (1 award)	Clandeboyne Estate Madagascar Vanilla Greek Style Yoghurt (Highly Commended)
Habanero Steve's	Blas na hÉireann	Habanero Steve's Pineapple Napalm Chilli Jam (Bronze Award)
Mash Direct	Free From Ireland awards	Mash Direct Gluten Free Curry Skinny Chips (Gold), Mash Direct Gluten Free Potato Croquettes (Gold), Mash Direct Gluten Free Carrot & Parsnip (Silver), Mash Direct Gluten Free Beer Battered Onion Rings (Bronze), Mash Direct Gluten Free Carrot & Parsnip Carrot and Parsnip (Parent's Choice Award Bronze), Mash Direct Gluten Free Skinny Chips (Runner Up Overall Product of the Year)
	Great Taste Awards	Mash Direct Beer Battered Onion Rings (1 star), Mash Direct Champ (1 star), Mash Direct Chilli Baby Bakes (1 star), Mash Direct Skinny Fries (1 star)
	The Grocer New Product of the Year Awards	Mash Direct Gluten Free Skinny Chips (Finalist)
Rock a Doodle Do	Great Taste Awards	Rock a Doodle Do Banshee BBQ – Chipotle (1 star), Rock a Doodle Do Metallica Blackened BBQ - Apple Habanero sauce (1 star)
Simply Scampi	Great Taste Awards	Salt and Chilli Battered Prawns (1 star)
Echlinville Distillery	International Wine & Spirit Competition	Jawbox Classic Dry Gin/London Dry Gin Category (Bronze - NI)
	Irish whiskey awards	Dunville's 21-Year-Old Palo Cortado Sherry Cask Finish Cask No. 1197 at Overall Winner (Best Overall Whiskey in Ireland), Dunville's 21-Year-Old Palo Cortado Sherry Cask Finish Cask No. 1197 Single Cask 12 Years & Older (Winner), Bán Poitín - Poitín Category (Winner), Dunville's 20-Year-Old Oloroso Sherry Cask Single Malt Category: 16 Years & Older (Winner), Old Comber Single Pot Still Single Pot Still Category: 11 and Under (Winner)

	World Gin Awards	Weavers Dry Gin Classic Dry Category (Best in Ireland), Echlinville Estate Irish Pot Still Gin Contemporary Style Gin Category (Silver - Ireland)
	World Whiskey Awards	<p>Dunville's Three Crowns Peated Irish Whiskey. Irish Blended Category: No Age Statement (Category Winner),</p> <p>Dunville's Three Crowns Irish Whiskey. Irish Blended Category No Age Statement (Bronze - Ireland),</p> <p>Dunville's PX 12 Years Old Single Malt Single Malt Category: Under 12 Years (Gold – Ireland),</p> <p>Dunville's PX 10 Years Old Single Malt Small Batch. Single Malt Category: Under 12 Years (Silver - Ireland),</p> <p>Matt D'Arcy Irish Whiskey 10 Years Old Port Cask Finish. Irish Blended Category: Under 12 Years (Silver - Ireland),</p> <p>Dunville's PX 12 Years Old Cask Strength. Single Cask Single Malt Category: Age: Under 12 Years (Silver - Ireland),</p> <p>Dunville's 19 Years Old Oloroso Sherry Cask Finish. Single Cask Single Malt Category: Age: 13 to 20 (Silver - Ireland),</p> <p>Dunville's 20 Years Old Palo Cortado Sherry Cask Finish. Single Malt Category: Age: 13 to 20 Years (Silver - Ireland),</p> <p>Dunville's 21 Years Old Palo Cortado Sherry Cask Finish. Single Malt Category: Age: 21 Years & Over (Bronze - Ireland),</p>
	Great Taste Awards	Echlinville Irish pot still gin (1 star)

Appendix 3

Methodology of Taste AND Food and Drink Plan 2023-2027 development

- Consultees: Online survey - 33 businesses submitted responses via the online survey within the industry consultation, 31 of which were Taste Ards and North Down Network members. Also, sector relevant Economic Development Forum members.
- The following external sector organisations accepted invitation to consult: Food NI, NIFDA, Hospitality Ulster, SERC, Ulster University and Invest NI.
- Internal consultation within ANDBC included: Tourism Development, Events, Economic Development, Environmental Health, Sustainability, Licencing and Lands.
- Current aligned ANDBC strategies and policies: Integrated Tourism, Regeneration, and Economic Development Strategy, Borough Events Strategic Direction 'Heart and Soul', The Big Plan (the Council's Community Plan), Corporate Plan, Roadmap to Sustainability and Council's community growing strategy 'Let's Grow Together'.
[Let's Grow Together Strategy](#)
- External national sources included: Failte Ireland, Tourism NI, VisitBritain and DEFRA.

Appendix 4

Timeline - Taste AND Food and Drink Plan 2023-2027

- May 2022 - Taste Ards and North Down Food Network reconvened.
- September 2022 - Sector network member committee (#13) formed and agrees outline for a new four-year plan.
- November 2022 - Online consultation survey conducted with sector businesses.
- November 2022 - One-to-one meetings with businesses requesting such.
- January/February 2023 – Consultation external food and drink sector organisations and educational bodies.
- January 2023 - ANDBC internal departmental consultation.
- March 2023 - Taste Ards and North Down Food Network / ANDBC Draft Review.
- April/May 2023 - Draft amends made and approved by ANDBC HOST/CLT.
- June 2023 - Taste Ards and North Down Food and Drink Plan, 2023-2027, recommended to Council.
- September 2023 - Taste Ards and North Down Food and Drink Plan, 2023-2027, formally launched.

Appendix 5

Consultation Feedback

Consultation took place as outlined above (33 responses). Key results have been documented in the main body of the Plan. Additional top line consultation findings summary provided as follows:

Importance/Positive impact of activity developed during the lifespan of the initial plan 2018-2023:

- Development of main food festivals and new major food events considered by 88% at highly positive/positive.
- Creation of new food tours and experiences, attendance of Taste AND at trade shows and regional events at 82% at highly positive/positive.
- Creation of the Taste AND food and drink network 79% at highly positive/positive.
- Most negative - that Taste AND identity being weak/negative at 15% however for development 64% think this is a positive action.

It was highlighted by respondents the need to continue to develop and that more resources, financial and economic need allocated to ensure success. Additionally, that the Taste AND logo and the brand need to have more substance. It is not attractive enough for businesses to want to use in the current format.

Please let us know what you think the impact of these issues/developments are having on the local food and drink sector.

- Energy costs have had the most impact on businesses at 100% of respondents stating it had a strongly negative or negative impact.
- Recruitment and retention at 90% strongly negative or negative impact.
- Political instability and Stormont ranked third with 86% strongly negative or negative.

In terms of our local food experience, how would you rate the following aspects of our local food and drink sector?

- Only one fifth saw the area as currently having a strong reputation for gastronomy and needs built upon.
- Likewise, under a quarter felt local produce was well represented in local retailers/markets.
- With over 80% feeling "locals" do not support local producers when purchasing and have difficulties in access to local produce.
- 80% believed tourism is an enabler currently to achieving improvement in the sector.

Looking at our tourism assets concerning local food and drink how do you rate the following?

- Range and quality of hospitality establishments – 2/3's two thirds felt the area had a moderate level with one third viewing as strong.
- Over 50% felt more to be done in provision of producers and places to experience local food and drink.

Thinking about the Council's commitments to the food and drink sector. What do you think in response to the following statements?

- 100% of respondents either agree or strongly agree that the food and drink sector should remain a key economic driver priority for the council, over 80% strongly agree.
- 100% either agree/strongly agree a budget supporting delivery of the plan is essential.
- 94% consider Taste AND Food and Drink network is essential in driving council focus on food and drink related work.

Appendix 6

Sustainability objectives within ANDBC

A key action within the Council's Roadmap to Sustainability - [Roadmap to Sustainability](#) - is focused on Sustainable Food.

The Council's Sustainability & Climate Change Policy gives a commitment that the Council will carry out its activities and functions a manner which minimises any potentially negative climate change impacts and states that the principles of sustainable development will be integrated throughout all Ards and North Down Borough Council activities and meeting corporate priorities including, Prosperity, Environment, Opportunity, Life, and Excellence and includes developing a Sustainable Food Strategy for the Council and Borough following the Sustainable Food Places approach – [Sustainable Food Places](#)

Appendix 7

Environmental Health and the Food Sector

Food safety in the Borough is just as important as food quality. An effective and dedicated food safety team contributes to this by protecting the health of residents and visitors through the provision of safe food, the prevention and detection of food borne illness and food poisoning, and by ensuring that compliant businesses are not disadvantaged by non-compliant traders.

The Food Safety section is responsible for the enforcement of legislation applicable to food hygiene, food labelling and composition including food allergens. Following the pandemic and increased costs of living challenges that businesses face the Food Safety team works with food businesses to provide advice and engagement on their legal obligations.

At present there are 2210 food businesses registered of which approx.145 are home caterers/artisan food producers. Some of the home caterers/artisan producers sell their food at markets within the borough and at other events across Northern Ireland, such as Garden Show Ireland at Castle Gardens Antrim.

We promote the FSA national Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS). The scheme is designed to help people choose where to eat out or shop for food by providing information about the hygiene standards in restaurants, pubs, cafes, takeaways, hotels etc. It is a legal requirement to display the rating which must be readily seen and easily read by customers.

Appendix 8

Food and Drink Experience Development

During the period of the initial Plan, and under the various restrictions of Covid-19, initiatives were created/delivered by way of experiences to support the industry and have continued in the period of initial recovery. These were developed and delivered directly via the Council or through support to third parties to create and operate.

Examples include:

- SUPnic – Stand up paddle board and picnic of local artisan produce. EAGS (Embrace a Giant Spirit Tourism NI) brand aligned.
- Sup & Sip – Stand up paddle board follow by visit to a local pub to pull your own pint.
- Canoe and Cake – discover Strangford Lough on the water, followed by homemade cake in a thatched cottage. EAGS brand aligned.
- Donaghadee Food Tour – Hit the Road Tours take you on a nostalgic culinary tour of the seaside town.
- Bangor Brunch Tour – Hit the Road Tours take you to some of the best spots for brunch in Bangor.
- Afternoon Tea at The Walled Garden Helen's Bay – enjoy homemade delights in the beauty of the garden.
- Yoga and brunch at the Walled Garden Helen's Bay – a wellbeing morning followed by brunch made from ingredients from the garden.
- Sunrise SUP and Island Yoga session – this beautiful experience on an island in Strangford Lough includes a picnic breakfast made up of fresh local produce. EAGS brand aligned.
- Grow and Graze – pick your own apples from the orchard in Castle Espie then make apple cakes with Tracey from Tracey's Farmhouse Kitchen.

Appendix 9

Food and Drink Events

In addition to Comber Earlies and Tide and Turf Portavogie, annual events including, but not limited to, Sea Bangor and other tourism-delivered events provide the potential for food and drink to be part of the offering and highlight the best of Taste AND.

Where Council Services outside of Tourism and Events are delivering activity, an approach to consider integration of food and drink into programming content supports and develops the Food and Drink Destination. Examples include the Council organised Chilli Plant Festival at Bangor's Walled Garden venue which is delivered over several days each September. This event showcases local products and an exhibition that includes many different varieties of chilli plants from across the globe, in all different shapes, sizes and colours. Opportunities to further link growing (and catching) food, cooking it and eating (and sharing) it has room for expansion using local venues to showcase producers. Events run with assistance of Council funding, or third-party events and community grant funded organisations should be encouraged to develop use of "local" where food and drink forms part of their activity. Examples include Open House which has for several years embraced and advocated "local" artisan food and drink within its activity with its Sun Down Market.

Appendix 10

Trade Shows

Attendance at trade shows over the period of the previous Plan and to participate in 2023:

- The Balmoral Show Food NI Pavilion (2021, 2022, 2023)
- Honey Fair at Hillsborough Castle (2022, 2023)
- Historic Palaces Festival (2019)
- Game Fair, Antrim (2022)
- The Garden Show, Ireland (2023)
- Love Your Food Show, Belfast (2023)
- Blas na hEireann Irish Food Awards – Food Village (2022)

Key trade shows likely to be a focus, budget permitting, during the term of the plan:

- Balmoral Show
- IFEX Belfast
- Honey Fair, Hillsborough Castle
- Love Your Food Show, Belfast
- Garden Show Ireland
- Blas Na hEireann Irish Food Awards

Appendix 11

Taste AND Food and Drink Network

Registered members (calendar year 2023)

Business / Membership Category	Location
Producers (44)	
Akushla	Hollywood
Angus Farm	Greyabbey
Ards Brewing Company	Greyabbey
A Slice of Heaven Ltd	Newtownards
Ballyboley Dexters	Greyabbey
Ballycrochan Artisan	Bangor
Beechmount Farm/ Robert Boyle	Millisle
Bow Bells	Donaghadee
Bumble & Goose	Donaghadee
Cacao Patisserie	Bangor
Capparelli Cooks	Ballystockart
Choice Pizza Ltd	Portaferry
Clandeboyne Estate Yoghurt Ltd	Bangor
Corries Meats Ltd	Newtownards
Culture Bakeries Ltd	Bangor
The Copeland Distillery	Donaghadee
Earth Rainbow Limited	Bangor
The Echlinville Distillery	Kircubbin
Glastry Farm Ice-cream	Kircubbin
Glen Bay Shellfish	Portavogie
Habanero Steve's	Bangor
Hellbent	Hollywood
Hotties Chocolate	Comber
The Local NI	Newtownards
The Mallow Makers	Bangor
Mash Direct	Comber
McWhinney's Sausages	Bangor
Morning Glory Granola Company	Bangor
Moorcroft Foods Limited	Newtownards
Nitro Coffee Co	Comber
North Down Beef Company	Comber
Olive Tree Bakes	Bangor
O'Neill's of Strangford Lough	Portaferry
Papas Mineral Company	Bangor
PEPPUP Limited	Newtownards
Rockadoodle Sauces	Bangor
Roy Lyttle & Co	Newtownards
Springmount Farm	Ballygowan
The Strangford Lough Prawn Company	Kircubbin
Totally Hot NI	Bangor
R&C Taggart Seafood/Simply Scampi	Portavogie
The Walled Garden at Helen's Bay	Helen's Bay
Wild Heart Coffee Roasting	Newtownards
The Wild Sage	Greyabbey
Restaurant/Hospitality (35)	
Alchemy	Greyabbey
The Bull & Claw	Donaghadee
Captain Jack's Portaferry Ltd	Portaferry
Camphill Hollywood	Hollywood
Cousins Home Catering Ltd	Comber

Clandeboye Lodge Hotel	Bangor
Coast	Holywood
Coffee Angels	Newtownards
Daft Eddy's Restaurant & Bar	Comber
The Dirty Duck Ale House	Holywood
Grace Neills	Donaghadee
The Griddle by Angus Farm	Greyabbey
Herd NI	Comber
The Jamaica Inn	Bangor
Joxer Harrison Ltd	Holywood, Bangor
Lekker Kitchen Café	Greyabbey
Lynchpin	Holywood
Maxemoo Farmyard Café	Millisle
McBride's on the Square	Comber
The Nines	Bangor
Noble Restaurant	Holywood
No 14 at The Georgian House	Comber
The Old Post Office	Lisbane
The Old Inn	Crawfordsburn
Pier 36/Harbour & Co	Donaghadee
Portaferry Hotel	Portaferry
Princetown Guest House	Bangor
Smokin Goat	Kircubbin
Smoq Artisan BBQ	Newtownards
Sugarcane Cafe Bistro	Comber
Teppan Genie Japanese Restaurant	Newtownards
Tom's Dining Rooms	Bangor
Tuk Tuk Asian Bistro	Bangor, Newtownards
Underground Dining	Bangor
Wildfowler Inn	Greyabbey
Retailers (9)	
Grattan's Family Greengrocers	Donaghadee
The Peppery Cat Zero Waste Grocer	Bangor
Homegrown NI	Newtownards
Horner's Farm	Comber
The Good Food and Wine Company	Comber
Indie Fūde	Comber
Lightfoot Zero Waste Market	Bangor
Camphill Community	Holywood
Milliken's Fam Shop	Bangor
Tour Providers / Attractions (8)	
Tracey's Farmhouse Kitchen	Killinchy
Hidden Ulster Tours	Comber
Ballywalter Park Enterprises	Ballywalter
WWT Castle Espie Wetland Centre	Comber
Dander Down Tours	Bangor
Experience & Explore NI	Holywood
Clandeboye Estate & Courtyard	Bangor
Hit the Road Tours	Bangor
Associate Members (3)	
UUBS Food & Drink Business Development School	Belfast
SERC Hospitality and Catering	Bangor
Kim Close Nutrition	Bangor
Markets (3)	
Market Fresh	Bangor
Comber Farmers' Market	Comber
The Market on the Square	Portaferry

Food and Drink Network Committee

The allocation of places for the network committee is proportional to the annual membership structure from the 2022 Registration, broken down as below. There are currently 12 members with one vacancy.

- Producer Reps: 6 Places
- Restaurant Reps: 3 Places
- Retailer Reps: 2 Places.
- Tour Companies and Food Attractions Rep: 1 Place
- Markets Rep: 1 Place

The representative allocations will be reviewed in January 2024 and will be proportional to membership structure as of 31 January 2024.

Current Food and Drink Network Committee Members

Name	Sector
	Producer Reps
Lorraine Alexander	Ballyboley Dexters
Karen Boyd	Pizzado
Megan Hide	Copeland Distillery
Heather Jenkins	Slice of Heaven
Scott McWhinney	McWhinney's Sausages
Will Taylor	Glastry Farm Ice Cream
	Restaurant Reps
Sarah Cochrane	Pier 36/Harbour & Co/Bow Bells
Michelle Harding	Jamaica Inn
Vacancy	
	Independent Retailer Reps
Laura Bradley	Indie Fude
Gemma Montgomery Gaw	Grattan's Fine Foods
	Additional Reps
Karen Kane	Clandeboyne Estate
Paul Leyburn	Markets Group/Earth Rainbow

Unclassified

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ITEM 16

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Prosperity
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Tourism
Date of Report	25 May 2023
File Reference	TO/EV119 and TO/EV120
Legislation	n/a
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	NI Regional Food Programme (NIRFP) Funding Applications Update
Attachments	None

On 23 March 2023, Officers received notice that the Northern Ireland Regional Food Programme (NIRFP) 2023-2024 was open (subject to budget availability) and was inviting submission of applications for funding. The return date for applications was 6 April 2023.

The Fund

The overall aim of the NIRFP is to raise the profile of quality regional food and increase its consumption within NI, ROI and GB.

The objectives of the programme are:

- to assist the NI agri-food industry to develop and expand profitable and sustainable markets;
- to assist the development of a sustainable and thriving rural economy by raising the profile of quality NI food and
- to increase integration and efficiency within the NI agri-food supply chain through enhanced co-operation and communication between/ within sectors.

Unclassified

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The programme encourages all sectors of the agri-food industry to work together and states it will provide financial assistance for eligible additional activities.

Awards are made on a competitive basis and only eligible projects that are judged to have best met the programme objectives will receive funding. Hence some projects which are eligible in principle may not automatically be funded.

Applications were invited for projects occurring between 21 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 under four categories of support including:

Category 1: 'Regional Fairs/Exhibitions'

Category 2: 'Seminars/Workshops'

Category 3: 'Information Programmes' and

Category 4: one 'Generic Agri-Food Sector Promotional Campaign.

Any application under Category 1-3, as listed above, if successful, was to receive financial assistance of up to 40% of expenditure against eligible project items.

Applications

The Tourism Service submitted applications under Category 1. Two were successful in receiving Letters of Offer.

- Comber Earlies Food Festival - £9,022.50 (30% of eligible costs) and
- Tide and Turf, Portavogie - £8,796.60 (30% of eligible costs)

Event publicity, infrastructure and participation fees form the basis of eligible items for funding.

The match funds available to support these Letters of Offer are within the existing event budgets for 2023/24.

Due to the very tight submission window, Officers progressed the applications and Council is being notified retrospectively.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes the above funding update report.

Unclassified

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ITEM 17**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Corporate Services
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Strategic Capital Development
Date of Report	5 June 2023
File Reference	160127
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Strategic Capital Development Performance Report Q4
Attachments	Quarterly Performance Report – Strategic Capital Development

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 (for publication 30 September 2022)
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2022)

Unclassified

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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 quarterly basis as undernoted:

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Quarter 1 (Q1)	April – June	September
Q2	July – September	December
Q3	October – December	March
Q4	January - March	June

The report for Quarter 4 2022-23 is attached.

Please note that, unfortunately, due to the timing of reports some financial information has not been updated.

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.
- Letters of Offer from Dfl signed for Comber to Newtownards and Newtownards to Green Road Greenways and MoU finalised with LUF.

Emerging issues:

- Delays in statutory responses to planning are creating knock-on delays in programming projects.
- 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.

Unclassified

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council note the report.


Unclassified

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Quarterly Performance Report - Strategic Capital Development

Generated on: 05 June 2023

Last Update Q4 2022/23

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	Provide training sessions on the Implementation of the Capital handbook as required	Yes	Yes
	Support and respond through CLT, HOST, CPPB and SPFG (SCRG)	Yes	Yes
	No of Engagement sessions with potential partnering organisations (cumulative)	8	8
	% spend against budget	94.68%	100%
	Develop a standard template to effectively track the progress of active planning applications and responses from Statutory Consultees	Yes	Yes
	% staff attendance	99.78%	95%
	% staff reporting regular receipt of team briefings	100%	100%
	Develop and implement interactive reporting dashboard for all capital projects	Yes	Yes
	Establish a centralised repository for all Project Briefs and Business Cases	Yes	Yes

Unclassified

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ITEM 18**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity
Date of Meeting	15 th June 2023
Responsible Director	Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regeneration
Date of Report	30 th May 2023
File Reference	
Legislation	N/A
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below.
Subject	Regeneration Performance Report Q4 2022-2023
Attachments	Q4 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 (for publication 30 September 2022)
- Service Plan – developed annually (approved April/May 2022)

Unclassified

152

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 quarterly basis as undernoted:

Reference	Period	Reporting Month
Quarter 1 (Q1)	April – June	September
Q2	July – September	December
Q3	October – December	March
Q4	January - March	June

The report for Quarter 4 2022-23 is attached.

Please note that, unfortunately, due to the timing of reports some financial information has not been updated.

Key points to note:

- The review of the five City/town Masterplans has been completed.
- The review of the village plans is progressing well.
- Portavogie Harbour Environmental Improvement Scheme has been completed bar the design of the mural.
- The Covid Recovery projects have been completed.
- Small Settlement projects are progressing well.

Key achievements:

- The regeneration project at Portavogie Harbour has been well received by the local community.
- Community consultation on the Small Settlement projects has commenced and is proving to be positive.
- Two new play parks have now been installed in Portaferry and Cloughey using funding from the Rural Development Scheme.

Emerging issues:

- It is now understood that funding under the Peace Plus programme will not be available in the next financial year as there are still legislative and operational issues to be resolved by SEUPB. However, the Council will continue to work with EBR to develop projects which may be suitable for funding once it is announced, however, there is now concern over the types of projects that may be funded.

Unclassified**153**

- As yet the Council has still received no information from DAERA about a replacement scheme for the Rural Development Programme. This is most concerning.

Action to be taken:

- To continue to work with EBR to get a better understanding of the requirements of Peace Plus and then to carefully review the criteria to see what projects we may have that meet this.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the report is noted

Unclassified













18.1

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Quarterly Performance Report - Regeneration

Generated on: 30 May 2023

Last Update Q4 2022/23

Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	To deliver the town recovery plans and a rural recovery plan	6	6
	To monitor the compliance of the Rural Development Programme grant from the various applicants	26	26
	No of Urban/Rural projects to planning stage to access funding streams	9	7
	No of Masterplan reviews	5	5
	% staff attendance	92.45%	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	16	9
	To develop, agree, secure funding and commence delivery of a public realm scheme for Portaferry	No	Yes
	To agree detailed technical design for Marine Gardens QP with Bangor Marina	0	1
	To progress the Bangor Waterfront Scheme, to agree Operating Model with BYC	0	1
	To complete the Portavogie promenade scheme	1	0
	New Chambers of Commerce 2-year Business Plans	0	0

18.1

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Performance Data Traffic Light Icon	PI Short Name	Performance Data Current Value	Performance Data Current Target
	No of meetings with Town Advisory Groups to develop regeneration improvements	5	1
	Manage the full commitment of the Rural Development Programme budget	£223,125.00	£0.00
	% Business as Usual and Covid Grant with completed PPE's	0%	0%
	No of projects developed in partnership with EBR for Peace Plus funding	0	2
	Number of capital schemes commenced using funding from Covid Recovery Small Settlements Programme	3	3

Unclassified

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ITEM 19**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regeneration
Date of Report	25 May 2023
File Reference	160089
Legislation	n/a
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	The Moat Car Park
Attachments	Appendix 1 & 2 - Car Park Visuals Appendix 3 - Plans

1. Background

As Members will recall it was agreed by the Council to seek additional public realm works at the Moat. This was to include external lighting, railings and CCTV. As this is a listed building, input from the Historic Environment Division (HED) would be key in taking this project forward. HED has been consulted and has indicated what would be acceptable to secure a positive outcome from a planning application. HED has confirmed that additional lighting and CCTV would not be acceptable, however, railings in an agreed location would. Therefore, the addition of railings, upgrading of sections of the path and some landscaping has been included in the proposed planning application.

As previously reported, Alistair Coey Architects has been appointed to develop the plans for the public realm around the Moat and the adjacent car park with a view of applying for planning permission for both areas.

Unclassified

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2. Current situation

Coey's has now finalised the designs for the Moat public realm and Council officers have also consulted local residents adjacent to the car park on the proposals. The result of the consultation are as follows:

Residents Location	Comments
Anchor Watch	Looks Well. Would like 1). Height barrier 2). No overnight stays/caravans/motorhomes 3). Good planting needed
Anchor Watch	Overall acceptable but consideration should be given to provide yellow lines along Moat Entry. Height Restriction to Car Park. Ref: wider Moat scheme cutting of grass more than twice per year.
Anchor Watch	Overall, the design seems to have no major impact, which is positive, however would like it if possible, to have height restriction at entrance, yellow lines in Moat Entry would be helpful to stop parking of boats etc, as it is Anchor Watch's main access to underground car park.
Anchor Watch	Yellow lines on Moat Entry and Shore Street
Anchor Watch	The design looks well especially with the greenery. Worried about overnight campervans staying so a height restriction would be necessary. Also parking in Moat Entry is a problem double yellow lines would be necessary. Access to underground car park can be difficult at times.
Anchor Watch	Looks Good. Height restriction and no overnight parking
Anchor Watch	The design is acceptable to me.
Anchor Watch	We both like it – would need height restriction
Anchor Watch	Acceptable with 23 proposed spaces and installation to prevent overnight campervans etc and prevent parking issues at entrance to Shore Street.
Shore Street	If it is an asset to the town, it will be a benefit
Kock Eden	Objecting – could lead to Anti-social behaviour, Car Park needs to be closer to the Town. Flower beds are dirt catchers
Knock Eden	Supportive – would like seating on outskirts of car park to remain
Knock Eden	Supportive

Subsequently, comments from the Donaghadee TAG were sought and several members expressed concerns over the proposals to the car park and requested further information, discussions and consultation around these.

RECOMMENDATION

As the contract with Coey's is now finalised and as there is no consensus around the proposals for the carpark, it is recommended that the Council agrees:

- (1) To submit a planning application for the public realm works around the Moat to enable this part of the project to proceed and

Unclassified

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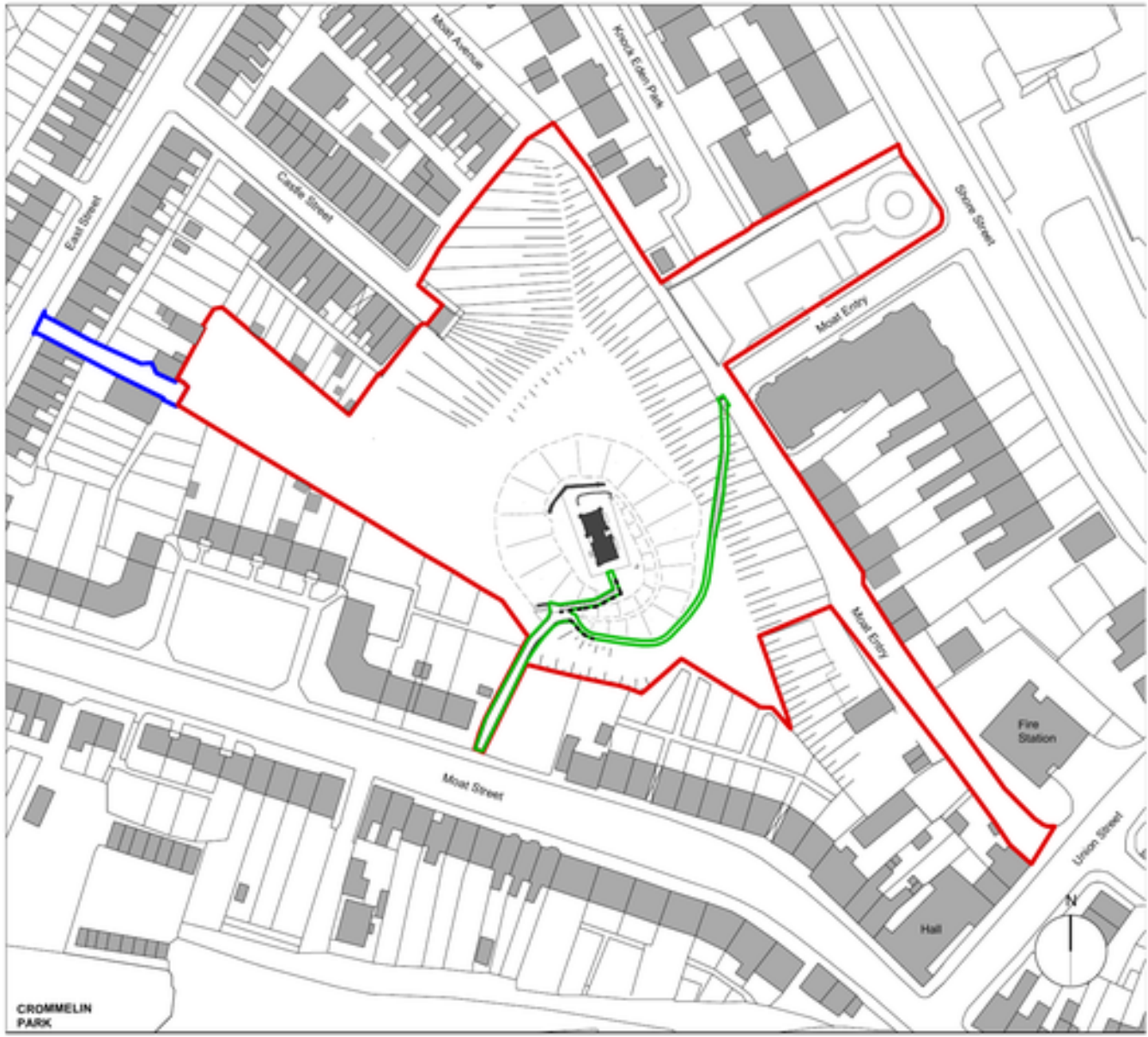
- (2) That after considering the comments of the TAG, agrees not to proceed with the car park proposals at present and continues discussions with the TAG in the future.

Appendix 1 - Moat Car Park



Appendix 2 – Moat Car Park 2





MOST RECENT UPDATE -
updated by
checked by

Alastair Coey Architects
 HISTORIC BUILDINGS SPECIALISTS
Alastair Coey & Co. Ltd. 14 Station Road, Belfast BT9 5DL, Northern Ireland
 Tel: 01234 90911 Fax: 01234 90912 Email: info@alastaircoey.com

Project Reference
**AND08
 PD01**

Scale: 1:1000 Date: MAR 23 Drawn by: MAG Checked by: ADC

CROMMELIN
PARK



- KEY**
- N
 - Improvements to existing paths and steps
 - Clean and repair to path
 - Refer to Landscape and car park drawings
 - Repointing historic stone walling and bridge where accessible from Council land
 - Repair to existing stone walling
 - Wayfinding signage
 - Interpretive signage
 - Hedge planting



Stone walls to be repaired in time-part of the courtyard of the listed Gunpowder Store

New kissing gate (example)

MOST RECENT UPDATE - 08/03/2023 updated by MMS checked by ADC

Alastair Coey Architects
HISTORIC BUILDINGS SPECIALISTS

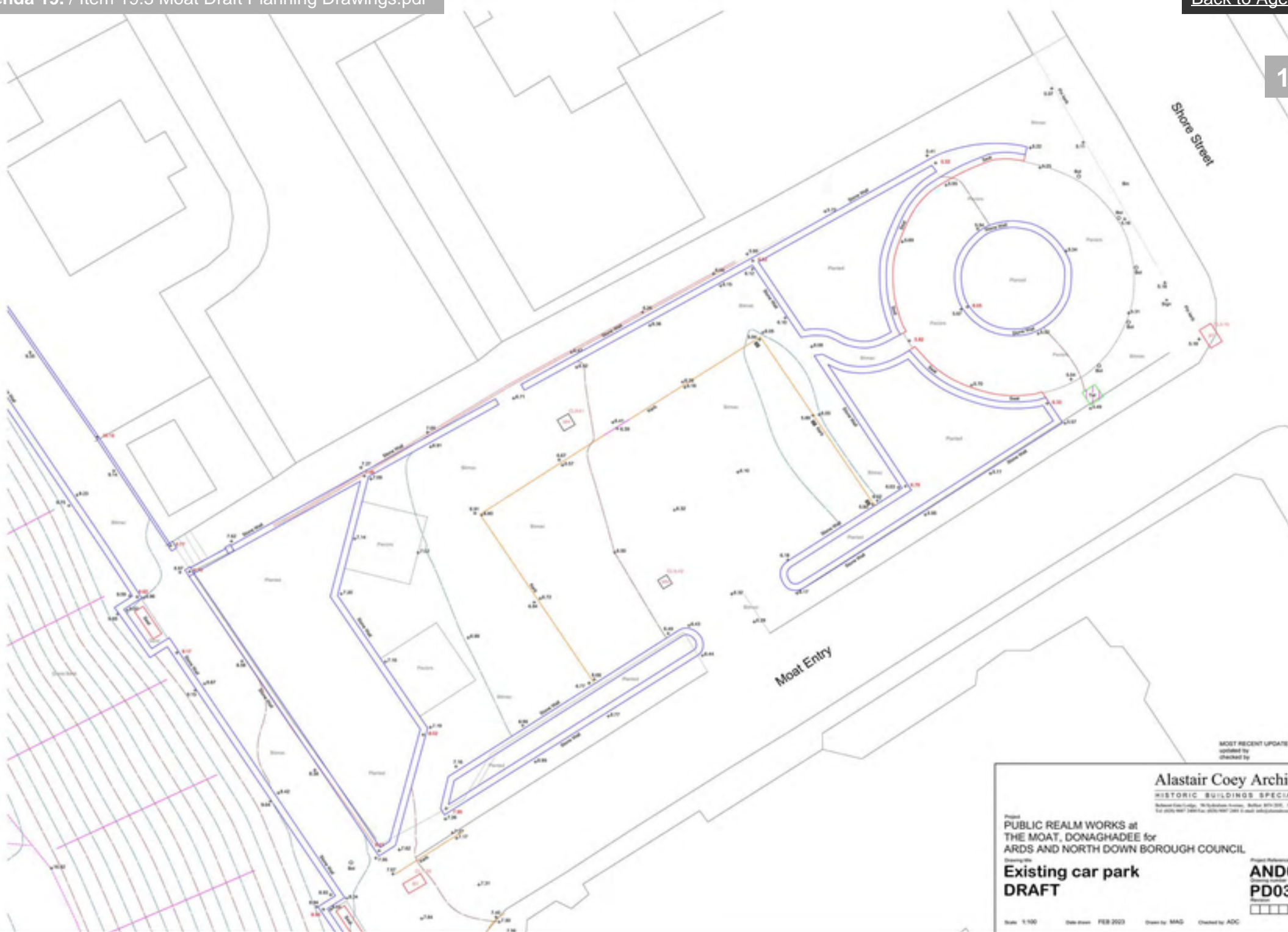
Richard Coey & Co. Ltd. 10 Southdown Street, Belfast BT1 5DT, Northern Ireland
Tel: 01234 444111 / 01234 444112 / 01234 444113 / 01234 444114 / 01234 444115

Project: **PUBLIC REALM WORKS at THE MOAT, DONAGHADEE** for ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Drawing No: **Proposed site layout DRAFT**

Project Reference: **AND08 PD02**

Scale: 1:200 (A1) Date: 08/03/23 Drawn by: MMS Checked by: ADC



MOST RECENT UPDATE:
updated by
checked by

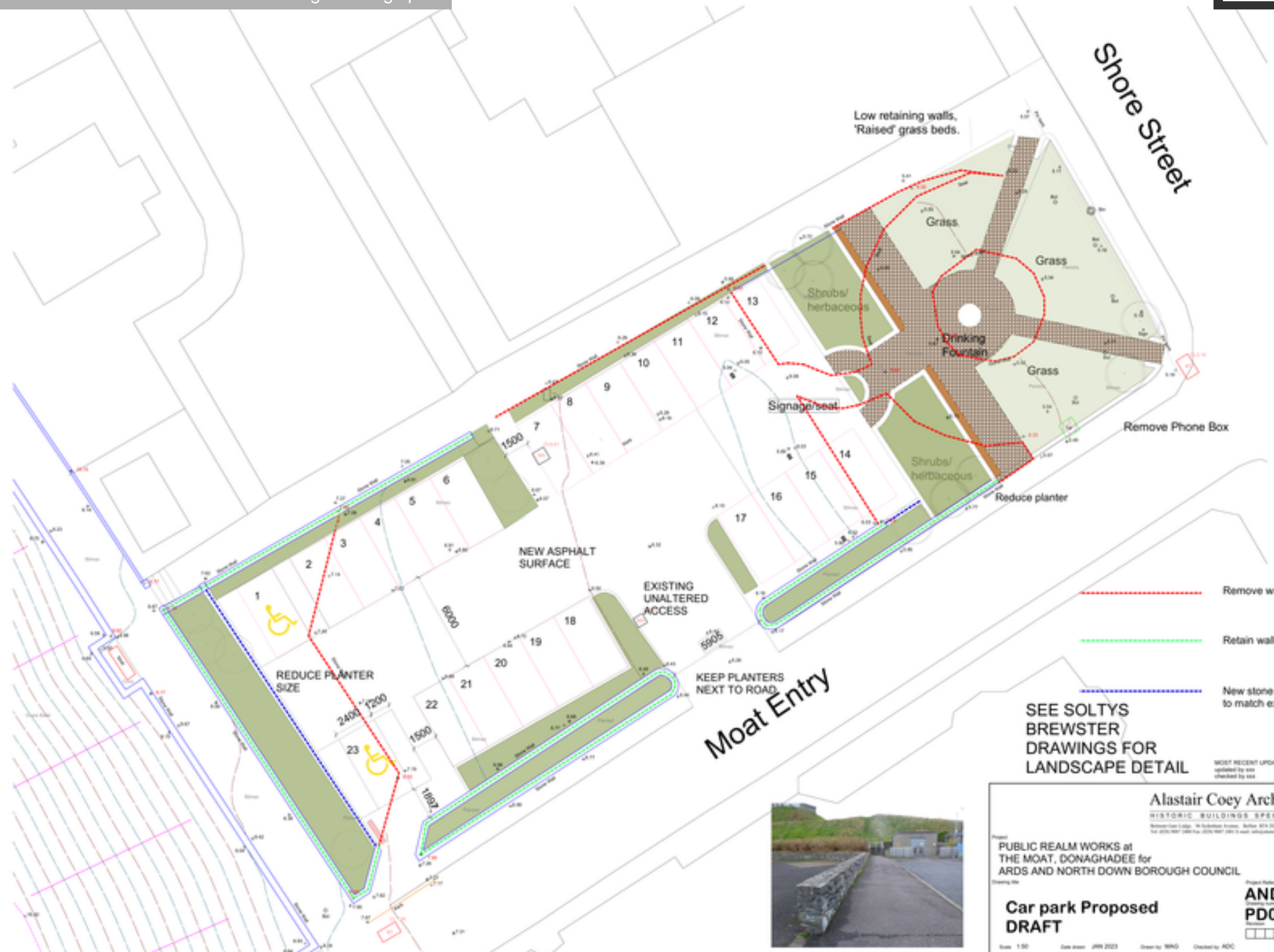
Alastair Coey Architects
HISTORIC BUILDINGS SPECIALISTS
Registered Architects, 36 The Old Mill, Ballinacorney, Dublin D15 2D2. Telephone: 01 854 7474. Fax: 01 854 7475. Email: info@alastaircoey.com

Project
**PUBLIC REALM WORKS at
THE MOAT, DONAGHADEE for
ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Drawings
**Existing car park
DRAFT**

Project Reference
AND08
PD03

Scale: 1:100 Date: FEB 2023 Drawn by: MAG Checked by: ADC



SEE SOLTYS
BREWSTER
DRAWINGS FOR
LANDSCAPE DETAIL

- - - - - Remove walls
- - - - - Retain walls
- - - - - New stone walls to match existing

MOST RECENT UPDATE - 06/04/2023
updated by: xxx
checked by: xxx



Alastair Coey Architects
HISTORIC BUILDINGS SPECIALISTS
Millstream Lodge, 16 Millstream Avenue, Ballyvaughan, Co. Wick, Ireland
Tel: 01276 847 000 Fax: 01276 847 001 Email: info@alastaircoey.com

Project:
**PUBLIC REALM WORKS at
THE MOAT, DONAGHADEE for
ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Project Reference:
**AND08
PD04**

**Car park Proposed
DRAFT**

Scale: 1:50 Date drawn: JUN 2023 Drawn by: WAG Checked by: ADC



Site plan 1:200 @A1

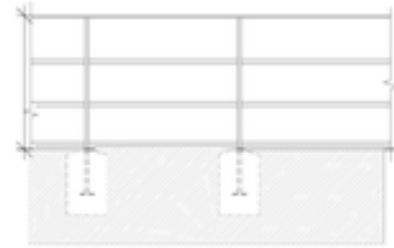
KEY

- Railings only to West Steps
- No works to Upper Steps
- Resurface to East Steps
- New surfacing to South Steps
- Coat of new rail to East Steps
- Repgrade to remove step & resurface in textured concrete

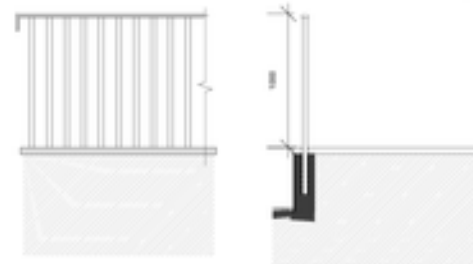
N



New handrails to steps (as noted) to match existing estate type railings



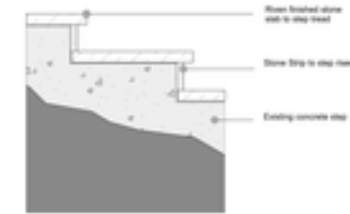
Detail 01 Estate Railing 1:20 @A1 to North, East and West steps



Detail 02 Vertical Railing 1:20 @A1

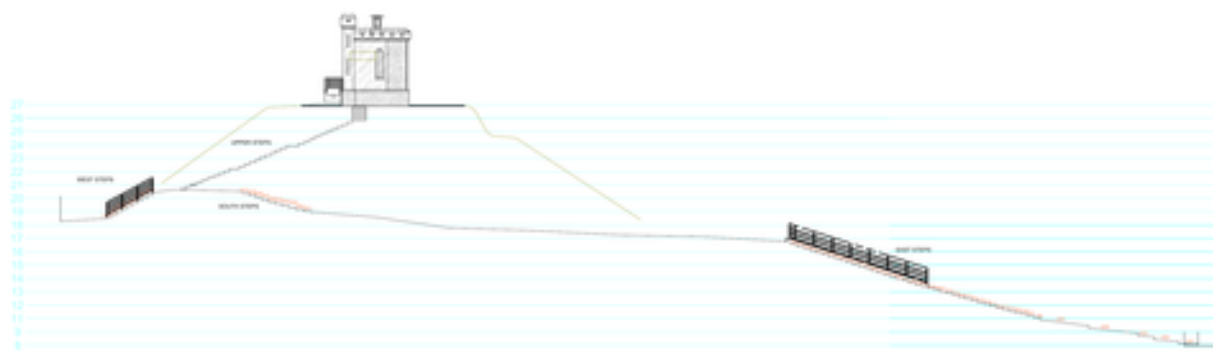


Stone as used for Curlewstone Stone Steps



Detail 03 Step overlay 1:10 @A1

All railings to fix into existing stone walls - no penetrations into the ground of the moat



Site section indicating proposed railings to east and west steps 1:200 @A1

MOST RECENT UPDATE - updated by MAG checked by ADC

Alastair Coey Architects
HISTORIC BUILDINGS SPECIALISTS

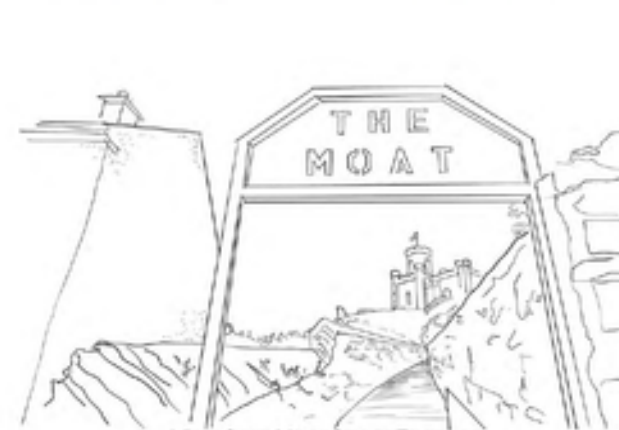
10 York Road, York, YO1 1QJ, UK
 Tel: 01904 477 200 Fax: 01904 477 201 Email: info@alastaircoey.com

Project: The Moat Public Realm at DONAGHADEE for Ards and North Down Borough Council

Details of step treatment and railings DRAFT

Project Reference: **AND08 PD05**

Scale: As noted Date: Mar 2023 Drawn by: MAG Checked by: ADC



View from the top of the mottle towards the harbour

View from the base of the mottle next to the car park

View from Moat Street Entrance- new railing is slightly visible



View from East Street Entrance- new railing not visible

New railing to match railing at the Gunpowder Store entrance

MOST RECENT UPDATE -
updated by ***
checked by ***

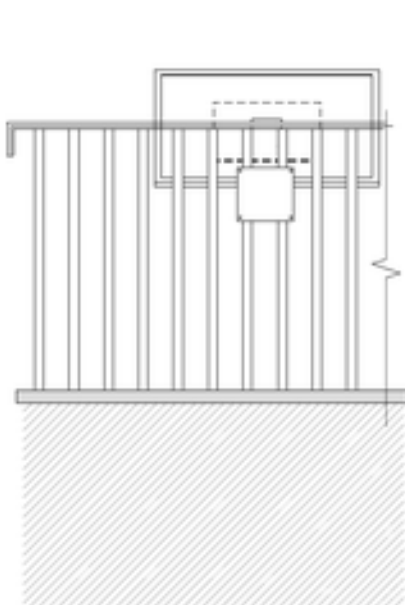
Alastair Coey Architects

HISTORIC BUILDINGS SPECIALISTS
Alastair Coey (Ld), Hilary Coey (P), Gillian Coey (P), Gillian Coey (P)
Tel: 028 302 2444 Fax: 028 302 2445 Email: info@alastaircoey.com

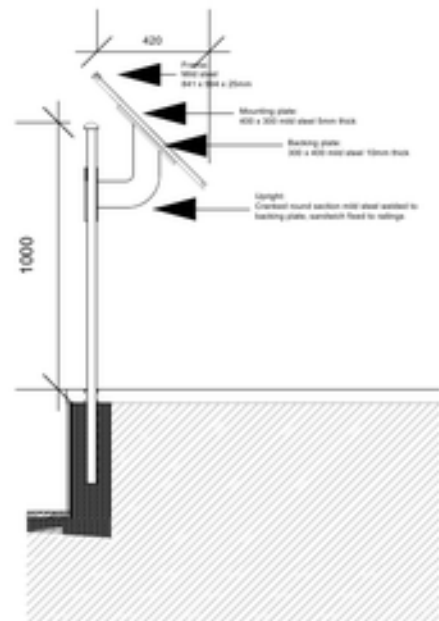
Project: PUBLIC REALM WORKS at THE MOAT, DONAGHADEE for ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Drawing No: **Views**

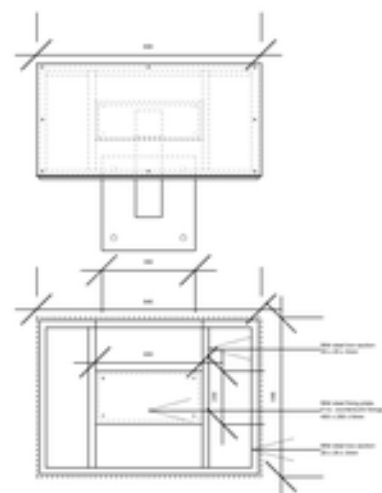
Project Reference: **And08**
Drawing No: **PD06**



Elevation to fence

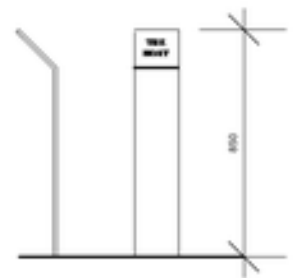


Section



INTERPRETIVE LECTERNS
One mounted to the new railings at the top of the motte, one to the wall in the car park

INTERPRETIVE LECTERN
To match existing at the Gunpowder Store



Wayfinding bollards proposed for the secondary entrances as indicated on the site plan to provide a collective identity to the site. Foundations to be minimal and carried out under archaeological supervision

WAYFINDING BOLLARD
Galvanized steel to match existing signage

MOST RECENT UPDATE - COMM20VY
updated by XXX
checked by XXX

Alastair Coey Architects
 HISTORIC BUILDINGS SPECIALISTS
 100-102 St. James Street, Dublin D04 2E2, Ireland
 Tel: 01 454 7000 Fax: 01 454 7001 Email: info@alastaircoey.com

Project
PUBLIC REALM WORKS at THE MOAT, DONAGHADEE for ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Drawing No
Proposed Signage DRAFT

Project Reference
AND08
PD07

Scale 1:20 @A3 Date drawn Mar 2023 Drawn by WAG Checked by ADC

Unclassified

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ITEM 20

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regeneration
Date of Report	25 May 2023
File Reference	RDP236
Legislation	N/A
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: N/A
Subject	Borough Wide Cycling Infrastructure
Attachments	None

As Members will be aware the Council was successful in securing funding from the Department for Communities, Department for Infrastructure and DAERA under the Covid Recovery Programme for interventions to encourage modal transport shift to healthy travel options including cycling and walking.

All the Town and City Advisory Groups, as well as the rural group, agreed that as part of their localised response to encourage healthier options and reduce dependence on the car, they collectively agreed to install cycling infrastructure to support these aims across the Borough.

Sustrans was commissioned to advise on what type of infrastructure would be suitable and on potential locations. Both the Rural and Urban groups agreed the interventions and their locations. Subsequently, cycle stands, shelters, maintenance stations and scooter racks have been installed in all towns and villages across the Borough.

In order to facilitate the installations, the Council needed to gain permissions from two private landowners to install the last remaining infrastructure by way of legal agreement as not all of the stands could be installed on Council or DfI land. These

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permissions have been agreed and the equipment installed on land at the Poacher's Pocket and the Old Post Office, both in Lisbane.

Once these are finalised this will conclude the cycling element of what had been a very successful Covid Recovery Programme.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council now formalises the legal agreements as outlined in the report.

Bangor City Advisory Group		
<u>TIME</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
6PM	Thursday 23rd February 2022	Signal
Attendees	<p>Mayor Karen Douglas Councillor Ray McKimm - Chair Alderman Wesley Irvine Councillor Alistair Cathcart Councillor Craig Blaney Councillor Stephen Dunlop Geoff Thompson - Bangor Chamber Frank Shivers - Bangor Chamber Marianne Kennerley - Bangor Chamber Jim Russell - Community Representative Philip McMillan - Faith Representative Alison Blayney - Kilcooley Women's Centre</p> <p>David Shivers - Urban Development Manager, ANDBC David Birch – Regeneration officer, ANDBC Sonia Tomblin - Assistant Regeneration Officer, ANDBC Glynis Poots – Administration Office, ANDBC</p> <p>James Hennessey – The Paul Hogarth Company Liam McGarry – McGarry Consultants</p>	
Item 1	Welcome	
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
Item 2	Apologies and Declarations of Interest	
	<p>Apologies were received from: Niall McVitty - DfC</p> <p>No Declarations of Interest were received.</p>	

Item 3	Masterplan Review Presentation- James Hennessey from Paul Hogarth Company
Action	<p>James Hennessey presented a recap of the Masterplan review process and then explained the suggested priorities for Bangor.</p> <p>The Committee then discussed points on the presentation:</p> <p>Alderman Wesley Irvine commentated that vacancy should be a key priority suggesting short term lease, dividing up space, pop ups to tackle it in the short term and investment will give some confidence. Marianne Kennerley said Boom Studios were looking for space and asked how to enable landlords. David Shivers confirmed that Pop up shops were successful in Comber and said private sector is the missing link in CAG</p> <p>The Mayor said car free days, cycling, pedestrian areas are important – changing attitudes, health of population, sustainable goals. Bangor needed to connect the City Centre with the rest of the City - perhaps a City wide brand.</p> <p>Councillor Craig Blaney commented that the high business rates on the properties in High Street are putting off potential businesses.</p> <p>Jim Russell commented on the 5 priorities and suggested another priority to be called Experience – making memories through experiences.</p> <p>Geoff Thompson commented that High Street, Abbey Street Dufferin Ave all doing well and filled with shops. He went on to explain that landlords are unwilling to engage with popups. He also added that the group should focus on delivery & outcomes be realistic about what we can deliver in the Masterplan.</p> <p>Councillor Alistair Cathcart suggested there should be 10% discount on rates and regeneration powers for vacancies. Adaptability with funding. Liam McGarry agreed that Bangor needed projects that are ready to go to match funding opportunities and David Shivers explained that there is budget to work up projects to get 'shovel' ready for funding.</p> <p>The Members suggested that DFi should be in attendance at the next meetings and the Mayor agreed and suggested the group should write to DFi and DfC for attendance to the next meeting.</p> <p>The Mayor, James Hennessey, Liam McGarry and David Birch left the meeting at 7.10pm</p>
Item 4	Minutes of previous meetings (Bangor Town Advisory Group) <i>circulated</i>
	<p><i>Previously Circulated: Bangor CAG minutes</i></p> <p>It was agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of proceedings.</p>

Item 5	Update on outstanding actions- David Shivers - Urban Development Manager
	<p>1.The Mayor stated that the CAG should be reviewing the Masterplan on an annual basis.</p> <p>ACTION- David Shivers replied that this was something he would be content to programme in.</p> <p>2. Bins at Mill Row; Councillor Ray McKimm referenced problems with the bins at Mill Row, causing obstructions and mess, David Shivers told him that ANDBC would internally find out who had responsibility to deal with this issue appropriately. Also Alderman Irvine requested this item to be added to the agenda at the next meetings.</p> <p>ACTION- RESPONSE FROM CRAIG BURNSIDE-WASTE COLLECTION OFFICER ANDBC</p> <p>Hi Sonia</p> <p>These bins used to be located in the alley way (Wolsey's Lane). Someone decided to place a large orange container (I'm not sure how or why they were allowed to do this) in this alleyway which blocked our collection vehicle from entering therefore our customers had to pull their bins up to mill row in order for them to be collected. Some of the bins at this location currently are not ours (private contractors).</p> <p>I have sent the following to several people now as bins causing an obstruction is not a council issue. I know that this is being considered by council but at present this is not currently something that we enforce. I'm assuming that if we take this on, additional staff will be needed to police this. Please see below...</p> <p>In this case, as the Council does not own the foot paths in the area, obstruction of the road/footpath is a Department of Infrastructure issue and not a Council one. Please see below.</p> <p>The Department for Infrastructure is responsible for ensuring the public road network in Northern Ireland is free from obstructions as far as reasonably practicable. If a person without lawful authority or excuse in any way wilfully obstructs the free passage of cars/ pedestrians along a road or street, that person is guilty of an offence. In such cases the Department for Infrastructure has legal powers and may enforce removal.</p> <p>You can use the below link to report and review progress online or contact the DFI directly using the below details.</p> <p>Clarence Court 10 - 18 Adelaide S</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • email: dcu@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk • phone: 0300 200 7899 (24 hours a day) <p>https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/report-obstruction-road-or-street</p> <p>ACTION-to be added to agenda.</p>

Action	Frank Shivers informed the group that Seagulls were getting into bins and pulling out rubbish. David Shivers said he should send the details to Greg Kenny Environmental Health Officer.
Action	<p>David Shivers suggested asking Craig Burnside if it has been reported to Environmental Health.</p> <p>3. Mayor requested a copy of Masterplan to be sent out to members,</p> <p>It was noted that the Masterplan was available on the Council Website</p> <p>ACTION-Sonia Logan to send members the link</p> <p>4. David Shivers told members he would call a single-item meeting in late November to discuss masterplan.</p> <p>ACTION- Masterplan review sessions were held in Nov.</p>
Item 6	Update on Covid Recovery and Revitalisation Funding- David Shivers -Urban Development Manager
	<p>Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme</p> <p>Overall –</p> <p>Total applications received: 478</p> <p>Total claims processed: 347</p> <p>Total: £714,705.18</p> <p>Bangor -</p> <p>Tranche 1 – 83 claims, £176,509.67</p> <p>Tranche 2 Part 1 – all outer boundary – 84 claims, £156,674.35</p> <p>Tranche 2 Part 2 – 8 claims, £6,264.22</p> <p>Project complete.</p> <p>Floral Sculpture</p> <p>Designed, constructed, and installed in 2021.</p> <p>Project complete. £10,000</p> <p>Solar Bins</p> <p>3no solar bins installed – Main Street, High Street and Pickie</p> <p>Project complete. £12,000</p> <p>‘Shop Local’ Town Centre Marketing Campaign</p> <p>Delivered across the 4town/1city in 2021 – including outdoor advertising, press, digital and print.</p> <p>Project complete. £17,706.50 (combined across all towns)</p> <p>Parklets</p> <p>3no parklet installed – High Street x2, Main Street x1</p> <p>Project complete. Approx. £75K – awaiting final invoice.</p> <p>Cycling Infrastructure</p>

	<p>Castle Park -1 Cycle Shelter & 1 Toast Rack Marina Area - 1 Cycle Shelter & Toast Rack, 1 Pump & Repair Station and 1 Scooter Rack Project Complete. £6,629</p> <p>Castle Park Lighting Scheme <u>Part 1</u>- replacement of existing lights to the area of Castle Park leading to Belfast Road. Project complete. £5,000.00</p> <p><u>Part 2</u>- work up a new lighting scheme for the remaining area of Castle Park where there is no provision at present. Drawings complete. Listed Building Consent applied. NOTE – this scheme will only proceed should funding become available in the future.</p> <p>Digital Touch Screen Information Point Located within the window of the public toilets at McKee Clock Arena – can be utilised from outside. Quotation in progress – supply and installation late March. Further email communications will be issued to CAG to agree content – within next 3-4 weeks. Project in progress, estimated cost £10,000.00</p> <p>Masterplan Review Conversations Marketing Campaign Delivered across the 4 towns/1city in 2022 – including outdoor advertising, press, digital and print. Project complete. £5,127.00 (combined across all towns)</p> <p>Comments from the Group; Solar bins well received</p> <p>Action Councillor Stephen Dunlop asked for feedback on returns and figures from shop local - Sonia Logan to action.</p> <p>Interactive Touch Screen Discussion re location of interactive touch screen David Shivers pointed out that it was important to procure now or we would lose funding. The Group has concerns about the location - NOTED</p> <p>Floral Sculpture The Group asked of the floral sculpture was going to be displayed again this year. David Shivers informed the Group it was in North Street Depot. Frank Shivers commented that they were reassured they could be reused and planted. Alison Blayney asked if Bangor in Bloom could plant it</p> <p>Action The Chair requested that their comments were sent to Stephen Daye asked if he could report back to the group.</p>
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Action	Marianne Kennerley requested an update on the planters and marquee from Project 24.
Action	Jim Russell expressed his concerns regarding the state of the solar bin in Donaghadee. He said it was rusting and unclean. Sonia Logan to chase up with cleansing team. Councillor Alistair Cathcart left meeting at 7.50
Action	Marianne Kennerley said the parklets used every day outside Boom Studios and great feedback. The Chair said one is filling with water and he will get back with further info
Item 7	Bins at Mill Street
	Discussed in Item 5 above – Update on Actions
Item 9	Any other business
Action	Frank Shivers requested the situation re Asylum seekers added to the agenda
Action	Marianne Kennerley has attended various meeting and groups regarding the Asylum seekers and said she would provide an update to the group.
Item 10	Date and Time of Next Meeting
Action	TBC
Item 11	Adjournment
	The Chair thanked all for attending and the meeting was adjourned at 8.10pm.

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Comber Town Advisory Group		
<u>TIME</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
6PM	Tuesday 21st February 2023	COMBER LEISURE CENTRE
Attendees	<p>Councillor Trevor Cummings – Chair Alderman Robert Gibson Councillor Philip Smith Councillor Patricia Morgan Liz Hamilton - Faith Representative Iris McBride - Comber Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>David Shivers - Urban Development Manager, ANDBC David Birch - Regeneration Officer, ANDBC Sonia Tomblin - Assistant Regeneration Officer, ANDBC Glynis Poots – Administration Officer, ANDBC</p> <p>James Hennessey – The Paul Hogarth Company Liam McGarry - McGarry Consultants</p>	
Item 1	Welcome and Apologies	
	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies were received from: Roy Murray - Comber Regeneration and Community Partnership (RM) Niall McVitty – Department of Communities Stephen Mills – Comber Community</p>	
Item 2	Declarations of Interest	
	No Declarations of Interest were received.	
Item 3	Presentation by James Hennessey of the Paul Hogarth Company	
	James Hennessey presented a recap of the Masterplan review process and then explained the suggested priorities for Comber. The following comments were made:	

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<p>Action</p>	<p>David Shivers to supply Comber baseline report</p> <p>The Chair began by asking about performance indicators and was there a measure of how people feel using the town</p> <p>James Hennessey replied that perception studies and environmental studies are key. The Chair agreed that a lot of the Towns activities were experiences.</p> <p>Councillor Philip Smith outlined 3 areas –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of infrastructure with growth of town and housing and rapidly growing Dundonald is opportunity for Comber but a potential challenge. Park and ride is planned – south side provides connectivity to lough but is a threat in terms of infrastructure i.e. GPs schools roads 2. Commuter area with infrastructure not fit for purpose with lowest GDP of anywhere in NI. The need to increase economic activity was highlighted. 3. Comber rec, cricket club, leisure Centre, parkrun – sporting activity elements, build on these activities. <p>David Shivers highlighted the necessity for the opinions of input of economic development and leisure departments. Possible hotdesking facility - encouraging this into the town would be an opportunity.</p> <p>Councillor Philip Smith said the Market during Covid produced change as younger shoppers were using it.</p> <p>Iris McBride said it was very important to be a weekly town, not just weekends – need to get commerce and rates from business.</p> <p>David Shivers suggested the missing link in TAG is a private sector representation.</p> <p>The Chair said the plan should look at town creating a coffee culture in heart of square.</p> <p>Councillor Patricia Morgan commented regarding 15 min Comber – expand on looking after what we already have, can we plant trees, are sports facilities good, wellbeing, not be over complicated. Repairs to pavement in Castle Street, small changes quality of place. Councillor Patricia Morgan suggested the need for planners at the meeting and agreed that the private sector needed involved with the TAG.</p> <p>The Chair concluded that access to the Lough and Castle Espie, connecting town to Castle Espie was important.</p> <p>David Shivers concluded by explaining the next Masterplan public engagement stage.</p> <p>James Hennessey, Liam McGarry and David Birch left the meeting at 7pm</p>
<p>Item 4</p>	<p>Minutes of previous meeting</p>

21/02/23

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	It was agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of proceedings.
Item 5	Update on outstanding actions- David Shivers -Urban Development Manager ANDBC
	<p>1. LABP -Local Area Biodiversity Plan update Actioned- all information regarding consultation for the Local Biodiversity Action Plan is now on ANDBC website</p> <p>2. Banners on roundabout/ cleaning -Actioned-response sent to TAG members 10/10 Response from Derek Brown Ards and North Down Section Office.</p> <p style="color: red;">Our Ref: MT143430-22Arrangements have been made to have the banner on the roundabout removed. With regards to the cleaning of the roundabout I can confirm that this area will be cleaned when resources and other competing priorities permit.</p> <p style="color: red;">I trust this reply is of assistance Kind regards Derek Brown Ards and North Down Section Office</p> <p>3. Meeting to discuss masterplan -Actioned masterplan conversations held in Nov</p>
Item 6	Update on covid Recovery and Revitalisation Funding-David Shivers-Urban Development Manager ANDBC
	<p>Comber – Tranche 1 – 28 claims, £61,169.46 Tranche 2 Part 1 – 3 claims, £6,264.22 Tranche 2 Part 2 – all outer boundary – 84 claims, £156,674.35 Project complete.</p> <p>Floral Sculpture Designed, constructed, and installed in 2021. Project complete. £10,000</p> <p>Solar Bins 1no solar bins installed – Bridge Street Project complete. £3,000</p> <p>'Shop Local' Town Centre Marketing Campaign Delivered across the 4town/1city in 2021 – including outdoor advertising, press, digital and print. Project complete. £17,706.50 (combined across all towns)</p>

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	<p>Parklet 1no parklet installed 24a The Square – in front of St Marys Project complete. Approx. £25K – awaiting final invoice.</p> <p>Cycling Infrastructure 1. Comber Square – Cycle Shelter & Scooter Rack. Installed. 2. Bridge Street Link – Cycle Shelter with Toaster Rack, Scooter Rack, Pump & Repair Station. Installed. Value – £9,905.95 Project complete.</p> <p>Comber Minor Environmental Improvement Scheme – Part 1 Project complete 2021/22. £25,449.15</p> <p>Comber Environmental Improvement Scheme – Part 2 Car Park at Leisure Centre Commenced January 2023 Completion 27 March 2023 (10weeks) Project in progress. Approx £100,00.00</p> <p>Masterplan Review Conversations Marketing Campaign Delivered across the 4town/1city in 2022 – including outdoor advertising, press, digital and print. Project complete. £5,127.00 (combined across all towns)</p>
Item 7	Any Other Business
Action	1. Chair expressed concern over Vandalism at Bridge Street Link. David Shivers informed the Group he has asked for the shelter to be removed, the cycle rack will stay. He confirmed he will ask the TAG in June to confirm another location.
Action	2. The Chair also raised the issue of flooding and agreed to contact Peter Caldwell
Action	3. An update regarding Laurel Bank was requested – Sonia Logan to contact Stephen Daye for an update
Item 7	Date and Time of Next Meeting
	TBC
Item 12	Adjournment
	The Chair thanked all for attending and the meeting was adjourned



Donaghadee Town Advisory Group Meeting

<u>TIME</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
6PM	Monday 20 th February 2023	Donaghadee Community Centre
Attendees	Adrian Kerr – Chair Alderman Bill Keery Councillor Gavin Walker Councillor Janice McArthur Councillor David Chambers Kate Boyd – Chamber David Shivers - Urban Development Manager, ANDBC Sonia Logan – Assistant Regeneration Officer David Birch – Regeneration Officer Glynis Poots - Administrative Officer, ANDBC Vincent McConville - DFI James Hennessey – The Paul Hogarth Company Liam McGarry – McGarry Consults	
Item 1	Welcome	
	The Chair welcomed the members.	
Item 2	Apologies & Declarations of Interest	
	Apologies were received from: Niall McVitty - DFC No Declarations of Interest were received.	

Item 3	Masterplan Review Presentation
	<p>James Hennessey presented a recap of the Masterplan review process and then explained the suggested priorities for Newtownards – please see attached presentation.</p> <p>James Hennessey began by saying Donaghadee could reawaken harbour – projects that can raise its profile to work toward the larger restoration.</p> <p>John Caldwell replied that in 2017 there was a marine report on rocky island – breakwater. He described an incident when a resident was injured and said breakwater must be a priority. He said this is a real opportunity for coastal protection money, without it the historic sea wall could be undermined. Make the harbour fit for purpose.</p> <p>Alderman Bill Keery said East border region dealing with coastal erosion John Caldwell said Peaceplus has a section for coastal erosion</p> <p>The committee advised that a Sportshub must be included in any future plans.</p> <p>Action John Caldwell to give James Henessey a list from Dec 2020 small working group.</p> <p>John Caldwell discussed restoration of walled garden and asked if it was listed. He explained £5-10K would buy it and said the community group would lease it off council and look after it. He mentioned that Nicola Lockhart Ards Business Centre would be interested in helping.</p> <p>John Caldwell asked about town centre boundary and James Hennessey replied that they will document the planning issue with this review.</p> <p>David Chambers enquired if the consultants could ask tourists what they like about Donaghadee and why they would come back. Liam said to speak to the providers of overnight accommodation and ask why are tourists staying and where are they coming from.</p>
Action	<p>David Shivers to speak to Tourism to get additional info on Hope Street, swimmers and cruise ships.</p> <p>Janice MacArthur asked if Motorhome visitors were surveyed by tourism Kate said as a trader the motorhomes do spend money and airbnbs are doing really well and booked out.</p>

<p>Action</p> <p>Action</p>	<p>John Caldwell asked about a camping and caravan site in original plan – he said it would be a revenue earner and ours is the only council without a council owned caravan park. James Hennessey said it was on the Commons plan and the Chair said they are looking at Cromellin. David Shivers to invite Andrew Dadley to the next TAG to discuss.</p> <p>Alderman Bill Keery said there is so much new housing in Donaghadee it would be beneficial to attract new business and look for industry to open up in town to create local jobs.</p> <p>The committee discussed evening economy and events staying open for longer. James Hennessey suggested said - what does success look like? Make the case to these businesses to encourage them to stay open.</p> <p>Liam discussed Purple flag accreditation regarding evening trading. In the South they paid organisations to run things in the evening as a pilot, however staffing can be an issue. Janice asked what towns have Purple Flag accreditation and Liam will provide a link.</p> <p>John Caldwell informed the committee that Donaghadee will be hosting the Ulster Scots Festival over 5 days and will have the Ulster Fry World Championship</p> <p>James Hennessey, Liam McGarry and David Birch left the meeting at 7pm</p>
<p>Item 4</p>	<p><i>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</i></p>
	<p><i>Previously Circulated: Donaghadee TAG minutes</i></p> <p>It was agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of proceedings.</p>
<p>Item 5</p>	<p>Update on outstanding actions, David Shivers (Urban Development Manager)</p>
	<p>1. Share point site to be set up for all Greenway routes/maps. ACTIONED- Sonia Logan set up and emailed all members an invite.13/10/22-site is now removed</p> <p>2. Alternative project information. Seating at Lemons Wharf. ACTIONED- Update provided under item 6 on agenda (Update on Covid Recovery)</p>

	<p>3. Rusty Bin outside Sailing club - David Shivers told members that he would discuss the matter of the rusty bin with Alistair Kerr – Borough Cleansing Services Manager ACTIONED - Alistair Kerr confirmed bin has been replaced</p> <p>4. Update on Moat - David Shivers to report back with visitor feedback / comments after the end of the season.- ACTIONED- Total visitors 2,500 between May and September 2022 with additional 2 weeks in oct.</p> <p>5. Adrian Kerr asked Sonia Logan to make sure DCDA report is put onto the agenda for each meeting. ACTIONED-ON AGENDA</p> <p>6. Copeland Windmill Councillor Mark Brooks asked how many visitors were attending the Copeland Windmill at present. David Shivers told Councillor Mark Brooks he would try and obtain some relevant figures for him. ACTIONED-emailed Alex Irvine 12/12- The figure for Ballycopeland is 15,000 visitors from opening until the end of September (that was inclusive of coffee shop visits and not exclusively tickets for the attraction).</p>
<p>Item 6</p>	<p>Update on Covid Recovery and Revitalisation Funding, David Shivers (Urban Development Manager)</p>
	<p>Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme Overall – Total applications received: 478 Total claims processed: 347 Total: £714,705.18</p> <p>Donaghadee – Tranche 1 – 21 claims, £41,172.99 Tranche 2 Part 1 – 2 claims, £5,000 Tranche 2 Part 2 – all outer boundary – 84 claims, £156,674.35 Project complete.</p> <p>Floral Sculpture Designed, constructed, and installed in 2021. Project complete. £10,000</p>

	<p>Solar Bins 2no solar bins installed – High Street and New Street Project complete. £8,000</p> <p>‘Shop Local’ Town Centre Marketing Campaign Delivered across the 4town/1city in 2021 – including outdoor advertising, press, digital and print. Project complete. £17,706.50 (combined across all towns)</p> <p>Copeland Court Environmental Improvement Scheme Delivered in 2021 – improving connections and creating a community space. Project complete. £120,000.00</p> <p>Cycling Infrastructure 3 Scooter Racks, 1 Pump & Repair station & 1 Toast Rack installed. Project complete. £3,246.</p> <p>Lemon’s Wharf Seating 4no benches and 3no picnic tables. Awaiting delivery – installation late March/ early April Project in progress. £10,000.00</p> <p>Masterplan Review Conversations Marketing Campaign Delivered across the 4town/1city in 2022 – including outdoor advertising, press, digital and print. Project complete. £5,127.00 (combined across all towns)</p>
<p>Item 7</p>	<p>Update on the Moat Projects, David Shivers (Urban Development Manager)</p>
<p>Action</p>	<p>David Shivers explained to the committee that a full design will be provided to the group before it goes into planning.</p> <p>David Chambers asked if the group should be liaising with community police regarding anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>David Shivers said he was unaware of any recent reports around the Moat David suggested we ask the Police to attend the next TAG meeting</p>

Item 8	DCDA report- John Caldwell
	<p>Previously circulated with TAG member</p> <p>John Caldwell discussed Donaghadee Summer Festival and Britain in Bloom competition.</p>
Item 9	Any other business
Action	<p>Janice MacArthur suggested the committee send a letter to Councillor Mark Brooks to wish him a speedy recovery. Letter to be drafted by Sonia Logan</p>
Action	<p>In Confidence The Committee raised an issue with Vincent McConville of DFi of lack lighting on a traffic island on Millisle Road. They stated it was a safety issue as children cross the road here and Vincent said he would report back.</p> <p>Vincent McConville Left the meeting at 7.15pm</p> <p>David Shivers thanked Committee for all their hard work and contribution, and wished good fortune for those standing in the next Council election.</p>
Item 10	DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING
	TBC

Hollywood Town Advisory Group		
<u>TIME</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
6PM	MONDAY 28thFEBRUARY 2023	QUEENS LEISURE COMPLEX
Attendees	<p>Councillor Martin McRandal - Chair Councillor Rachel Woods Councillor Carl McClean Robin Masefield - Co-Opted Member Marilyn Toogood - Faith Representative Nadia Dornan - Youth Representative Gordon Wright - Hollywood Residents Association</p> <p>David Shivers - Urban Development Manager, ANDBC David Birch – Urban Regeneration Officer, ANDBC</p> <p>Sonia Tomblin - Assistant Regeneration Officer, ANDBC Glynis Poots - Administrative Officer, ANDBC</p> <p>James Hennessey – Paul Hogarth Company Liam McGarry – McGarry Consultants</p>	
Item 1	Welcome and Apologies	
	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies were received from: Councillor Gillian Greer Christine Layton - Hollywood Residents' Association Niall McVitty - DfC</p>	
Item 2	Declarations of Interest	
	No Declarations of Interest were received.	

<p>Item 3</p>	<p>Masterplan Review Presentation - James Hennessey from Paul Hogarth company</p>
<p>Action</p>	<p>James Hennessey presented a recap of the Masterplan review process and then explained the suggested priorities for Holywood – please see attached presentation.</p> <p>The Committee then discussed points on the presentation:</p> <p>Rachel Woods began by saying there needed to be a balance between development and deliverability. Importance of health and wellbeing air quality, reduction in cars, it's a heavily polluted area. Rachel Woods enquired if there was funding and David Shivers explained that there was money to work up a couple of projects so that if funding became available the project would be ready or it could meet funding requirements.</p> <p>David Shivers suggested it should be named 'a place plan' and needs to be a flexible document. David Shivers highlighted the need to re-engage statutory partners to bring in funding and it would be beneficial if the private sector could attend the TAG.</p> <p>He continued saying the group should look for funding outside DfC, cross border levelling up, community ownership fund, Peaceplus, capacity funding, National Lottery. Social finance and festivals that can animate communities.</p> <p>Carl McClean apologized for being late and asked if there should be budget ranges for each priority. He asked if there are specific examples of placemaking that has gone well and why and was there anything for v little money that could transform the town. He concluded saying if Holywood had 3 or 4 things that we could say we had done, people would be happy.</p> <p>James Hennessey explained that the review it is not a full masterplan development - it will set a roadmap to take projects forward to a business case and planning.</p> <p>Gordon Wright explained that the Holywood Residents Association have completed a project and working with DfI and Council is very different. Redburn square does not seem to represent value for money. Maintenance leaves a lot to be desired and there is no point in throwing away money and need to have a vision.</p> <p>He continued that 3 subways will have new lighting schemes as good relationship with DfI.</p> <p>David Shivers responded by saying Council asked DfI to sign up to TAG and if there is a problem with maintenance, DfI need to attend TAGs and action issues. The roll of the TAG is to make an effective holistic partnership and the terms of reference for the TAG will be reexamined to make the partnership more responsive.</p> <p>Marilyn Toogood agreed by saying that the Town should maintain what we have and know that anything new will be maintained.</p> <p>David Shivers said that John McConnell Parks and Cemeteries Manager could come to the next TAG. The Chair proposed also inviting Maintenance and DfI to the next meeting, this was proposed by Marilyn Toogood and seconded by Rachel Woods.</p>

	<p>Liam McGarry said that good relationships make things happen, he gave examples of Seacourt in Bangor and Comber pop-ups and Armagh Festival.</p> <p>Robin Masefield expressed his frustration at having to deal with many departments in the Council including Arts & Culture, Tourism, Parks, and community groups are weary and small grants are very hard to get.</p> <p>David Shivers suggested that going forward the TAG could set up a subgroup to deal with Queens Hall.</p> <p>James Hennessey, Liam McGarry and David Birch left the meeting at 7pm</p>
<p>Item 4</p>	<p>Minutes of previous meetings-<i>previously circulated</i></p>
	<p>It was agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of proceedings.</p>
<p>Item 5</p>	<p>Update on outstanding actions- David Shivers Urban Development Manager-ANDBC</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Drone Footage – David Shivers to speak to ANDBC corporate communications about the possibility of featuring Holywood Chamber’s Virtual Reality Tour on Council’s website. ACTIONED-response from Comms it is not a good fit with our website content, which is primarily about services offered by the Council. NOTE; Has now been shown on councils Facebook site 2. Alternative Projects- Actioned update provided under item 6 covid Recovery and Revitalisation Funding- 3. Masterplan- David Shivers told members he would call a single - item meeting for November to discuss the Masterplan. Masterplan meeting was held in Nov.
<p>Item 6</p>	<p>Update on Covid Recovery and Revitalisation Funding-David Shivers-Urban Development Manager ANDBC</p>
	<p>Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme</p> <p>Hollywood – Tranche 1 – 42 claims, £91,623.69 Tranche 2 Part 1 – 2 claims, £2,739.43</p>

Action	<p>Tranche 2 Part 2 – all outer boundary – 84 claims, £156,674.35 Project complete.</p> <p>Floral Sculpture Designed, constructed, and installed in 2021. Project complete. £10,000</p> <p>Solar Bins <u>Part 1</u> - 1no solar bins installed – High Street Project complete. Approx. £3,000</p> <p><u>Part 2</u> – 2no solar bins – Hibernia Street and Spafield. Order placed – awaiting delivery and installation. Approx. £8,000</p> <p>‘Shop Local’ Town Centre Marketing Campaign Delivered across the 4town/1city in 2021 – including outdoor advertising, press, digital and print. Project complete. £17,706.50 (combined across all towns)</p> <p>Subway Improvement Scheme Completed in association with Holywood Residents Association. Project complete. £2,815.00</p> <p>Cycling Infrastructure <u>Part 1</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High Street, Holywood Library - Cycle Shelter & Stands. Installed. 2. Jonny the Jig Play Park – Scooter Rack. Installed. <p>Project complete. £2,689.00</p> <p><u>Part 2</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Church Road, Car Park Entrance - Sheffield Stands 2. Queens Hall, Sullivan Place – Sheffield Stands <p>Project to be completed end of March 2023. £5,000.</p> <p>Mobile Urban Orchard Update to be provided by Parks at next meeting</p> <p>Johnny the Jig Playpark - Public Realm Enhancements Public realm enhancements to include benches, picnic tables, litter bins and cycle stands for the new playpark. Completion end of March 2023. £30,000</p>
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	<p>Masterplan Review Conversations Marketing Campaign Delivered across the 4town/1city in 2022 – including outdoor advertising, press, digital and print. Project complete. £5,127.00 (combined across all towns)</p> <p>Christmas Lighting Features Refer to proposals. Budget approx. £10-15,000</p> <p>4m tree with lights £3,750 8m tree with lights £7,625 3D reindeer £4,200 Polemount features (x4) £1,420</p> <p>After discussions the members decided on the 8M tree with lights.</p>
Item 7	Any other business
Action	<p>Robin Masefield spoke about working with Translink on the Holywood Station and its environs and said this is currently a work in progress.</p> <p>He also spoke about Palace Barracks and the fence being the wrong way around and Robin said he would raise the issue.</p> <p>Robin Masefield enquired if there was any update from the Play Strategy documents sent by Edel Trainor. The Group expressed the necessity for serious engagement with youth groups and residents.</p>
Action	<p>David Shivers said he would feed back to Edel Trainor of Parks and Cemeteries and ask if she would like to attend the next TAG.</p>
Item 8	Date and time of next meeting
	TBC
Item 9	Adjournment

Newtownards Town Advisory Group		
<u>TIME</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
6PM	Thursday 2nd Mar 2023	ABM LEISURE COMPLEX
Attendees	<p>Councillor Richard Smart – Chair Derek Wright - Chamber Representative Pam Williamson – Ards and North Down Street Pastors</p> <p>David Shivers - Urban Development Manager, ANDBC David Birch - Regeneration Officer, ANDBC Glynis Poots - Administrative Officer, ANDBC</p> <p>James Hennessey – The Paul Hogarth Company Liam McGarry - McGarry Consultants</p>	
Item 1	Welcome	
	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
Item 2	Apologies and Declarations of Interest	
	<p>Apologies were received from: Councillor Victoria Moore (VM) Niall McVitty - DFC</p> <p>No Declarations of Interest were received.</p>	
Item 3	Masterplan Review Presentation - James Hennessey from Paul Hogarth Company	
Action	<p>James Hennessey presented a recap of the Masterplan review process and then explained the suggested priorities for Newtownards – please see attached presentation.</p> <p>Derek Wright requested a copy of the presentation as turnout at the meeting was low</p> <p>Presentation emailed to Derek Wright on Monday 6th March 2023</p>	

The Committee then discussed points on the presentation:

David Shivers began by saying that now the large work is completed how do we animate specific areas, get communities involved and include all council departments and community partners.

Plans for housing in Court Street were discussed and the Chair emphasized the need for a Pedestrian link through from Town to Tesco saying that commercially its good to get residents into town.

David Shivers explained that DFC are trying to protect wall but agreed it would be beneficial to direct people through - trail to lough and canal with way finding and signage.

Pam Williamson said the parklets are looked great, and Derek Wright confirmed that there has been positive feedback so far and this should increase in the summer.

The Chair said that dereliction is important to us and if it was redeveloped there is a demand for it. We need to highlight it as an issue as its holding us back if funding came through. We need a list of who owns it and how it could be used.

David Shivers explained that Pop up shops are working well in Comber – maybe something we could look for in dereliction for example a shipping container behind a façade.

Derek Wright explained the need for a Hub and Pam agreed saying that a one stop shop would be great for all the needs out there – community health, community events etc.

The Chair pointed out that it should be community led; they hold the key.

David Shivers suggested the Community hub could be a community asset opportunity.

Davis Shivers expressed the need for animation of Conway Square

The Chair explained they had fantastic feedback with covered Christmas market and lights and Derek Wright continued that the one of the goals was passing the square over to the community, everyone has 30 mins to perform; and they were over subscribed for next Christmas

David Shivers suggested that it would be good to see this model work in the summer

Derek Wright replied that to do this they have to fill in a 32-page doc and there is no access to diary for the square

David Shivers said the events team do have a diary but does not include other groups. He suggested that other council departments need to feed into this group

The Chair said that Ards does struggle with animation as it falls short on food and tourism, more of a need for community to step in. Move away from capital projects and focus on small gains.

	<p>Vision for history – signage /history of town</p> <p>David Shivers said the Priory is a great asset for a history/heritage trail but closed –</p> <p>Derek Wright suggested they could have a pop-up heritage event</p> <p>The Chair explained Ards historical society trying to get key from HED however they are apprehensive to let people in.</p> <p>Cover on Conway Square</p> <p>Derek Wright asked if the appraisal for a cover on the square could be included in the plan, it is currently under economical appraisal</p> <p>He continued saying the cover would encourage more food outlets and more entertainments and concerts</p> <p>David Shivers explained that it must stack up economically – if it didn’t, they could pilot a stretch cover.</p> <p>Cycling and Cars</p> <p>The Chair said the cycle infrastructure was good, but they needed to be mindful of older residents and a community built around the car. He continued that incremental change would be good but to remain cautious.</p> <p>David Shivers explained that Dfi came up with interesting concepts for cycle lanes in Ards and it would be good to resurrect this and make sure this ties in with the Greenway.</p> <p>Liam McGarry said that it was important to indicate sustainability and active trials for future funding, but should be in small steps with crossings, lighting, seating, toilets and signage.</p> <p>David explained terms of TAG and suggested that private sector representative would be beneficial plus partners such as Dfi.</p> <p>David Shivers concluded by explaining the next Masterplan public engagement stage.</p> <p>James Hennessey, Liam McGarry and David Birch left the meeting at 7pm</p>
<p>Item 4</p>	<p>Minutes of previous meetings (Newtownards Town Advisory Group) circulated</p>
	<p><i>Previously Circulated: Newtownards TAG minutes</i></p> <p>It was agreed that the minutes were an accurate record of proceedings.</p>

<p>Item 5</p>	<p>Update on outstanding actions- David Shivers -Urban Development Manager ANDBC</p>
	<p>NEWTOWNARDS TAG MEETING ACTIONS OCT</p> <p>1. Abandonment of adopted road Conway Square, Pedestrianisation of Meeting house lane-</p> <p>David Brown response- There are ongoing discussions between the Council and DFI to try to establish which parts of the Square are owned by each organisation and then to decide on a course of action. This might result in all the land being transferred to the Council. It appears that there are no current plans showing exactly who owns which part of the Square, but it is considered that DFI owns a strip of land on each side of it and this is effectively an adopted road.DFI can normally enforce parking restrictions on an adopted road but as they are unsure the extent of their road they are not currently managing the parking.</p> <p>Update- from David Brown- A report has now gone to council 16/02/2022</p> <p>DFI Response-</p> <p>Dear Sonia,</p> <p>Thank you for your enclosed email dated 1st September 2022 regarding the request to pedestrianize Meeting House Lane, Newtownards.</p> <p>Traffic Section would have no objections in principle to the request but as the area is adopted by DFI and maintained by the local Section Office I have forwarded a copy of your email to them for comments / thoughts.</p> <p>I would assume legislation (including neighbourhood notification) would be required.</p> <p>I will contact you when I receive a reply from them.</p> <p>Yours sincerely</p> <p>Arthur Rooney</p> <p>Traffic and Network Development Section</p> <p>1. Conway Square Cover</p> <p>Awaiting Economic appraisal</p> <p>2. Masterplan</p> <p>DS to arrange a single-item TAG meeting in November, giving members the opportunity to speak to the consultant. - actioned</p>

Item 6	Update on Covid Recovery and Revitalisation Funding- David Shivers Urban Development Manager ANDBC
	<p>David Shivers presented the following information:</p> <p>Business Adaptation and Improvement Scheme Tranche 1 – 63 claims, £140,219.15 Tranche 2 Part 1 – 11 claims, £20,622.63 Tranche 2 Part 2 – all outer boundary – 84 claims, £156,674.35 Project complete.</p> <p>Floral Sculpture Designed, constructed, and installed in 2021. Project complete. £10,000</p> <p>‘Shop Local’ Town Centre Marketing Campaign Delivered across the 4town/1city in 2021 – including outdoor advertising, press, digital and print. Project complete. £17,706.50 (combined across all towns)</p> <p>Parklets 3no parklet installed – High Street, Regent Street, Frances Street Project complete. Approx. £75K – awaiting final invoice.</p> <p>Cycling Infrastructure South Street - Cycle Shelter with Toaster Rack & Pump & Repair Station, Installed. Mill Street – 2 Sheffield Stands, Installed. Gibson’s Lane – Cycle Shelter with Toaster Rack, Installed. Conway Square – Scooter Rack, Installed. Conway Square – 2 Cycle Planter Racks, to be Installed. Value – £16,565.10</p> <p>Conway Square Seating 8no curved benches & 16no chess style tables Installation to take place upon receipt of all items of furniture – expected May 2023. £66,000.00</p> <p>Masterplan Review Conversations Marketing Campaign Delivered across the 4town/1city in 2022 – including outdoor advertising, press, digital and print. Project complete. £5,127.00 (combined across all towns)</p>

Item 7	Any other business
	<p>The Chair enquired about traffic control Conway Square and David Shivers replied that Council would not want to adopt and suggested that Derek Wright email Gillian Robinson.</p> <p>Derek Wright asked if Comber is getting their floral sculpture back and David Shivers replied that the Comber Tag is working with Castle Espie and if they want to display the structure, they need to get it assessed by a structural engineer and then insured.</p> <p>Derek Wright then confirmed that the Chamber we might be interested in getting the Spitfire for Ards airport.</p>
Action	Can we send Covid Recovery details to Chamber – included above in these minutes
Action	<p>Discuss cover at next meeting – A single agenda meeting will be arranged in April to discuss the economic appraisal</p> <p>The Chair asked for an Update on Greenway</p> <p>The Chair asked that included in the minutes was disappointment at attendance of this meeting.</p>
Item 8	Date and Time of Next Meeting
Action	TBC
Item 9	Adjournment
	The Chair thanked all for attending and the meeting was adjourned

Unclassified

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ITEM 22

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regeneration
Date of Report	23 May 2023
File Reference	RDP43
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: Not applicable
Subject	Small Settlements Regeneration Programme - Project Progress Improvements
Attachments	Appendix A - Ballygowan Village Infrastructure Improvements Appendix B - Improvements to School Lane, Ballywalter Appendix C - Greyabbey Community Park & Viewing Platform Appendix D - Kircubbin Coastal Path Appendix E - Groomsport Harbour Environmental Improvement Scheme Appendix F - Millisle Park - Phase One Lagoon Project

Council was previously advised of the COVID Recovery Small Settlements Regeneration Programme, which aimed to build upon the successful collaborative approach of the COVID-19 Recovery Revitalisation Programme. A budget for rural projects was set at £547,000. This was a mixture of capital and revenue funding which was to be used to develop and deliver projects. This was part of a cocktail of funding received from DfC, DfI and DAERA. The lion share of the funding has been

Unclassified

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allocated to the delivery of the Portaferry Public Realm scheme. A budget of £50,000 has already been used to complete the Portavogie Promenade Scheme.

A budget of £350,000 has been allocated to small scale capital projects in Ballygowan, Ballywalter, Greyabbey and Kircubbin. Revenue funding of £147,000 has been assigned to the technical development of projects in Millisle and Groomsport to generate readiness for future capital opportunities. All these projects were previously agreed by Council.

The schemes which have been developed for these villages are based on internal officer and community consultation feedback. They also deliver on the aims and objectives of the Small Settlements Regeneration Programme and are in line with projects identified in the various village plans.

The below update outlines the current position on each of these projects:

Capital Schemes

1. Ballygowan Village Infrastructure Improvements

Budget: Revenue £25,000 | Capital: £150,000

AECOM was appointed to develop a small-scale village enhancement concept plan for Ballygowan which has now been completed – see Appendix A. A range of options were presented as part of the overall Plan, this was to allow for a project to proceed with the Small Settlements capital budget, and also to identify further projects should future funding become available.

Two engagement meetings have been undertaken with the local community to ascertain their priorities for the capital scheme. Their priorities were:

- Enhancements to War Memorial space – replace damaged paving to provide new surfacing, additional ornamental planting, replacement seating, wall mounted feature lighting and new litter bin.
- Planter Tubs with decorative planting – high quality planter tubs planted to complement existing roundabout planting scheme – only provided at traffic islands where they do not conflict with visibility displays.
- Footway planter tubs with planting – high quality planter tubs utilised throughout the village centre to unify and brighten the streetscape, consideration to small species tree planting within planters where space permitted.

AECOM is currently developing a technical specification for the above proposals. A costing exercise will determine which of the above proposals can be delivered within the capital budget available.

Subject to Council approval, it is recommended that this scheme proceeds should it be costed within budget. If cuts are required a further report will be presented.

Unclassified

200

2. School Lane, Ballywalter

Budget: Revenue: N/A Managed Internally | Capital £20,000

A plan has been developed for the improvement works to School Lane, Ballywalter. This lane leads from housing developments to the Village, as well as to the school and playpark.

A proportion of the land is in the ownership of the Education Authority, and as such, its approval was sought to undertake these works, which has recently been obtained.

Subject to Council approval, it is recommended that this scheme proceeds to construction stage when all appropriate arrangements are finalised.

3. Greyabbey Community Park & Viewing Point

Budget: Revenue: £25,000 | Capital £120,000

AECOM was appointed to develop a concept plan for Greyabbey, which has now been completed – see Appendix C.

Prior to the development of the concept plan, Officers were made aware that the viewing point has been subject to objection by some members of the local community.

A significant proportion of this scheme is planned for development on Council-owned land, however, a section of pathway through the woods, and the viewing point is located on private land, which is leased to the National Trust from the Montgomery Estate. Officers attended a meeting with both parties in April 2023 and they now support the scheme in principle, subject to further public consultation.

A public consultation meeting took place in Greyabbey on 24 May 2023 to gauge the level of support for the scheme. There were no objections to the proposal at the public meeting, however some areas for consideration were highlighted, these will be investigated, and further discussions will take place with the National Trust and private landowner with a further report to be brought back to Council.

It is recommended that the Council notes the above, with a further report to follow.

4. Kircubbin Coastal Path

Budget: Revenue: N/A Managed Internally | Capital £60,000

This concept was developed internally by Council officers – see Appendix D.

The plan has been shared with members of the local community association, who are largely in support of the implementation of the scheme.

Unclassified

201

Given the environmental designations in close proximity to the location of this site, a Habitat Regulations Assessment was undertaken which was submitted to the Planning Service for a Pre-Application Discussion. NIEA and Shared Environmental Services have determined that a planning application is required, and this has recently been submitted.

Officers have prepared a project brief and specifications for costings.

Subject to planning permission being granted, it is recommended that construction works commence at the earliest possible opportunity should the scheme be costed within budget. If cuts are required a further report will be presented.

Revenue Schemes

1. Groomspout Environmental Improvement Scheme

Budget: Revenue: £20,000 | Capital: N/A

AECOM has developed a concept plan which has now been completed – see Appendix E. The options have been developed in a phased approach for delivery, so that realistic and achievable projects can be delivered if future capital funding opportunities become available.

Two engagement meetings have been undertaken with the local community to obtain feedback on the proposals and ascertain their current priorities for a Phase One scheme should future capital funding become available. Planning permission is not required for this scheme.

AECOM is currently developing a technical specification for phase 1 which will be used to undertake procurement in the event funding becoming available.

It is recommended that members note the above update.

2. Millisle Park – Phase One Lagoon Project

Budget: Revenue £37,000 | Capital: N/A

AECOM has now developed a concept for the Lagoon – see Appendix F. The options were presented via a phased approach for delivery, so that realistic and achievable projects can be delivered if future capital funding opportunities become available.

Two engagement meetings have been undertaken with the local Steering Group to obtain feedback on the proposals and ascertain current priorities for a Phase One of the scheme.

Unclassified

202

Some elements of this scheme require planning permission. AECOM is now in the process of preparing the application which necessitated the requirement for several environmental and ecological surveys.

AECOM is also currently costing the project which will be used to undertake procurement in the event of capital funding becoming available.

It is recommended that members note the above update.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Council agrees this report.

Ballygowan

Environmental Improvements

Ballygowan is a rural village and a busy commuter bypass, less than 10 miles from Belfast. The community centre is popular local hub in the village. The green space between the hall and the play park has the potential to be upgraded to a vibrant community garden and upgraded / extended play park. To enhance the use of the community hall, we propose to provide a BBQ/picnic area and garden with seating and raised beds.

Throughout the village, we propose to enhance the public realm with the installation of high quality decorative planters, replace litter bins, street trees and ornamental shrub planting. The war memorial space situated at the roundabout, is in need of an upgrade. We propose to resurface this area with resin bound gravel, provide replacement seating, and additional ornamental planting.



Potential projects

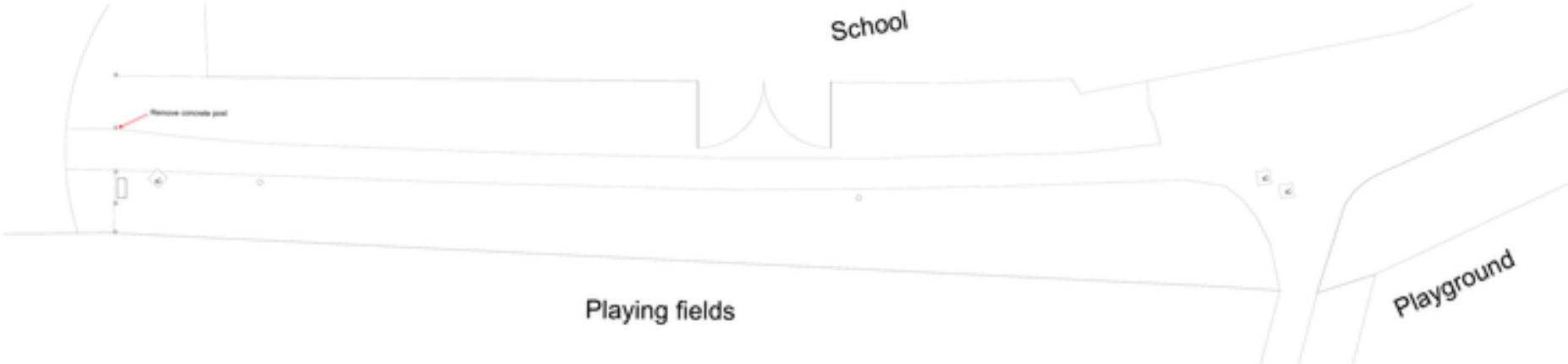
- 1 **Outdoor community area**
(Provision of paved space for BBQ / picnic with associated community garden space with power source, outdoor tap, seating, planting and raised beds. Proposed pathways leading to existing playground.)
- 2 **Footway planter tubs with planting.**
(44 x high quality planter tubs utilised throughout the town centre to unify and brighten the streetscape. Consideration to small species tree planting within planters where space permits)
- 3 **Frontage improvements**
(Seek agreement with landowners to improve the appearance of the public frontage to privately owned lands using decorative hoarding and planters.)
- 4 **Enhancements to War Memorial space.**
(Remove existing concrete slabs, and resurface area in resin bound gravel. Additional ornamental planting, replacement seating, wall mounted feature lighting and new litter bins)
- 5 **Interpretation signage**
(Interpretation signage to be installed at war memorial and community centre.)
- 6 **Planter tubs with decorative planting**
(High quality planter tubs planted to compliment existing roundabout planting scheme - only provided at traffic islands where they do not conflict with visibility splays)
- 7 **Additional planting**
(Decorative planting to compliment existing planting)
- 8 **Replace all existing litter bins**
(New high quality litter bins consistent with other borough towns)



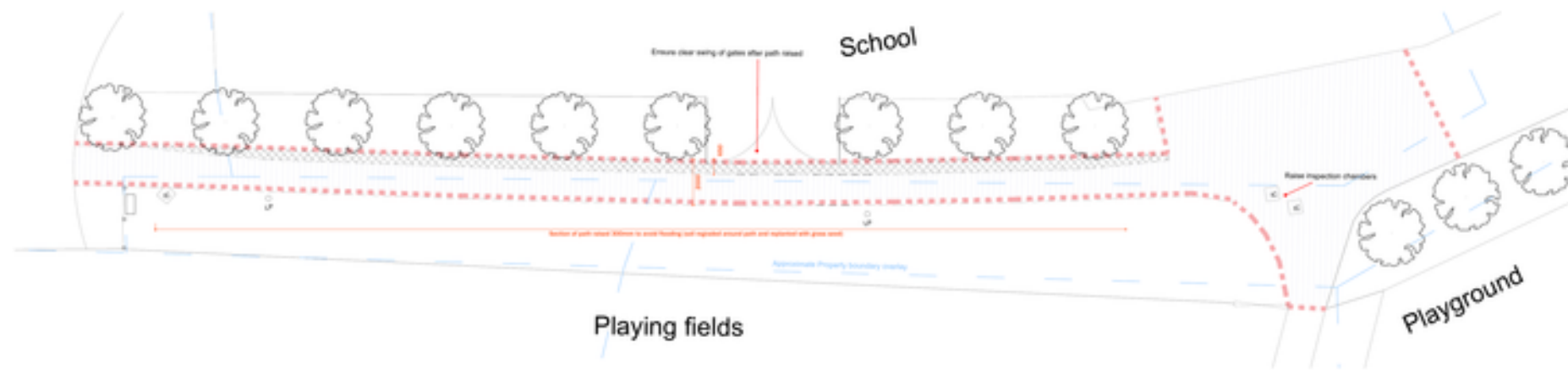
Picnic benches and decorative planters



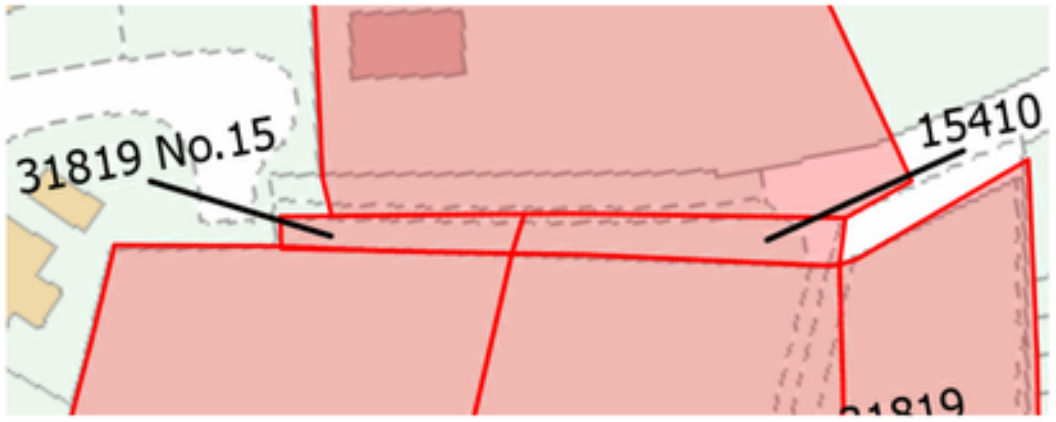
Community garden
(Moneyreagh)



EXISTING PLAN 1:100



PROPOSED PLAN 1:100



- Key
- Common whitewash (Surface) and All new low stock gate Size 2030 x 10 Number
 - Proposed Flat Top Kerb Last Flush 50mm wide 107 linear meters approx
 - Existing path raised 300mm and new tarmac surface 143m2 approx
 - New tarmac path raised 300mm 25 m2 approx

CONSTRUCTION	DATE	BY
<p>Ards & North Down Borough Council</p> <p>Ballywater Path</p> <p>Existing & Proposed Plan</p>		
<p>Ards and North Down Borough Council</p>		
1040-02		R2

Greyabbey

Environmental Improvements

Greyabbey

The Council owned green site to the rear of Greyabbey Village Hall is well used by dog walkers and leads to a dense planted area at the far side of the site owned by The National Trust. This densely planted area leads to stunning views that look out across Strangford Lough to the Mourne Mountains, and hosts a number of wildlife species. There is a shared existing lane that is used as a path to access this area. We propose to build a new path that meanders across the green site, through trees and through existing woodland. Keeping the design as natural and informal as possible, we propose to create a widened footpath at the far end of the site, through the woodland planting, to allow users to enjoy the views.

The site recently had some orchard trees planted, and there are a number of more mature trees, wilder in character, that are a focal point of the site. We propose to create a low level nature play area within these trees, with the addition of picnic benches situated alongside the pathway.

Toilet Block



Willow screen



Potential projects

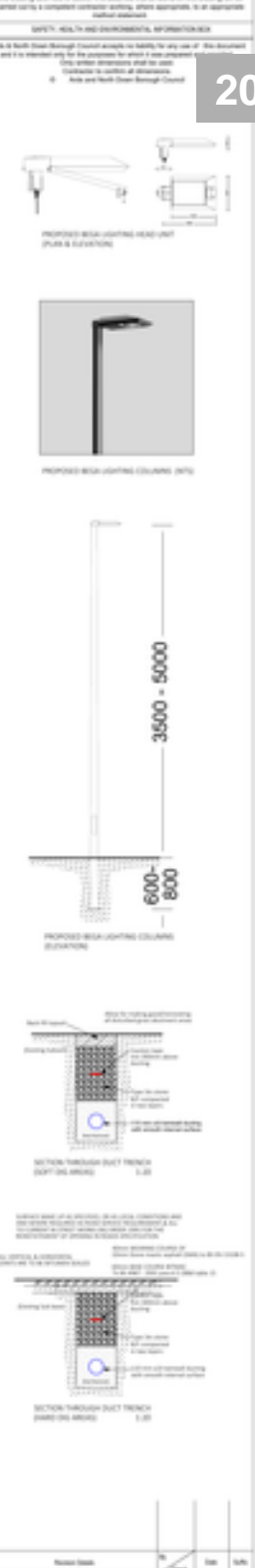
- ① **Enhanced entrance**
(Clean entrance wall and plant shrub planting in front of wall. Proposed hedge along fence an LHS.)
- ② **Proposed pathway through green space**
(Self binding gravel with timber edging)
- ③ **Proposed planting**
(Proposed structure woodland planting to open space and boundary with right of way access lane.)
- ④ **Shrub planting**
(Shrub planting mix)
- ⑤ **Wildflower Planting**
(Wildflower mix)
- ⑥ **Natural play area**
(Informal natural play on bark mulch)
- ⑦ **Picnic area**
(3 x picnic benches)
- ⑧ **Proposed orchard pathway**
(Mown grass pathway)
- ⑨ **Proposed woodland pathway**
(Self binding gravel with felled timber edging)
- ⑩ **Proposed screen planting**
(Woodland planting)
- ⑪ **Lookout point**
(Widened path and cleared area for viewing. Informal felled timber logs)
- ⑫ **Willow screening**
(Decorative lattice screen in winter and foliage in summer)
- ⑬ **Toilet block**
(Installation of prefabricated 5m x 3m unisex toilet block)

Natural Play



Concept proposals

- KEY:-**
- EXISTING GRASS AREAS
 - EXISTING PAVING
 - EXISTING BITMAC SURFACE/PATH
 - EXISTING ROCK FACE ARMOUR
 - PROPOSED LIGHTING
 - PROPOSED DUCTING (HARD DIG)
 - PROPOSED DUCTING (SOFT DIG)
 - PROPOSED BENCH SEATING (EXISTING STONE)
 - PROPOSED BENCH SEATING (EXISTING PLASTIC)
 - PROPOSED PICNIC TABLES (EXISTING PLASTIC)
 - SITE BOUNDARY
 - PROPOSED TREE PLANTING
PNUS PINASTER SX TRANSPLANTED 2M WIDE X 3.5M TALL, ROOT BALLED WITH LEADER & LATERAL PLANT AS SHOWN ON LAYOUT
 - PROPOSED PLANTING AROUND EXISTING WWTW
ESCALONIA IVEX IN 2L POTS SPACED AS PER PLAN



Project Name	PLANNING APPLICATION
Client	ANDBC
Project No	KIRCUBBIN PROMENADE LIGHTING AND FIXTURES
Sheet No	SITE PLAN LAYOUT PROPOSED
Author	
Checker	
Designer	
Date	22.03.23
Scale	1:500
Ards and North Down Borough Council	
Project Name	KIRCUBBIN PROMENADE LIGHTING AND FIXTURES
Project No	RG/23/KP/02
Sheet No	A

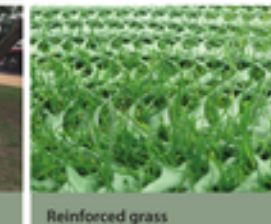
Groomsport

Environmental Improvements

Groomsport harbour is a small amenity harbour situated in a popular seaside town. The amenity space includes a paddling pool that has current planning proposals to be replaced by a splash park. We would propose to resurface this area, around the newly installed splash park. The green space adjacent to the proposed splash park is on a steep embankment with a picnic area at the far side. We would propose to relocate the picnic area closer to the splash park and provide additional improvements to the embankment to include compliant pathways, decorative planting and outdoor gym equipment.

The existing 60 space car park is often at capacity during high season. We have proposed to create a more formalised overflow carpark in the area behind the toilet block, by resurfacing the existing space, and creating spaces on the grass verge by using grass reinforcement. This would create an additional 13 spaces.

- Potential projects**
- 1 **Splash Park**
(Project to be implemented by others)
 - 2 **Resurfacing works**
(Resurfacing works around the completed splash park)
 - 3 **Proposed footpath**
(Extended public footpath connecting car park to amenity space)
 - 4 **Traffic calming - 50/50 table**
(Additional drainage gullies will be provided)
 - 5 **Proposed seat wall**
(Existing wall to be refurbished where needed, timber tops sanded and painted)
 - 6 **Climbing plants**
(Clematis to be planted in front of existing wall)
 - 7 **Outdoor gym equipment**
(Outdoor gym equipment to include -
1x Sports bike
1 x Cross trainer
1 x sit up bench)
 - 8 **Ornamental shrub planting**
(Existing soft verges)
 - 9 **Splash park picnic area**
(Relocation of picnic area)
 - 10 **Outdoor showers**
(2 x outdoor showers installed to external wall of toilet block)
 - 11 **Planter tubs with decorative planting**
(High quality planter tubs)
 - 12 **Extended footway**
(Footway to extend the full length of the entrance road)
 - 13 **Power source**
(Power for potential food / coffee kiosk)
 - 14 **Overflow car park**
(Proposed resurfaced car park, including grasscrete on soft verge - 13 spaces)
 - 15 **Changing benches**
(Timber changing huts)
 - 16 **Repositioned picnic area**
(Proposed new picnic area)
 - 17 **Reinstate grass**
(Prepare and reseed grass area)



Concept proposals

Millisle

Environmental Improvements

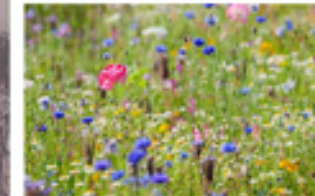
Millisle Lagoon includes a beachfront promenade, jetty and slipway and is situated in a popular seaside village. The lagoon makes it the perfect safe spot for watersports and swimmers. There is currently a large disused paddling pool that is quite unsightly, and the proposals aim to repurpose this space. We have proposed to retain the paddling pool and transform its appearance by creating a tiered amenity space. This space will have seating pods to shelter from the elements, a timber boardwalk and floating pontoons. The pontoons are a great addition for watersports enthusiasts, allowing easy access to the lagoon. We also propose to create improved stepped access to the beach. There is the opportunity to install beach huts / kiosks to facilitate changing facilities, watersports hire and a coffee dock. A timber screen will enhance the pier area and existing carpark. We propose to upgrade the green space along the promenade to include an amenity space with picnic benches, and coastal shrub planting. The existing wall can be refurbished and seating built in to the wall for the comfort of visitors.

Potential projects

- 1 **Beach access**
(Improve stepped access to the beach)
- 2 **Floating pontoons**
(Modular floating pontoons allow for access to the lagoon for watersports)
- 3 **Walkway**
(Pontoon walkway linking promenade)
- 4 **Tiered amenity space**
(Tiered amenity space with seating shelter pods)
- 5 **Decorative planters / seating pods**
(Coastal planting)
- 6 **Beach huts / Kiosks**
(temporary huts for coffee docks / watersports hire)
- 7 **Timber screen**
(Decorative timber screen with recess for portable toilet / shower and power source)
- 8 **Toilet / Shower facilities**
(Option for portable toilet / shower)
- 9 **Refurbished wall with seating**
(Existing wall to be refurbished with seating built into wall with timber top)
- 10 **Structural planting with amenity space**
(Amenity space with picnic area and structural planting)
- 11 **Improve stepped access**
(Underground existing BT pole)
- Structural planting along promenade**
- 12 (Structural planting and tree planting along promenade)
- 13 **Lighting columns**
(Lighting columns located at amenity hub)



Seating



Coastal planting

Concept proposals

Unclassified

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ITEM 24

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regeneration
Date of Report	10 May 2023
File Reference	RDP60
Legislation	N/A
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Chambers of Commerce Yearly Budget
Attachments	None

As Members will be aware the Council currently provides funding to the five Chambers of Commerce/Trade to undertake the following types of activities:

- Promotion of the Chambers to attract new members.
- Events for Chamber members on current issues effecting the Town/City Centres.
- Marketing activity to attract visitors and shoppers to the Town/City Centres.
- Administration to assist the running of the Chambers.

Last financial year the Chambers submitted two-year business plans which were reported to Council and over the last 6 months the Chambers have presented these to the Place Committee. They also gave their aspirations for each of the Towns/City and Chamber growth for the future.

The relationship between the Council and the Chambers has continued to be productive with all working in partnership to achieve growth and assist the Chambers to be more representative of the business community in their area.

Unclassified**210**

The annual budget has remained the same for the last 8 years at £12,000. Given the rapid increase in prices for goods and services and having reviewed the annual budget with each Chamber, the Chambers have confirmed they are finding it difficult to continue matching their activity within their current budget. In an effort to address this issue and to continue with the partnership working, it would be reasonable to agree a modest increase of the annual budget to £15,000 per annum. This can be met from existing budgets.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council increases the annual budget to the Chambers of Commerce/Trade to £15,000 per annum.

Unclassified

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ITEM 25**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regeneration
Date of Report	25 May 2023
File Reference	RDP163
Legislation	n/a
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Free Wi-Fi Provision
Attachments	None

1. Background

As Members will be aware the Council has provided free Town/City Centre Wi-Fi provision for the last 10 years.

This provides free internet access to residents and visitors in the commercial core by way of a Wi-Fi service which was originally funded by the Department for Social Development (DSD) as a marketing tool to enhance town centres.

As technology has moved at a rapid pace, the equipment and provision has struggled with download/upload speeds and the usage of this service has fallen dramatically over the last couple of years. Most people who own a mobile device usually have a data allowance and 4G connectivity, which is faster and easier to use than the Wi-Fi. The current service has an annual upkeep costs of £15K per annum, not including obsolete equipment repairs and replacement.

As part of the rate setting process the Council agreed that the Wi-Fi provision and the on-going maintenance was no longer sustainable.

Unclassified

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2. Next Steps

The Wi-Fi provision was effectively switched off as of 31 March 2023 and the Council is now in the process of decommissioning the equipment.

There are 68 Wi-Fi antennas that form the network to broadcast the free outdoor Wi-Fi. Of these 38 are located on private property, with the remainder on CCTV poles and other Council buildings. The following has now commenced:

- Terminate the broadcasting of the Wi-Fi system with Wi-Fi Spark
- Power off the gateway hubs in each of the towns.
- Stock take existing equipment and locations.
- Update names of tenants and owners of buildings which currently host antennas.
- Notify those that the scheme is being discontinued and the Council will follow up in relation to the removal of the equipment.

This process will take approximately 3 months to complete.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes the report.

Unclassified

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ITEM 26

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regeneration
Date of Report	25 May 2023
File Reference	RDP230
Legislation	n/a
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Conway Square Covering Project
Attachments	Conway Square Covering Project - Outline Business Case

1. Background

As Members will be aware the Council appointed Hall McKnight to undertake an economic appraisal of the proposed Conway Square covering project to ascertain the financial viability, economic benefits and fundability. There was a break clause included in the appointment that required a positive economic appraisal before moving to a detailed design and planning application for the project.

2. Economic Appraisal

The Outline Business Case (OBC), see appendix 1, has been prepared in accordance with Treasury guidance and follows the 'Five Case Model'. This also takes account of the previously undertaken Feasibility Study. The structure of the OBC is as follows:

- Introduction: To set out the background and context to the Conway Square development.

Unclassified

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- **Strategic Case:** To demonstrate strategic fit with local and regional policies, and to set out the clear and compelling case for intervention.
- **Economic Case:** To identify options to take forward the Project, acknowledging the need for a sustainable and viable option. This section also details the cost of the Preferred Option.
- **Commercial Case:** To outline the commercial arrangements underpinning the development of Conway Square.
- **Financial Case:** To demonstrate the affordability, fundability and financial sustainability of the Preferred Option.
- **Management Case:** To set out: the proposed governance arrangements, including project management and project assurance and the risk and benefits management processes.

The OBC clearly identifies several key constraints:

- Availability of capital funding from ANDBC and no identified external funder.
- Availability of revenue funding to manage the facility.
- Availability of human resources to manage the facility.
- The need to operate in a financially viable and sustainable manner as to add to the economy of Newtownards.
- Planning (although there has been engagement with Planning and HED).

The construction costs for the project are estimated in the region of c£800k. This budget has not been included in the current Council's project portfolio capital budgets profile.

A further key issue is the management of the Square and its events. The Council currently does not have the funding or resources to manage and deliver additional events in the Square besides those which are normally held.

Based on the limited data available, the project is not forecast to present a net economic benefit to the economy, although there would be non-monetary benefits. In light of this, it would be most difficult for the Council to proceed with the project as it is not considered to represent Value for Money.

3. Outcome

Whilst some benefits would be experienced from the project, they are outweighed by the risks and low economic benefits to Newtownards, especially in trying to enhance the evening economy. Given the findings set out in the OBC it would also be extremely unlikely that this project could attract external funding as a positive economic appraisal would be essential.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council does not proceed to the detailed design and planning application stage, due to the low economic benefit as detailed in the OBC.

Ards and North Down Borough Council CONWAY SQUARE NEWTOWNARDS

Outline Business Case

28 February 2023



Ards and North Down Borough Council

Conway Square Newtownards Contents

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3.0	ECONOMIC CASE	28
4.0	COMMERCIAL CASE	45
5.0	FINANCIAL CASE	47
6.0	MANAGEMENT CASE	51

Appendices

2.1	Feasibility Study
2.2	Ian Foster Submission
3.1	Capital costs
3.2	Life cycle costs
3.3	Tourism Benefits
3.4	NPSC

Ards and North Down Borough Council
Conway Square Newtownards - Outline Business Case

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GLOSSARY

Term	Description
ANDBC	Ards and North Down Borough Council
CSF	Critical Success Factor
DfC	Department for Communities
DfE	Department for the Economy
DoF	Department of Finance
EQIA	Equality Impact Assessment Exercise
FY	Financial Year
HED	The Historic Environment Division
MDM	Multiple Deprivation Measure
NIPPP	Northern Ireland Public Procurement Policy
NPSC	Net Present Social Cost
OB	Optimism Bias
OoS	Out of state
OBC	Outline Business Case
PAN	Procurement Advisory Note
PCR	Public Contract Regulations
PER	Project Evaluation Review
PfG	Programme for Government
PPE	Post Project Evaluation
PPR	Post Project Review
SRO	Senior Responsible Owner
VAT	Value Added Tax
VfM	Value for Money

Ards and North Down Borough Council Conway Square Newtownards - Outline Business Case

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1.0 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction to OBC

Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC or the Council), has appointed Hall McKnight and its associate Capaxo Limited to undertake an Outline Business Case (OBC) on the opportunity to develop Conway Square in Newtownards. This follows on from a Feasibility Study completed and approved by the Council in 2021, when the concepts included in this OBC were presented.

The purpose of this OBC is to provide the necessary business case cover to secure approval and funding for the Conway Square development.

1.2 Project Overview

A Masterplan was prepared for Conway Square in 2010.

As part of the public realm improvements, the Masterplan identifies Conway Square as a priority intervention, noting:

"It provides an excellent focal point for Newtownards, but would benefit from updating and redesign. The new space would reinvigorate the town, acting as a location for events, festivals and the weekly market, as well as a becoming a well-known and pleasant space for people to meet and spend time.

As the single most significant open space, it is important that the potential of the Square is maximised. There is an opportunity to make even more of the Square, allowing for more events and activities to be held in the space. A re-modelling of the Square is proposed, the aim being to reinforce its role as the civic heart of the town centre, one that is used all day, including evenings, every day, throughout the year.

Public open space, such as Conway Square, plays an important role in enhancing the character of civic buildings, as well as helping to attract business and tourism to a locality. Improvements to Civic Spaces could help to enhance the quality and amenity of the Town Centre.

Improvements to Conway Square would enhance the existing events programme. This would lead to an increase in footfall throughout the town centre".

The Project

The proposal is for redesign of Conway Square, with there to be two permanent canopies erected.



Ards and North Down Borough Council Conway Square Newtownards - Outline Business Case

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Capacities for Conway Square post redevelopment include:

- Standing (Static) Crowd Density - 1536 under the canopies / 2304 including central open area;
- Typical Market Stalls - 80 stalls under the canopies / 112 including central open area;
- 4-person tables layout (maxed out) -
- With the existing benches retained 1188 + 120 = 1208
- With the existing benches removed 1188 + 220 = 1308
- An indicative concert-type event capacity including a 10x6m stage of 1500 people (1620 including the benches).



1.3 Expenditure and Grant Sought

The cost of the option proposed above is as follows:

	Preferred Option - Option 0.3
Capital costs	£798,869
Lifecycle costs over 30 years	£90,108
Revenue costs provided for	£0

A summarised overview of the various analyses undertaken on the shortlisted options is presented in Table 1.2 below:

	Do Nothing Option 0	Do Minimum Option 1.0	Preferred Option - Option 0.3
Capital costs	£0	£436,726	£798,869
Lifecycle costs over 30 years	£0	£50,000	£90,108
Net present social cost	£0	£880,901	£1,207,352
NPSC Ranking	-	1	2
Benefit cost ratio	-	1: 0.27	1: 0.37
BCR ranking	-	1	2
Revenue costs provided for	£0	£0	£0

Ards and North Down Borough Council Conway Square Newtownards - Outline Business Case

	Do Nothing Option 0	Do Minimum Option 1.0	Preferred Option - Option 0.3
Non monetized benefit scores ¹	0	360	810
Risk scores ²	9	59	66

There are considered to be benefits in investment in the Square. Newtownards town is a popular retail area. There is an active Chamber who have noted the benefits that could arise from the investment in canopies in the square, in terms of opportunities for cultural and community events that are of benefits to the wider traders. It is noted that feedback from the wider traders has not been forthcoming. Feedback from Councillors was to be provided by the Chamber but has not been forthcoming.

There are risks that the benefits to the traders do not materialise, i.e., that there are challenges in managing events around the weekend markets.

In terms of the capital costs, the cost of the investment (£798k) is not included in the Council's capital budget.

A further key issue is the management of the Square and its events. The Council has indicated that it does not have the funding or resources to manage and deliver events in the Square.

The project, under both options, result in a Net Present Social cost and a BCR below 1:1 (a benchmark for value for money).

Based on the limited data available, the project is not forecast to present a Net economic benefit to the economy although there will be non monetary benefits.

The project is not considered to represent Value for Money and is not recommended.

1.4 Format of Report

This business case has been prepared in accordance with Treasury guidance to follow the Five Case Model. It follows on from the approved Feasibility Study. The structure of the OBC is therefore as follows:

- Introduction: To set out the background and context to the Conway Square development.
- Strategic Case: To demonstrate strategic fit with local and regional policies, and to set out the clear and compelling case for intervention.
- Economic Case: To identify options to take forward the Project, acknowledging the need for a sustainable and viable option. This section also details the cost of the Preferred Option.
- Commercial Case: To outline the commercial arrangements underpinning the development of Conway Square.
- Financial Case: To demonstrate the affordability, fundability and financial sustainability of the Preferred Option.
- Management Case: To set out: the proposed governance arrangements, including project management and project assurance and the risk and benefits management processes.

¹ Highest score depicts highest benefit

² Highest score depicts highest risk

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2.0 STRATEGIC CASE

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of the Strategic Case is to demonstrate how the development of Conway Square:

- Aligns with stated commitments of the NI Executive and Council and underpinning policies;
- Is supported by a compelling Case for Change, which underpins the need for development.

This Section of the OBC is therefore structured in two parts, as follows:

I Strategic Context: to provide a brief overview of Conway Square's alignment with the Executive's commitments, priorities and policies, and with those of ANDBC.

II The Case for Change: to define the Spending Objectives for the proposed development of the Conway Square, the key drivers for change, summarising the main benefits and risks, and constraints and dependencies.

I STRATEGIC CONTEXT

STRATEGIC AND POLICY ALIGNMENT

2.2 Policy Alignment - Regional Level

The need for development is driven by a number of strategies.

NI Executive Strategies

Draft Northern Ireland Programme for Government Framework (2016-2021)

- 'We prosper through a strong, competitive, (regionally balanced) economy' The proposal creates new employment post-launch.
- "We have created a place where people want to live and work, to visit and invest" - safeguards and delivers additional net job-years
- 'We give our children and young people the best start in life'

Programme for Government Draft Outcomes Framework Consultation December 2020

- Our children and young people have the best start in life
- Our economy is globally competitive, regionally balanced and carbon-neutral
- People want to live, work and visit here

The New Decade, New Approach Deal

Focuses on delivering what matters to citizens in Northern Ireland: better public services, a stronger economy and a fairer society.

Key Departmental Strategies

Draft Tourism Strategy for Northern Ireland (DfE) - The Project has the potential to attract tourist seeking an all weather facility and attracting repeat visitors from NI and ROI. Assist in the recovery of the tourism sector, post Covid19.

ANDBC Strategies: The Project underpins the following:

The Integrated Strategy for Tourism, Regeneration and Economic Development which presents a coherent vision for the pursuit of prosperity in the Borough of Ards and North Down 2018-2030. This notes that the visitor proposition for Ards and North Down has been guided by the following principles:

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- The need to create greater awareness of the destination by communicating that Ards and North Down has a wealth of living and historic culture; specific things to participate in; specific places to encounter and a programming of events designed to showcase the essence of the destination.
- The proposition is centred around a unique, distinctive and differentiating aspect of the destination
- Creativity, as expressed through the ways in which visitors will encounter the destination's places, people, personality, product and programming of events, is central to the proposition.
- The 'experiences' will be true to the motivations of those visitors who represent the best prospects for the destination.

The strategy identifies a number of tourism opportunities in the Borough such as the promotion of themed routes and trails along the coast, developing a diverse range of visitor accommodation, investing in the public realms of towns and villages and bringing heritage buildings back into sustainable use.

This strategy describes the key investment priorities of ANDBC up to 2030. This includes a detailed "Visitor Proposition".

- Targets within this strategy to which the Conway Square project will contribute include:
- **Visitor Targets:** Increase ANDBC share of Overnight Trips from 6% in 2016 to 10% in 2030
 - Overnight Trips to increase from 283,229 in 2016 to 507,227 in 2030
 - Associated Visitor Expenditure to increase from £46m in 2016 to £82m in 2030
- **Jobs Target:** Increase job growth by an ambitious 22% resulting in an additional 7,500 jobs by 2030.
- **Productivity Target:** To increase GVA per head in the Ards and North Down area to at least the NI average by the end of the strategy period (2030). The 2015 AND baseline was £11.7k against a 2015 NI baseline of £18.6k.
- Investment in Conway Square has the potential to be an enabler for each of the above targets.

ANDBC Integrated Arts and Heritage Development Strategy

The three main priorities which are relevant for the strategic context are as follows:

Priority 1:

- Investment in our heritage assets by Council and other agencies: Develop a heritage programme to animate, support and build capacity within the heritage sector and safeguard and develop heritage assets of Ards and North Down including buildings and monuments.
- Expand the heritage offer: Develop the heritage offer to ensure its collection is representative of the whole borough.

Priority 2:

- Collaborating to make the most of national resources.
- Work with national cultural organisations to make the most of resources and the opportunities they offer to engage visitors and residents.

Priority 3:

- Promote Pride of Place.
- Support and create a sense of local pride of place.
- The proposed Conway Square Project represents an opportunity to contribute to each of the above priorities.

ANDBC Growing Better Together the Corporate Plan 2020-2024 and The Big Plan 2017 - 2032

The Ards and North Down Borough Council Corporate Plan sets out the Council's vision that Ards and North Down will be a place to be proud of - which is more prosperous, vibrant, healthy and sustainable; and where people enjoy an excellent quality of life.

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The Corporate Plan sets out the following priorities:

- Priority 1: Prosperity: Growing our local economy;
- Priority 2: Environment : Growing a cleaner, greener local and global environment;
- Priority 3: Opportunity : Growing the lifelong potential of our community;
- Priority 4: Pride : Growing empowerment, respect and safety of our community;
- Priority 5: Life : Growing the health and wellbeing of our residents; and
- Priority 6: Excellence : Growing a high-performing Council.

Through these priorities the Plan aims to enable all people in Ards and North Down to:

- Outcome 1: Fulfil their lifelong potential
- Outcome 2: Enjoy good health and wellbeing
- Outcome 3: Live in communities where they are respected, are safe and feel secure
- Outcome 4: Benefit from a prosperous economy
- Outcome 5: Feel pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment

An aspirational vision for 2032 "Ards and North Down is a vibrant, connected, healthy, safe and prosperous place to live."

II THE CASE FOR CHANGE

THE CASE OF NEED/CASE FOR INTERVENTION

2.3 The Socio Economic Profile

2.3.1 Overview of Ards and North Down as per The Big Plan.

As at 2019, the population of Ards and North Down is estimated to be 161,725 persons, representing 9% of the Northern Ireland total.

Newtownards is the largest settlement in Ards and Down area, with a population that has grown rapidly in recent years to an estimated 28,050 in 2011. On Census day (27 March 2011) Newtownards accounted for 1.55% of the NI total. Of these:

- 20.26% were aged under 16 years and 15.19% were aged 65 and over;
- 51.70% of the usually resident population were female and 48.30% were male;
- 39 years was the average (median) age of the population;

The perception of Ards and North Down is one of affluence where people are well educated, live in large houses and enjoy an excellent quality of life. In comparison to the rest of Northern Ireland, we have the lowest levels of obesity, higher than average levels of economic activity and some of the most majestic scenery, high quality outdoor spaces and accessible leisure facilities for people to participate in physical recreation.

The ANDBC population is getting older. In 2015, 20% of people in Ards and North Down were aged 65 and over. By 2032 this is projected to have risen to 28%.

12% of all jobs in Ards and North Down are in the tourism industry. This is higher than the Northern Ireland average of 8%. This area is served by approximately seven hotels, 36 B&Bs, nine guesthouses, two guest accommodation providers and 103 self-catering facilities. There were over 1.5 million trips to visitor attractions during 2015.

93% of adults engaged in culture, arts and leisure Source: NISRA, DfC, 2011-14.

Of particular relevance is Outcome 4 and 5 of the Big Plan.

Outcome 4: All people in Ards and North Down benefit from a prosperous economy

This notes the value of tourism - with 61% hotel room occupancy Source: NISRA, Tourism Statistics, 2016.

Aesthetics of our business hubs and tourism infrastructure is seen as critical.

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Attractive town and village centres, well conserved historic buildings and sites, alongside safe, vibrant and accessible leisure and tourist facilities, serving local need and visitors alike, are important assets in which to develop a strong economic base. Natural, built and archaeological heritage should be promoted as part of Ards and North Down's tourism asset. Tourism will help develop a long-term sustainable economy in both urban and rural areas. Tourism will help develop a long-term sustainable economy in both urban and rural areas.



Figure 2.1: GVA in ARD

This indicates the level of local business success and the strength or weakness of the local economy. Gross Value Added (GVA) is the value of goods and services produced in an area or industry sector. This indicator shows the estimated value of businesses in Ards and North Down.



Figure 2.2: Total spend

This indicates the importance of tourism to the area. Overnight stays can be used to measure growth in this industry as well as the economic benefits that can be generated.

Outcome 5: All people in Ards and North Down feel pride from having access to a well-managed sustainable environment

There are approximately 652 archaeological sites/monuments and 675 listed buildings

Source: Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Figure 2.3: Access to Listed buildings

The value of quality open and heritage spaces: Open spaces can provide platforms for community activities, social interaction and physical recreation, as well as reducing social isolation, improving community relations and positively affecting the wider determinants of health. During the Big Conversation, people told us they want to be able to interact with their environment. There are lots of opportunities across Ards and North Down to create a connected green infrastructure that

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protects and enhances biodiversity while also enabling people to benefit from exposure to well-kept green shared spaces.

People benefit from having access to a well preserved historic environment, the benefits of which are often overlooked. The historic environment provides interesting ways to learn about the complexity of our past; it has proven positive impacts on health and wellbeing and has a key economic role to play through encouraging tourism and increasing quality of life. It is a finite resource that should be nurtured and promoted.

2.3.2 Tourism Statistics for Ards and North Down

Key attractions in the Borough

The Borough has a number of key attractions, including Mount Stewart and Scrabo Castle (shown before Covid):

	2017	2018	2019
Ards Visitor Information Centre	37,864	30,041	28,451
Bangor Abbey	1,099	1,081	712
Bangor Visitor Information Centre (Tower House)	25,543	14,969	13,154
Castle Espie Wetland Centre	59,925	61,296	60,353
Cockle Row Cottages	16,051	11,697	9,385
Grey Abbey			21,870
Grey Point Fort	11,841		37,349
Mount Stewart House & Gardens	217,221	236,491	239,392
Nendrum Monastic Site	3,125	1,793	9,157
North Down Museum	75,944	72,445	73,664
Pickie Fun Park	235,359	396,737	393,651
Portaferry Visitor Information Centre	10,017	9,286	7,422
Portico Arts and Heritage Centre	5,000	5,900	200
The Lookout, Mount Stewart	13,263	14,503	11,613
Ulster Folk & Transport Museum	168,077	146,425	172,712

The opportunity from Out of State (OoS) visitors, including since Covid, is demonstrated through Pickie Fun Park in Bangor.

Pickie Park case study

10% of visitors had traditionally come from outside NI, which in 2019, at circa 36k Out of State (OoS) visitors, is significant and helps to contribute to the TNI aim of regional dispersal. OoS visitors increased to 25% of total visitors in 2020. At an annual figure of circa 400,000 visitors, OoS visitors would therefore be in the region of 100k.

For Exploris Aquarium in Portaferry, OoS visitors accounted for 30% of all visitors in 2020.

It is also noted that a generation of artisan entrepreneurs is emerging in Ards and North Down. The soil and micro-climate in the Borough is ideal for producing new foods. Some local food producers in the Borough include Echlinville Distillery just outside Rubane which produces whiskey and Jawbox Gin, Farmageddon craft ale, based in Comber, Glastry Farm Ice Cream, Kearney Blue Cheese, near Portaferry and Clandeboye Yogurt, just outside Bangor.

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Events in the Borough

The Council has noted the events throughout the Borough, including Newtownards (as per the Feasibility Study):

2019	
EVENT	DATE
Easter, Bangor	Saturday 20 th - Monday 22 nd April
May Day, Holywood	Monday 6 th May
Pipe Bands, Ards Airfield	Saturday 11 th May
Sea Bangor, Bangor	Saturday 1 st - 2 nd June
Comber Earlies Festival	Saturday 29 th June
Summer Entertainment, Ward Park, Bangor	Sundays in July & August
Bluegrass Picnic, Bangor	Sunday 25 th August
Portavogie Seafood Festival	Saturday 10 th August
Groomsport Music and Fireworks	Saturday 17 th August
Donaghadee Lights Up	Saturday 7 th September
Seapark Fireworks, Holywood	Saturday 26 th October
Bangor Christmas Switch on	Saturday 23 rd November
Newtownards Christmas Switch on, Conway Sq	Saturday 30 th November
2021	
EVENT	DATE
Summer Animation, Bangor	Saturday 21 st August
Portavogie Seafood Festival / Tide and Turf	Saturday 11 th September
Pipe Band Championships, Bangor	Saturday 4 th September
Bangor Christmas Switch on	Date TBC - November
Newtownards Christmas Switch on, Conway Square	Date TBC - November

Tourism in Ards and North Down

Ards and North Down accounts for 6% of overnight trips (8% of those from Great Britain):

Council Area	Domestic	Great Britain	Other European & North America	Other (including Rol)	All
Antrim and Newtownabbey	65,895	75,311	30,032	22,293	193,531
Ards and North Down	89,706	112,536	40,663	31,290	274,195
Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon	63,336	71,822	30,640	21,568	187,366
Belfast	377,991	652,438	335,518	179,299	1,545,245
Causeway Coast and Glens	603,031	138,015	62,948	157,632	961,626
Derry City and Strabane	132,876	84,328	36,837	41,997	296,038
Fermanagh and Omagh	216,795	56,706	19,744	57,290	350,535
Lisburn and Castlereagh	52,646	71,127	27,177	19,072	170,022
Mid and East Antrim	117,713	94,549	35,631	36,740	284,633
Mid Ulster	56,034	51,685	23,357	17,322	148,398
Newry, Mourne and Down	345,758	74,469	28,467	88,169	536,863
Northern Ireland	2,121,779	1,482,987	671,015	672,671	4,948,452
% AND	4%	8%	6%	5%	6%

The number of nights stayed (at 4.36) is above the NI average:

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Council Area	Overnight Trips	Nights	Expenditure	Ave Duration
A&N	157,228	525,432	27,668,300	3.34
AND	257,119	1,121,979	45,983,014	4.36
ABC	188,551	704,130	26,404,319	3.73
Belfast	1,693,985	5,244,269	395,013,843	3.10
C&G	1,011,485	3,177,569	172,343,288	3.14
DC&S	334,874	1,025,913	55,433,203	3.06
F&O	403,904	1,064,561	72,894,905	2.64
LCC	189,366	725,493	30,527,274	3.83
MEA	296,441	966,916	50,670,328	3.26
MU	130,088	450,101	21,968,481	3.46
NMD	449,953	1,289,821	69,345,336	2.87
Northern Ireland	5,112,993	16,296,184	968,252,291	3.19

The setting is at a Grade B+ Listed Town Hall.

NISRA has noted that attractiveness of outdoor areas and historic properties to visitors;

Attraction Category	Number of Visitors (Thousands)	(%)
Country Parks/Parks/Forests	5,040	39%
Gardens	180	1%
Historic Properties	1,020	8%
Museum/Art Galleries	1,780	14%
Visitor/Heritage Centres	2,120	16%
Wildlife/Zoo/Nature Reserve	520	4%
Places of Worship	150	1%
Other	2,170	17%
Total (135 Responding attractions)	12,980	100%

Attraction Category	Estimated Proportion of Visitors External to NI (%)
Country Parks/Parks/Forests	21%
Gardens	26%
Historic Properties	67%
Museums/Art Galleries	36%
Visitor/Heritage Centres	47%
Wildlife/Zoo/Nature Reserve	15%
Places of Worship	69%
Other	20%
All Responding Attractions (N=116)	31%

2.3.3 Conclusion

The above would indicate the aspirations for the Council to grow its tourism asset, to maximise the opportunity from historic sites and the public realm.

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The need for outdoor space is all the more critical as a result of Covid. Tourism NI do not expect a return to 2019 figures until 2026. There is an emphasis on local NI and ROI /GB visitors, with attractions such as Pickie Fun Park demonstrating the appeal to OoS visitors.

2.4 The Case for Change

This section describes the key reasons why public investment in the Conway Square Project is needed to bring important benefits to the Region:

2.4.1 Reason 1 - Need to Address Declining Visitors to Ards and North Down

Research undertaken for the purposes of the Council Strategy documents has shown that visitor numbers to the Ards and North Down Borough are falling. The table below illustrates the rate of decline:

Visitors and Spending in the Borough	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Change between 2014 and 2018
Trips to AND ('000)	443	378 (8% of NI)	283 (6% of NI)	282 (6% of NI)	257 (5% of NI)	-42%
Visitor Spend (£'m)	63	55 (7% of NI)	46 (5% of NI)	46 (5% of NI)	46 (5% of NI)	-27%
Holiday Visitors (000) ³	172	174 (45% of NI)	157 (42% of NI)	96 (30% of NI)	90 (33% of NI)	-48%

Source: Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency ("NISRA")

This shows the number of trips to the Borough fell by 42% over the five years to 2018 and the visitor spend by 27%. This occurred when the total number of overnight trips across the rest of NI **increased** over the same period.

In addition, Ards and North Down productivity (GVA per head) is significantly lower than the NI average. The 2015 Gross Value Added per head in the Borough was £11,678 compared to an NI average of £18,584. The business profile of the Borough is dominated by sectors that typically produce low levels of productivity (specifically retail/wholesale, public sector service provision and accommodation/food services).

This demonstrates a clear need for public intervention to address the decline in visitor numbers and the associated reduction in employment this is creating.

Analysis undertaken by Tourism NI has highlighted the strengths of the Borough which provide the basis for the investment needed to arrest this decline. A Visitor Attitude Survey undertaken in 2018 highlighted the following important points relating to the tourism sector in Ards and North Down:

- The Borough attracts a higher proportion of local leisure visitors than most other areas, particularly day trippers.
- The area welcomes a greater proportion of frequent visitors than the NI average.
- Great Britain is the second largest source market - 29% of all visitors originated in GB.
- The existing attractions are a key motivation for visiting Ards & North Down, as well as the beautiful scenery. Leisure visitors to this area were more likely to visit historic buildings and forest parks/gardens (they were very positive about the friendliness/professionalism of staff at these attractions but less happy about the cleanliness of the beaches and the area in general).

The most popular attractions were as follows:

³ 3 year rolling average (2012-2014 / 2013 – 2015 / 2014-2016) for Holiday, Pleasure, Leisure Trips

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Attraction	Percentage of Visitors that confirmed a trip
• Mount Stewart House and Gardens	• 63%
• Ulster Folk and Transport Museums	• 43%
• Crawfordsburn Country Park	• 16%
• Pickie Fun Park	• 14%
• Scrabo Country Park	• 11%

The latest information on the visitors to the Borough collected by NISRA in 2019 is shown below:

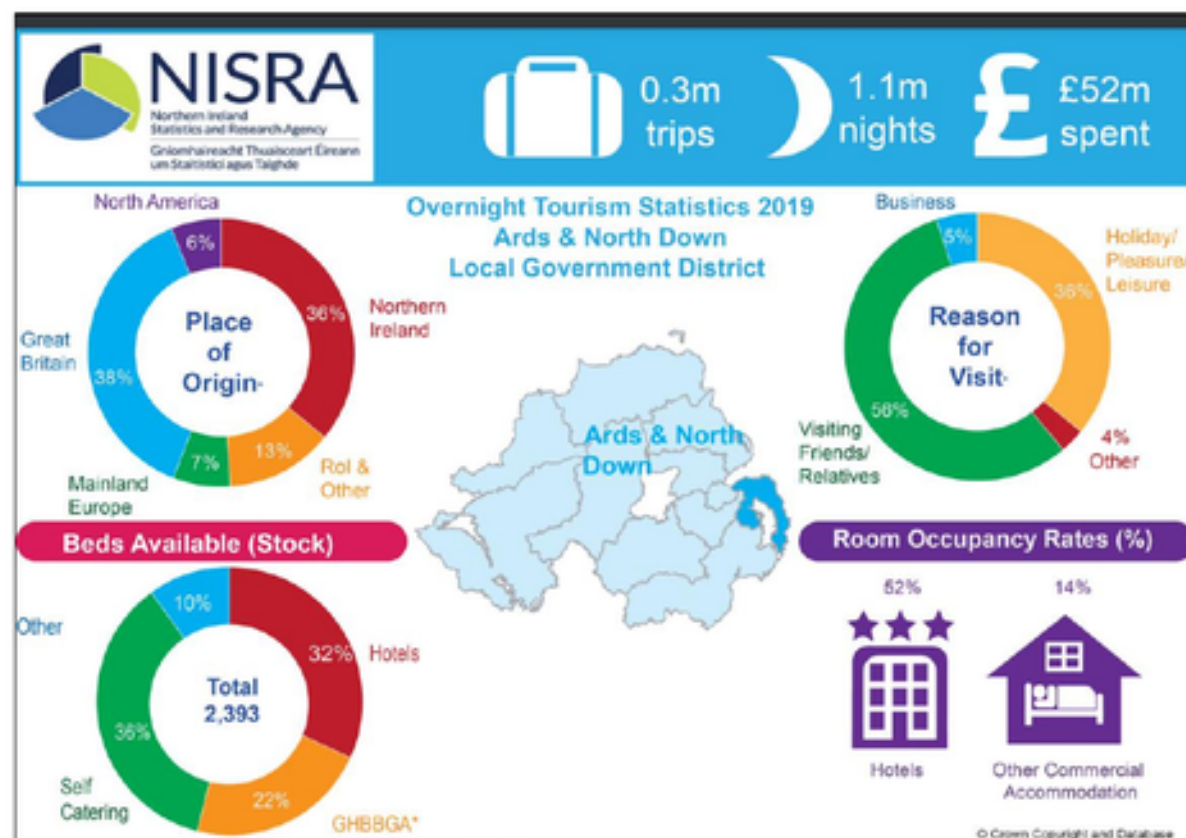


Figure 2.4: ARD tourism data from NISRA

This shows that Ards and North Down remains a popular location for visitors from outside Northern Ireland (particularly from people visiting friends and relatives). Therefore, a firm base exists from which future economic benefits can be derived from investment in local infrastructure.

2.4.2 Reason 2 - Potential to Address Deprivation and Enhance Employment Opportunities

The redevelopment of Conway Square has the potential to attract important inward investment in terms of services that complement the attraction and provide employment for people in the surrounding area. Therefore, it is important to establish the impact that this could have.

The table below provides an overview of Conway Square wards and surrounding wards in terms of their rankings under the Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (MDM) 2017.

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Ward	Conway Square	West Winds	Ballygrainey	Movilla	Gregstown	Glen	Cronstown
Multiple Deprivation Measure Rank	32	34	176	180	265	349	428
Income Domain Rank	31	34	160	162	209	293	371
Employment Domain Rank	49	51	212	169	208	339	420
Health Deprivation and Disability Domain Rank	62	69	96	172	211	335	381
Education, Skills and Training Domain Rank	48	26	103	73	158	219	380
Access to Services Domain Rank	435	230	211	285	413	272	312
Living Environment Domain Rank	153	443	449	456	408	370	243
Crime and Disorder Domain Rank	24	125	140	189	257	167	437

Figure 2.5: MDM from NISRA

Conway Square, West Winds, Ballygrainey and Movilla all fall into the top half of the most deprived areas within NI. In particular, both Conway Square (32nd) and West Winds (34th) fall within the top 8% of the most deprived wards in NI.

Two other key measures to note are also:

- 1) **Health deprivation and Disability Measure:** The Conway Square, West Winds and Ballygrainey wards all fall within the top 25% of the most deprived wards in NI relating to health. Access to attractive walking and active leisure facilities at Whitespots could assist in addressing this issue.
- 2) **Education, Skills and Training Measure:** All four wards of Conway Square, West Winds, Ballygrainey and Movilla fall within the top 25% of the wards with the least access to education, skills and training.

2.4.3 Reason 3 - Opportunity to Build upon the Investment in the Public Realm and Bring Underutilised Heritage Attractions to Greater Prominence

There is the opportunity to unlock a highly valuable asset for the ANDBC area.

In 2017, the Council in conjunction with the Department for Communities invested £5.5 million into a Public Realm Scheme for Newtownards. The objective of these works was to reinvigorate Newtownards, transforming the visual appearance of the town centre by complementing its townscape character, rich history, and listed features. This scheme included regeneration works to Conway Square and nine adjoining streets.

The Square was developed as a main public space and key focal point to complement listed and historic features. The materials and design style used within the Square were translated through to the surrounding streets.

The focal point of the Conway Square is the Market House/Town Hall. The Market House - later to become the Town Hall in Newtownards, was erected by the Stewarts. The Market Place was designed by Ferdinando De Stratford. Construction started in 1765 by the Stewarts and finished in 1770.

Originally there was a great archway in its centre which spanned the line of the North/South street axis. The market occupied the ground floor while the upstairs held function rooms which were used by the local gentry for social events and civic matters. inc. a public lecture room, ballroom and news room - Downstairs were the caretakers room, weighing office and Y.M.C.A. rooms.

There has been discussion with The Historic Environment Division (HED) as to develop within the setting of the Grade B+ Listed Town Hall.

Events in Conway Square

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There has traditionally been a market at Conway Square. This typically includes a diverse range of stalls including local fruit and vegetables, seafood and meat; there are also tools, clothing and accessories, toys, flowers and plants. It is held every Saturday from early morning.

Feedback from the Council Events Manager and Arts Manager for indication of events in the current timetable taking place in Conway Square note the following:

- Events - Christmas Switch On in Conway Square - 26th November 2022
- Arts - Creative Peninsula - scheduled for 4th August 2023
- The Saturday Market occupies the Square on Saturday all year around and each year in September, a Harvest Fair is also usually held.
- Continental market May
- Weekly street theatre
- Other smaller activity events such as Puppet festival held at the end of May usually tags along with the Saturday Market.



The market and the Harvest Fair are operated on a franchise basis, with each subject to public tender every five years.

Feedback from the Chamber is that the Square is underutilised.

2.4.4. Reason 4 - Need to increase the retail sector in Newtownards with economic benefits to the Borough

The original need for the Project came from the Chamber of Trade at Newtownards. Newtownards is recognised as a prosperous town in the ARD area.

In 2022, Newtownards and Coleraine jointly scooped the prestigious High Street of the Year award, battling High Streets across Northern Ireland for the coveted prize.

Wardens of Newtownards received the sought-after Overall Retailer of the Year award.

The initiative shone a light on Northern Ireland's independent retailers, with the public choosing their favourite retailers in an online vote, and over 10,000 participating.

Given its success, as a market town with significant independent retailers, the Chamber of Trade at Newtownards are seeking to increase footfall, with an all weather facility to attract additional visitors to the town and to encourage them to stay longer.

2.4.5. Reason 5 - Need to deliver against the Council's Area Community Plan and promote Neighbourhood Tourism

The Ards and North Down Borough Council Corporate Plan sets out the Council's vision that Ards and North Down will be a place to be proud of - which is more prosperous, vibrant, healthy and sustainable; and where people enjoy an excellent quality of life.

A key driver will be the promotion of neighbourhood tourism. The proposal is for the Council to deliver a programme of events that increases the tourism and community offering and creates a standout visitor experience. The market need is underpinned by:

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- Benchmarking, according to the Visitor Attitude survey 2018 of Tourism NI, 24% of visitors to Belfast City have visited St Georges Market.
- Experiences related to food and drink are also highlighted in the recent domestic tourism strategy of Tourism NI (March 2020). The objective is to shift domestic perception beyond fine-dining to also include more casual and broader range food experiences, including markets and street food. With the redevelopment of Conway Square there is opportunity to be part of this strategic effort.
- Overall, more local and neighbourhood-centred tourism is strategically framed as the natural “next step” for regions. The 2018 report by Deloitte, commissioned by Belfast City Council, describes local tourism as part of developing the depth and range of the Belfast tourism offering. Local tourism experiences are seen as part of the wider tourism ecosystem, though not in themselves enough reason-to-go.
- The breath of its heritage and cultural offering makes Conway Square ideally placed for further development of tourism attractions and experiences.
- Conway Square has the opportunity to create an authentic tourism destination which expands on the developing offer of Ards and North Down and promotes heritage and the public realm.
- However, there is clearly significant potential from the investment in a high quality, authentic and sustainable product development and experience development initiative at Conway Square.

Details of the events that the Chamber envisage that Conway Square will cater for, post redevelopment, are noted in para 2.6.

2.4.6. Reason 6 - Need to Address Changing Public Needs following COVID-19 Pandemic

The impact of the COVID 19 pandemic has resulted in an increase in the demand for open air / leisure facilities. Conway Square hosts a Saturday and Christmas market as well as a number of one-off events, but is largely underutilised. This project would increase utilisation at the Square.

2.5. Findings from the Masterplan and 2021 Feasibility Study

2.5.1 Masterplan

The Newtownards Town Centre Masterplan 2010⁴, prepared by Scott Wilson for the Council and the then DSD, identified the need to create a civic space that is at the heart of the town centre and setting for public events and activities that define the character and community spirit of the town.

It noted the following:

Conway Square is the functional, as well as the historic, heart of Newtownards. It is at the heart of the Town Centre retail core and the setting for public activities and events that define the character and community spirit of the town. It is at the very centre of the network of streets and spaces and is an important civic asset. Several uses and activities are accommodated within the space, including:

- Weekly Saturday Market with a diverse range of stalls including local fruit and vegetables, seafood and meat, there are also tools, clothing and accessories, toys, flowers and plants and more;

⁴ https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/downloads/Newtownards_Town_Centre_Masterplan_Dec19.pdf

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- A number of one-off or annual events are also held, including: a Continental Market; the 'A Taste of the Peninsula' Festival; a Game Fair, Puppet Orchestra Session/Puppet Making Workshop; the Ards Town Centre Cycle Races; an annual 'Creative Peninsula' Event, a 'Craft in the Square' day; and the Newtownards Harvest Fair day;

- Eating and drinking: although part of the primary retail core, the area surrounding Conway Square is also home to several catering services.

In addition, Conway Square plays an important tourism role in helping to improve accessibility, marketing, and the cultural and heritage attraction of Newtownards. Conway Square is also home to Ards Art Centre, which is located in the beautifully restored Georgian Town Hall.

A municipal and Grade B+ building, Ards Arts Centre delivers a year-long programme of visual arts exhibitions, creative classes and workshops, performances of live music, dance and drama.

As part of the public realm improvements, the Masterplan identifies Conway Square as a priority intervention, noting:

"It provides an excellent focal point for Newtownards, but would benefit from updating and redesign. The new space would reinvigorate the town, acting as a location for events, festivals and the weekly market, as well as becoming a well-known and pleasant space for people to meet and spend time.

As the single most significant open space, it is important that the potential of the Square is maximised. There is an opportunity to make even more of the Square, allowing for more events and activities to be held in the space. A re-modelling of the Square is proposed, the aim being to reinforce its role as the civic heart of the town centre, one that is used all day, including evenings, every day, throughout the year.

Public open space, such as Conway Square, plays an important role in enhancing the character of civic buildings, as well as helping to attract business and tourism to a locality. Improvements to Civic Spaces could help to enhance the quality and amenity of the Town Centre.

Improvements to Conway Square would enhance the existing events programme. This would lead to an increase in footfall throughout the town centre".

This project therefore seeks to deliver on the opportunities identified in the Masterplan.

2.5.2 Feasibility Study

Ards and North Down Borough Council appointed a professional team led by Hall McKnight Architects to carry out a Feasibility Study on a new 'bespoke, stand-alone, covered structure' for Conway Square in Newtownards.

The purpose of this study was to establish proposed design concepts and cost analysis for the installation of a covered structure for Conway Square.

The design concepts needed to be in principle acceptable to Historic Environment Division (HED), Department for Infrastructure, Department for Communities, Planners, local traders, and local representatives.

This Feasibility Study was to serve as a foundation upon which the structure will be built and of which a specification for the development of the design, build and installation of the structure could be developed.

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The development of an agreed design concept and the preparation of specification requirement was to enable the Council to move to the implementation stage once external funding becomes available.

In summary, this study was to:

- Establish options which will enable the Council to make a fully informed decision about the potential long term, sustainable use of the site and viability of the covered structure.
- Help to identify feasible design and costing options. The design options will need to include how the site will accommodate many and varied events/activities over a longer term.
- Consult with all relevant stakeholders and reach agreement on a proposed design and cost option.
- Assist in the development of other project documentation such as business case, project execution plan, and strategic brief

Following workshops with the Planners and HED, Hall McKnight developed Option 03 as the 'Preferred Option' for the purpose of this Feasibility Study.

This option proposed a 'tree' arrangement with 4 columns for each canopy and two pitched roofs running E-W. The structural proposals for this option included X-shaped steel plate columns and steel plate beams extending sloping down towards the corners and middle of the covered structure. A series of rooflights is then proposed at the columns and centre of each canopy. The structure was proposed as a mix of steel column and beam with a Cross-Laminated Timber soffit clad in zinc or copper.

Both the Planners and HED felt that this was their preferred option as the most appropriate structure for the setting of the Grade B+ Listed Town Hall.

There are several developments since the planning workshop including:

- The X-shaped column structure has been revised to a simple rectangular steel section for each column (approx. 200x400mm); This has simplified the base detail (a flush with the surrounding ground stone base) as well as the roof structure above.
- The reduced column structure further reduces the visual obstruction to the Town Hall and maximises the flexibility of the space below;
- The roof structure has been revised to include 2no beams running E-W, effectively portalising each half;
- The roof geometry has also been adjusted to include a hip (similar to Option 04), allowing a continuous horizontal edge along three sides of each canopy. This simplifies the roof drainage and takes the water to the outer edges of the canopies in line with the existing drainage channels;
- The roof plane is proposed as a series of large Cross-Laminated Timber slabs, clad in zinc;
- 6no. rooflights are currently proposed per canopy. This is to be further tested and developed at future design stages in order to optimise the amount of light, shade and cost of the rooflights;
- A combination of in-ground uplighters and suspended lights has been proposed at this stage. Lighting proposals are to be further developed at future design stages.

This Preferred Option was presented to the Newtownards Town Advisory Group on the 18 June 2021 and was unanimously well-received. Further areas are to be further investigated at future design stages, including:

- Quantity and size of rooflights;
- Drainage details;

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- Material specification for the proposed roof structure (potential to use steel with CLT roof slabs, instead of the CLT beams and slabs);
- Colour of the structure;
- Lighting of the canopies;
- Temporary covers for each side, effectively forming 2 enclosed 'halls';
- Bespoke temporary structure to cover the open middle section of the square for Special events.

The Preferred Option - 0.3 - would accommodate the following:

STANDING CAPACITY

Standing Capacity per Canopy is 768 people (1536 people under both canopies).

As each canopy is 1/3 of the square, the central open space can accommodate an additional 768 people, bringing the total standing capacity up to 2304. A temporary cover can be provided to the central space for special events.

MARKET STALLS CAPACITY UNDER CANOPIES

40 market stalls can be comfortably accommodate under each canopy. In this layout a total of 80 market stalls with ample area to circulate around can be accommodated. At least 32 more stalls (dashed in blue) within the open central area can be further accommodated. This brings the total market stalls up to 112. A temporary cover for the central area can be provided for special events.

4 PERSON TABLES

This indicative layout shows 99x 4-seater tables under each canopy and in the central open space. This allows for a total of 297 tables (1188 covers). The central open area can be covered with a temporary structure for special events. This layout allows for a central E-W route to be maintained free of obstructions for general circulation around the square. If the existing benches were to be removed, an additional 55 tables can be accommodated, adding 220 extra covers.

Total number of seats:

With the existing benches retained $1188 + 120 = 1208$

With the existing benches removed $1188 + 220 = 1308$

CONCERT-TYPE EVENT CAPACITY

An outdoor concert-type seating layout allows 1500 seats. 2/3 of the seating is under the canopies (980). A temporary central cover could be provided. The existing benches are excluded from the calculation. Each S-shaped bench accommodates approx. 20 people, allowing an additional 120 seats, increasing the total to 1620.

The above would indicate the potential uses of the redeveloped Square and capacity footfalls into Newtownards.

2.5 Feedback from the Chamber of Trade at Newtownards

A meeting was held with the Representatives of the Chamber of Trade in Newtownards in October 2022.

The feedback was very positive as to the benefits from the redeveloped Square, with the Chamber noting:

- The usage of the Square is poor as per para 2.4.3.
- Funding post the Masterplan and the Public Realm did not materialise.

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- The Redeveloped Conway Square will cater for festivals, market events, the evening economy, with opportunities for pop-up eateries.
- The canopies for the Square would offer a form of weatherproofing for Christmas Market/Switch on's, and other large scale events with potential for bookings by entertainment agencies.
- Potential for evening events and the stimulation and expansion of the night time economy.
- Potential usage of the liquor licence for events (transferred from adjoining public house)
- Increased usage of the Town Hall as a commercial venue.
- There were challenges in getting access to the Council's calendar of events for the Square.

The Chamber were asked to provide Letters of Support from Traders.

Three submissions of support were received, from Ian Foster, a Chamber member and planning consultant, from David Hull Promotions and from Del Pieros who trade from Conway Square.

Ian Foster

CONWAY SQUARE

The town of Newtownards is the "Gateway" town for the Ards Peninsula and lies at the convergence of five (5) A class traffic routes. There is a catchment population of approx. 220,000 persons living within a twenty (20) minute drive time of the Square. This unique position renders the town centre easily accessible not only to those resident in the catchment area but also those from further afield.

The installation of the canopy as proposed will have the following positive effects;

Establish an all-weather area at the heart of the Borough with solar powered lighting to reduce running and operational costs.

Create a "Piazza" at the centre of the Borough Council Area.

Expansion and use of the central square during the day by the community.

Encourage the local community and visitors to identify the "Piazza" as a meeting place

Encourage growth of the local catering facilities with stimulation of other local businesses

Stimulation and expansion of the night time economy.

Allow for full programme of entertainment both local and national. (Music / opera /Dance/etc.

Creation of a programme of inter-community challenges

Create a unique open-air medium sized facility for entertainment agencies to book.

The creation of this "Piazza" will have a beneficial effect on the mental health and wellbeing of the community by the creation of a meeting/ conversation hub. The ease of access to this location will promote more walking and cycling within the town centre.

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From David Hull Promoter

Dear Ian

Thank you for bringing to my attention the plans that are proposed for the creation of a covered piazza at Conway Square.

My first reaction is that it is both an innovative and creative reimagining of the square. The devil is always in the detail and execution of the plan giving due consideration for its use as an entertainment/exhibition space will be vital.

However the use of outdoor squares and spaces e.g. Custom House Square in Belfast, which has seen events from food markets to popular music concerts, has greatly increased footfall within the area and with it resulting benefits to the local economy.

I see no reason why innovative programming of the space would not achieve the same results in Newtownards. I certainly can imagine Conway Square as a hub for a variety of events and exhibitions. The space could be used to promote and celebrate culture, heritage, design and technology. Such activity would draw attention and focus to the town and help position the town as a centre for arts, culture and innovation.

The creation of a covered piazza would be a unique facility within Northern Ireland and I would fully support you in your efforts to make this happen.

Regards

Del Pieros who trade from 10 locations, one based in Conway Square.

Further to our conversation about a fixed covering in the square, I want to offer our 100% support to the project. As a local business with four outlets in Newtownards town centre and Ards Shopping Centre our family have chosen to invest in our hometown and have been hugely encouraged by the work of the Chamber and Council.

Conway Square in Newtownards is the envy of many major towns in Northern Ireland. It's a considerable size, an actual square, flat and bang in the centre of the town. It was these qualities and the potential of its use that caused us to invest in 7 Conway Square in 2019.

In spite of its obvious qualities as an amenity space I believe there is potential way beyond its current usage, most significantly as an economic driver for town centre businesses. With the right investment Conway Square can become a destination, routinely attracting people from outside of the Borough.

The Chamber and Council have done a fantastic job in recent years ensuring that town centre businesses are supported. I'd encourage both groups to push further and execute the vision for a fixed covering to the square that has the potential of increasing year-round usage and the towns night-time economy.

I've no doubt that with the right investment and ongoing support that Conway Square can replicate the qualities of any European town centre plaza or piazza. Imagine a clustering of food businesses with cafes, bars and restaurants. Hordes of people sitting around tables, good food and drink, live music, chatter and all undercover, allowing, perhaps with the help of blankets and patio heaters, healthy year-round trade.

The success of the Dundonald Omniplex restaurants, CastleCourts 300-seater food court or more recently Belfast's Common Market, prove the benefit of clustering food businesses in particular. The potential of a fixed cover is that a family can choose to eat in the square around the same table having ordered food from different cafes or restaurants. Encourage buskers

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during the day and add a stage for booked evening musicians and Conway Square becomes a viable choice for local lunchers and evening diners from Belfast and beyond. It's not uncommon for diners to travel 60 miles to the Ramore Complex in Portrush from Belfast for an evening meal. Make the destination attractive and the journey is unimportant. Add a Glider stop and we think the economic rewards will be considerable.

The wider impact is obvious. Retail is boosted by increased footfall and dwell time. People come to eat and shop, staying longer because of the fantastic covered central plaza. The night-time economy that has dwindled in recent years is brought to life by shoppers from further afield. Everyone wins.

The Chamber had indicated that they would be approaching all of the Councillors in the Borough to get letters of support. These were not presented for the purpose of the OBC.

The Chamber had noted that support form traders would be collated through its newsletter (pre Christmas 2022), however no further feedback was made available.

The Chamber were made aware in 2022 that there were issues in relation to additional funding for events and providing/managing additional animation for the covered Square.

The Chamber had indicated that there were not seeking a further events budget but would require resource support from the Council to manage the calendar of events, noting that Chamber members were full time traders (see below - no additional resource support is available within the Council).

2.6 Feedback from the Council

Consultations have been undertaken with Council executive responsible for regeneration and events management.

- A key issue is the lack of any additional budget within the Council or staff resources to be made available for the Conway Square Project.
- In discussions with the Council, the Chamber note that Traders were being squeezed too much at present by energy bills and would be unlikely to extend opening under present conditions.
- In addition, some traders had voiced concerns over the effect the cover will have on natural light and that the design would need to incorporate glass for lighting (which is not included in the design and costs).{Note that the technical consultant does not consider this to be an issue}.
- There are no vacancy rates in the Square - no regeneration benefits - although benefits could be in increased footfall.
- There are various events space in Northern Ireland that does not have a cover, ie: Ward Park, Custom house Square Belfast (which uses marquees periodically), Ebrington Square in Londonderry, Lisburn Square, CS Lewis Square. Bangor uses shipping containers.
- It was noted that as a result of Covid 19 - there has been a move to outdoor eating and drinking, with feedback that Cyprus Avenue and Olivers having doubled their takings. It was noted that these have a side canopy to take away the chill factor.
- The costs of running events is likely to be significant, including event management, communication, insurances etc
- Consideration could be given to running events in the first instance to see the level of interest. The Council did however note the extent to which weather had led to cancellation of events.

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The Council had also offered to undertake surveys directly with the traders in the Square, although this was put on hold as the Chamber were to contact these traders through their newsletter (see above).

2.7 Benchmarking

Benchmarking has been considered in relation to existing Council facilities and other Council Facilities.

St George's Market, Belfast



Belfast's historic St George's Market is probably the city's most popular indoor market. As a Victorian covered venue, it has been housing vendors and customers since 1890. Nowadays, the market is open three days a week, with different stalls filling the space on different days. It hosts the Variety Market on Fridays, which focuses on crafts, and a Food and Craft Market on Saturdays. Sundays see the aptly named Sunday Market, made up of a mixture of the other days' stalls. Drop in for food, drink and, occasionally, live music.

TradeMarket Belfast



On the Dublin Road in Belfast, home to shipping containers and stretch tents.

The Feasibility Study noted examples outside of the UK, ie Market Hall in Ghent:



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2.10 The Rationale for Council Intervention

Evidence of 'Market Failure' -

There is evidence that the Private sector cannot afford to fund this project themselves.

Displacement

There has been no negative feedback that would suggest displacement, although comments to Council note the challenges to natural light.

2.11 Spending Objectives

The Spending Objectives for the development of Conway Square are as follows:

Table 2.9: Spending Objectives and Associated Targets	
Objective 1:	A greatly enhanced and accessible Conway Square offering, with significant improvements to the infrastructure of Newtownards
Targets:	1.1 Investment in the infrastructure at Conway Square by June 2024
Objective 2:	A greatly enhanced and accessible Conway Square offering, with significant usage by the people of Newtownards
Targets:	2.1 To Achieve a 10% increase in footfall at the Square by June 2025 (baseline to be established) 2.2 To Achieve a 70% satisfaction level from traders (measured through a survey of visitors)
Objective 3:	To reinforce the reputation of Newtownards as a great place to live and work through the provision of high quality facilities for the public
Targets:	3.1 To invest in new infrastructure at Conway Square by June 2024 3.2 To maximise the impact of the Conway Square in relation to health and well being (measured through a survey of visitors in 2025)
Objective 4:	To deliver the Conway Square project as an environmental and financial sustainable and viable offering
Targets:	4.1 Major enhancements to the Conway Square by June 2024. 4.2 Value for money - evidence of economic benefits

2.12 Main Benefits and Risks

Benefits

The main benefits associated with the Conway Square development include:

- Enhanced provision for arts and cultural activities and general recreation
- Enhanced community provision
- Potential leverage for private sector investment
- Potential for economic benefits through OoS tourists

Risks

The main risks associated with the Conway Square Newtownards project include:

Table 2.10: Risks	
Affordability	There are ongoing pressures to the Council's budgets.
Construction	There are risks of cost overruns. No other significant risks identified

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Operational	Logistics of holding events that fit around the existing Square offering, ie weekly markets will continue, and events on Friday and Saturday evening would need to accommodate these.
Management and delivery of events	The Chamber have noted that need for resources to manage events, bookings etc, with neither resources not funding available from the Council. This will be a major impediment to the delivery of the project unless funding is made available from either party. The Chamber have also noted that need for access to the calendar of events at the Square and the Council have noted that this can be facilitated.
Financial viability	Funding challenges are noted above. The Chamber have noted that costs for running events can be offset against revenue generated. There will be a risk that insufficient revenues are generated to cover costs. The resultant outcome would be a lack of future events or a burden on the Council at a time of budgetary constraints.
Economic benefits	There is a risk that economic benefits do not exceed costs and the project does not represent value for money

2.13 Constraints and Dependencies

Constraints

The proposed project is subject to the following constraints:

- Availability of capital funding from ANDBC.
- Availability of revenue funding to manage the facility.
- Availability of resources to manage the facility.
- The need to operate in a financially viable and sustainable manner.
- Planning (although there has been engagement with Planning and HED).

Dependencies

The proposed Conway Square is subject to the following dependencies:

- Ongoing alignment of the objectives with the needs and objectives of funders.

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3.0 ECONOMIC CASE

3.1 Introduction

The Economic Case seeks to identify the proposal that delivers best public value to society, including wider social and environmental effects. Demonstrating public value requires a wide range of realistic options to be appraised (the long-list), in terms of how well they meet the spending objectives and critical success factors for the scheme; and then possible options (the short-list) is examined in further detail.

3.2 Critical Success Factors

The first step in this process is to identify the Critical Success Factors (CSFs) from which the long list of options will be determined. The CSFs and long list of options has been developed after consultation with the Project Team via a series of workshops with the Leisure and Estates department. The CSFs for the redevelopment of Conway Square are:

1. Strategic Fit and Business Need
1.1 - How well the option meets the agreed spending objectives, recognising the needs of those wishing to use the service
1.2 - How well the option provides a holistic fit/synergy with other strategies, programmes & projects
2. Potential Value for Money
2.1 How well the option optimises public value (economic, social, health and wellbeing), in terms of the potential costs, benefits and risks.
3. Supplier capacity and capability
3.1 - How well the option matches the ability of potential suppliers to deliver the required services
3.2 - How well the option is likely to be attractive to the supply side.
3 Potential affordability
4.1 - How well the option can be funded from available sources of finance
4.2 - How well the option will deliver as a viable business model
5. Potential achievability
5.1 - How well the Option matches the level of available resources required for successful delivery.

The rationale and weighting for the CSFs is detailed below:

Criteria and Sub-Criteria	Rationale
1.0 Strategic Fit and Business Need	
1.1 How well the option meets the agreed spending needs, recognising the needs of those wishing to use the service	Critical to meeting objectives Critical to ensuring strategic fit
1.2 How well the option provides a holistic fit / synergy with other strategies, programmes and projects	
2.0 Potential Value for Money	
2.1 How well the option optimises public value (economic, social, health & wellbeing, cultural and environmental), in terms of the potential costs, benefits and risks.	Critical to ensuring value for money while assessing risks and non-monetary benefits
3.0 Supplier capacity and capability	
3.1 How well the option matches the ability of potential suppliers to deliver the required services	To ensure options are deliverable including within timescale
3.2 How well the option is likely to be attractive to the supply side.	
4.0 Potential affordability	
4.1 How well the option can be funded from available sources of finance	To ensure options can be financed To ensure options can be delivered on a viable basis having regards to existing priorities
4.2 How well the option will deliver as a viable business model	
5.0 Potential achievability	
5.1 How well the Option matches the level of available resources required for successful delivery.	To ensure options meet the resources available or being developed in the area

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The above follows on from the Feasibility Study which was completed in 2021.

3.3 Long List of Options and Short List

Following on from the strategic case and assessment of need, opportunity and demand (Section 2), in determining the Long list of Options, consideration was given to a number of components including the operational scope, service solutions, service delivery vehicles, implementation timeframes and funding mechanism.

Table 3.3: Long list considerations
Scope
<p><i>The 'what', in terms of the potential coverage of the project. Potential scopes are driven by business needs, service requirements and the scale of organisational change required to improve service capabilities. Examples include coverage in terms of: business functions, levels of service, geography, population, user base and other parts of the business</i></p> <p>Potential scope will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site - at current Conway Square or elsewhere • Consideration is given to the size of the development within the site • The nature of the investment - canopies
Service Solutions
<p><i>The 'how' in terms of delivering the 'preferred' scope for the project. Potential service solutions are driven by available technologies, recognised best practice and what the market place can deliver. These solutions provide the potential 'products' (inputs and outputs) and as such the enabling work streams and key activities required.</i></p> <p>Options include the scale of the investment in terms of area coverage and size of infrastructure and features, ie:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of options - Number of canopies • Quality of Finish
Service delivery
<p><i>The 'who' in terms of delivering the 'preferred' scope and service solution for the project. Potential options for service delivery are driven by resources, competencies and capabilities - both internal and external to the organisation. Examples include: in-house provision, outsourcing, and partners.</i></p> <p>Options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Post project implementation - by Chamber • For Post project implementation - with appointment of ANDBC team (existing staff or new and existing staff)
Service Implementation
<p><i>The 'when' in terms of delivering the 'preferred' scope, solution and service delivery arrangements for the project.</i></p> <p>Service Implementation options include the redevelopment works in a single phase or multiple phases.</p>
Funding
<p><i>The 'funding' required for delivering the 'preferred' scope, solution, service delivery and implementation path for the project.</i></p> <p>Funding options will include funding solely through ANDBC, funding through other sources etc, with fundig opportunities to be identified.</p>

The “Do Nothing” or “Business As Usual” option is discounted as this is not a feasible option under the legislation.

Design options were considered in the Feasibility Study (see Appendix 2.1):

Table 3.4: Long list of Options
Option 01

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DISCOUNTED OPTION BY CLIENT AT CONCEPT OPTIONS WORKSHOP 21 MAY 2021

Figure 3.1: Concept drawing Option 0.1



annual Christmas Tree every winter.

This option proposed a series of 'tables' in a symmetrical arrangement along both N-S and E-W axes. This arrangement allowed a widening in the centre of Conway Square (touching the points of the secondary 'rays' of the star pattern), bringing more light in the centre of the square and more open circulation space around the

Figure 3.2: Concept drawing Option 0.1



FIG 3.2: Aerial view looking across Conway Square from North East

The structural proposals for this option included 500x500mm square columns with a 300mm slab (500mm upstand along the perimeter), and a coffered central area in order to minimize weight.

The structure was proposed as a mix of insitu and precast concrete with a section of the coffered area at the centre of each table used for rooflights, bring light below the covered structure.

This option was discounted in conversation with the Client, due to the amount of vertical structure (16 columns in total) necessary.

Option 02

DISCOUNTED OPTION BY PLANNERS / HED AT CONCEPT OPTIONS PLANNING WORKSHOP 26 MAY 2021



Figure 3.3: Concept drawing Option 0.2

This option proposed a simple column and beam arrangement which minimized the amount of vertical structure required and allowed for a flat soffit along the entire span of the covered structure. The structural proposals for this option included 400x400mm square columns and beams with a concealed upstand within the double-hipped roof. Three conical rooflights were proposed at the centre of each canopy (there will be two canopies), bringing light underneath and along the E-W axis of symmetry. The structure was proposed as a mix of stone/precast concrete columns and beams with a thin metal soffit and a double-hipped timber and metal roof structure clad in zinc or copper.

Figure 3.4: Concept drawing Option 0.2



FIG 3.4: Aerial view of the North East from the middle of Conway Square

This option was discounted in conversation with the Planning Officers and HED.

The Planners felt that a flat soffit was not appropriate for the setting of the Town Hall and preferred the pitched forms proposed in Options 03 and 04.

Option 03

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PREFERRED OPTION BY CLIENT / PLANNERS / HED

Figure 3.5: Concept drawing Option 0.3



This option proposed a 'tree' arrangement with 4 columns for each canopy (there will be two canopies) and two pitched roofs running E-W. The structural proposals for this option included X-shaped steel plate columns and steel plate beams extending sloping down towards the corners and middle of the covered structure. A series of rooflights is then proposed at the columns and centre of each canopy. The structure was proposed as a mix of steel column and beam with a Cross-Laminated Timber soffit clad in zinc or copper.



View 1: Side view of the Town Hall from across High Street



View 2: Side view looking across Conway Square from West to East



View 3: Side view of the Town Hall from the middle of Conway Square



View 4: View from below the proposed canopy structure looking towards the Town Hall

Figure 3.5: Concept drawing Option 0.3

Both the Planners and HED felt that this was their preferred option as the most appropriate structure for the setting of the Grade B+ Listed Town Hall.

This option has been progressed further and forms the basis for the 'Preferred Option' section of this report.

Option 04

SECOND PREFERENCE OPTION BY CLIENT / PLANNERS / HED

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Figure 3.6: Concept drawing Option 0.4

This option proposed a hipped roof structure with a continuous horizontal edge on three sides and a shallow gable facing the square. The structural proposals for this option included a series of masonry (stone or precast concrete) columns and steel roof structure on top with a three primary beams arranged in a star-shaped pattern. A series of rooflights is then proposed within a shallow structural grid on top of the deep beams. The roof

was proposed to be clad in zinc or copper. There will be two canopies.

The Planners and HED felt that this was their second preference option as the hipped and star-shaped structure fitted well in the context of the square and Town Hall. This option has been not been progressed further at this stage. Its geometry has however informed the development of the 'Preferred Option'.



Figure 3.7: Concept drawing Option 0.4

Note that the above comprises the long list of options presented at the Feasibility stage, which was approved by the Council.

The above long list is then sifted by considering the ability of each option to contribute to the spending objectives and whether they meet the threshold for critical success factors. This is presented below:

Table 3.5: Assessment aginst Objectives and CSFs

Option	0	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4
Description of Option	Do Nothing	Variation	Variation	Preferred way forward	Variation
Spending Objectives					
Significant improvements to the infrastructure of Newtownards and its city assets					
Significant usage by the people of Newtownards					

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Support growth of the tourism sector					
Reinforce the reputation of Newtownards					
Project that is environmental and financial sustainable and offers value for money					
Critical Success Factors	0	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4
Strategic Fit					
Business Needs Fit					
Potential Value for Money i.e. benefits optimisation at lowest cost					
Supplier capacity and capability					
Potential Affordability					
Potential Achievability					
Summary	Discounted	Discounted	Discounted	Preferred	Discounted

Post the Feasibility study, the Council have asked for consideration of other semi permanent options, ie temporary marquees, as used at Customs House Square in Belfast for events and stretch tents.



Figure 3.8: Temporary Marquees and Stretch tents

The technical feedback was that Stretch tents would need maintenance and not last as long. The Council could consider a marquee - same as Custom house Square - not this would not facilitate ease of adjustment for the Saturday markets etc.

In summary, the following have been taken forward for costing:

- Option 0: "Do Nothing" and Business as Usual
- Option 0.3: Preferred Way Forward - 2 canopies as per Figure 3.5
- Option 1: Do Minimum - Variation of Option 0.3 with one canopy

As noted above, the long list has been scored. It should be noted that the options partially rather than fully meet the Spending Objectives and Critical Success Factor in most cases, due to the lack of detail on the need and support for the project and concerns over Value for money.

3.6 Monetary costs and income

3.6.1 Capital costs

Monetary costs are estimated as per below.
There are no capital costs associated with Option 1.
Inflation has been excluded.

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3.6.2 Key assumptions

General

- Costs are shown for financial years (FY) to March;
- Inflation on revenue costs has been considered on the basis of the National Statistics GDP deflators (March 2022). An inflationary increase of 2% per annum has been applied;
- The Council has noted that VAT will be recoverable;
- All capital and revenue costs and income are stated exclusive of VAT;
- The projections commence on 1st April 2023; and
- The Conway Square development is assumed in July 2024 (completed June 2024).

Capital Cost Pricing:

- Capital costs are stated as at 17th October 2022 and have been advised by Rainey Best;
- Inflation has not been included beyond Q3 2022;
- Capital costs include statutory and professional fees; and
- No land or site acquisition will be required.

Exclusions:

- Rainey Best note the following exclusions on the costs included in their Order of Cost Estimates (October 2022) at Appendix 5.1:

Exclusions

- 1 VAT
- 2 Statutory fees
- 3 Finance costs
- 4 Electrical - power, AV, PA, IT

Notes:

- 1 Assumed no complications with site other than piling required e.g. no utility diversions or underground obstructions etc
- 2 This estimate is based on architectural and structural engineering drawings.
- 3 Assumed no hazardous material to be removed (asbestos or contamination)
- 4 Costs current at date of estimate

Estimated life:

- The Public Realm works is assumed to have an estimated life of 40 years

Optimism Bias:

- Optimism bias (OB) has been determined for the programme as follows, based on Section 2.6.15 of the Northern Ireland Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation, and the Department of Finance Optimism Bias Calculator for Civil Engineering Projects. These have been reviewed to take account of risk mitigation as the OBC has progressed and the extent to which costs estimates are at upper levels. At this stage, design risk contingency is included at £29,040.

Revenue costs and income:

- No provision has been made for revenue costs or income associated with the proposed development.
- As noted in the Economic section, there is no additional budget or resources available within the Council, with the Council noting the budgetary constraints to the Chamber.
- Detailed plan to be sought from Newtownards Chamber of Trade as to how the project will be managed and funded.

Visitor capacity (Option 0.3):

- Capacities for Conway Square post redevelopment are estimated as follows for Option 0.3:

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- Standing (Static) Crowd Density - 1,536 under the canopies / 2304 including central open area;
- Typical Market Stalls - 80 stalls under the canopies / 112 including central open area;
- 4-person tables layout (maxed out) -
- With the existing benches retained $1188 + 120 = 1,208$
- With the existing benches removed $1188 + 220 = 1,308$
- An indicative concert-type event capacity including a 10x6m stage of 1,500 people (1620 including the benches).

3.6.3 Capital Costs

Capital costs are as estimated (see Appendix 3.1 for costs for Option 0.3):

Monetary costs £	Do Minimum 1.0	Preferred Option - Option 0.3
Capital Cost	£352,174	£704,347
Fees	£84,552	£84,522
Sub Total	£436,726	£788,868
Statutory costs	£10,000	£10,000
TOTAL	£436,726	£798,869

No Street Furniture has been included, none is deemed to be required (ie event managers will provide as necessary). Capital costs in Option 0.3 include contingency of £14,520.

Capital costs are spread:

YE March £	2023	2024	2025	Total
Option 1.0 Do Minimum		£436,726		£436,726
Option 0.3 Preferred Way Forward	0	£226,939	£571,930	£798,868

3.6.4 Lifecycle costs

Lifecycle costs are estimated as follows:

£	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Option 1.0 Do Minimum					£8,000		
Option 0.3 Preferred Way Forward					£13,204		

Lifecycle costs are estimated for the first 30 years for Option 0.3 at £90,108 (before inflation), and reduced prorata for Option 1.0

3.6.5 Revenue costs - Conway Square

Revenue costs have been discussed with the Council and the Chamber. Costs are likely to arise in respect of the following:

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Resources to plan and manage events.	A part-time resource or volunteers from the Traders
Marketing collateral	Could be through social media, to minimise costs, but out of pocket expenditure still anticipated. However, could be offset by anticipated revenue income streams.
Insurance and maintenance	Insurance cost and reactive maintenance
Utility costs, cleaning costs, security costs relating to events	Depending on the event. I.e for additional markets, may be utility costs or security costs whereas as a concert would need security etc. However, could be offset by anticipated revenue income streams.
Evaluation	Surveys to measure impact

The Council has a budget for events within the town. With the constraints on the Council's budgets, no further events budget is available.

Staffing Plan

Consideration has been given to the complement of staffing required to operate the Conway Square. The Council has confirmed that no additional resources are available from within the Council.

Feedback from the Chamber is that additional resource will be required to manage the events at the Square. The Chamber notes that its members are fully engaged in their trading activities and that an additional resource is likely to be needed (and a request has been made to the Council for the same). The budget for this cost has yet to be identified.

An estimated cost for the above is £70,000 for option 0.3 plus £5000 for an evaluation.

3.6.6 Revenue Income

While there is anticipated by the Chamber to be some events in the Square that will be income generation, these are likely to be organised by events promoters. No income is anticipated to accrue to the Council.

3.7 Economic assessment

Economic assessment has been considered in respect of:

- Construction Impact
- Wellbeing
- Tourism

3.7.1 Construction Impact

The capital expenditure through the construction phase will create economic benefit, including employment, both directly and indirectly, and additional value to the economy.

Construction costs based on 7 jobs for £1m spend. Multiplier provided by DfE economist.

- As a guide it is estimated that every £1m in construction related output typically corresponds to 7 direct construction jobs in NI - the combination of both employees and the self-employed.
- As a guide it is estimated that for the NI Construction Sector in 2018 the Type 1 multiplier is 0.25. That is every direct construction job supports an additional 0.25 jobs within the NI economy due to

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supply chain/ indirect impacts. The Type 2 multiplier inclusive of both indirect and induced employment impacts is 0.52.

Overall, construction related spend is estimated to create or sustain between 29 and 82 direct jobs, between 44 and 124 direct, indirect and induced job years of employment.

£	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Total before VAT and inflation	0	£352,174	£704,347
Direct Jobs at 7 per £1m	0	2	5
Employment multiplier	0	1.52	1.52
Direct, Indirect, Induced Jobs	0	4	7

3.7.2 Well being Impact

Wellbeing in Northern Ireland, 2020 21 (executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk)

It is likely that the increase in the cultural offering at Conway square will have a positive impact on wellbeing, as defined in the 'Well Being Guidance for Appraisal: Supplementary Green Book Guidance' (July 2021)⁵.

In the guidance, well being is defined as,

"Wellbeing is about how people feel. Throughout history, wellbeing has been the subject of philosophical, sociological and wider scientific thinking. Since early developments in economics, the concept of wellbeing has been implicitly and explicitly expressed through utility theories. More recently, wellbeing has been associated with a desire to go beyond the use of a single measure of performance using Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Improvements in the measurement of wellbeing measurement in the second half of the twentieth century have enabled consideration of wellbeing as part of the microeconomics of social welfare.

Throughout modern times, the UK government has always had the welfare - or wellbeing - of the population in mind. It has been officially measured in the UK since 1991 through the British Household Panel Survey, more recently incorporated in the Annual Population Survey, and covered by the wider Office of National Statistics (ONS) Measuring Wellbeing Programme since 2011. The ONS defines wellbeing as "how we are doing' as individuals, communities and as a nation and how sustainable this is for the future." Personal wellbeing is measured by the ONS through subjective reports of satisfaction, purpose, happiness and anxiety. The ONS also produces indicators on areas of our lives that have been shown to be most important for personal, community and national wellbeing."

The ONS measures ten broad dimensions (the ONS calls them "domains") that have been shown to matter most to people in the UK (Figure 3.9) - the measures of national wellbeing.

⁵https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005388/Wellbeing_guidance_or_appraisal_-_supplementary_Green_Book_guidance.pdf

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Figure 3.9 ONS Measures of Well Being



Source: Office for National Statistics (Measures of National Wellbeing Dashboard)

The wellbeing dimensions are assessed with a set of indicators including objective measures - such as crime rates - and subjective measures such as how people feel about their lives. For example, the 'Where we live' dimension includes objective measures such as accessing the natural environment and crime rates, while the 'Our relationships' dimension includes self-reported assessment of feelings of loneliness. The ONS Measuring National Wellbeing programme reports progress against these dimensions twice a year.

The NI Wellbeing report notes the benefit of cultural activities:

Main Story

- Across a range of measures of personal wellbeing: life satisfaction, self-efficacy, locus of control and loneliness, analysis shows higher personal wellbeing among adults who engaged in culture, arts and sports than among adults who had not engaged in these activities. Whilst this report shows a link between engagement and personal wellbeing it does not show that one causes the other. For example, previous analyses have shown that individuals' poor health is a key barrier to their full participation in culture, arts and sporting activities.

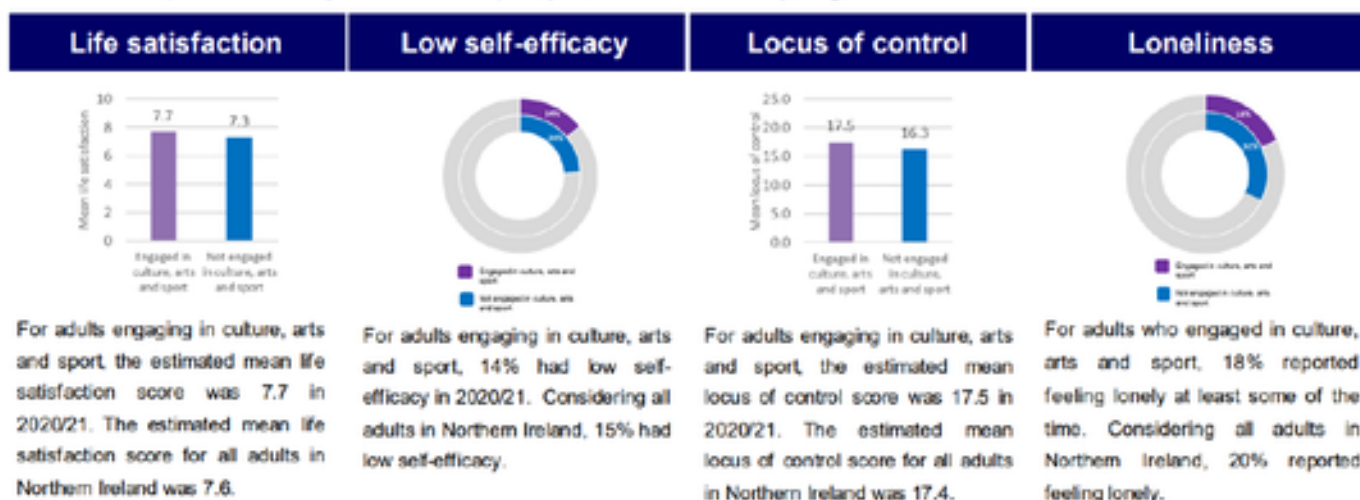


Figure 3.9: NI Wellbeing report

It further notes:

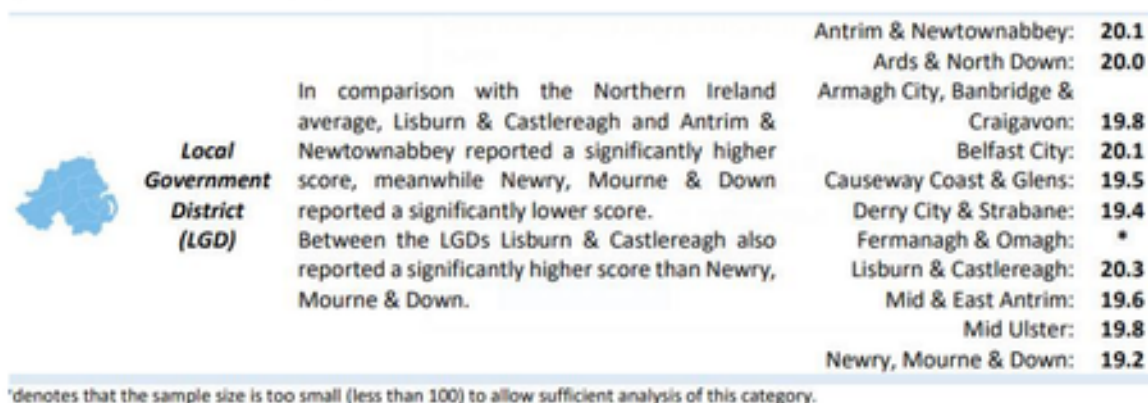
Self-efficacy is a concept describing a person's beliefs about their capability to produce results or effects, and their ability to exercise influence over events that affect their lives. ♣ Those with high self-efficacy have confidence in their abilities and make sustained efforts to achieve goals. ♣ Those

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with low self-efficacy often doubt their capabilities, are less ambitious and give up on aims when challenged. This can limit the choices a person makes and how much effort they are willing to invest.

Self-efficacy affects the decisions a person makes and what they see as achievable. It has been shown to influence physical and mental health, learning and achievement, career and job satisfaction and family relations. Interventions to increase self-efficacy in specific groups can improve collective resilience and capacity. This can lead to positive social change in communities, and can improve social cohesion and inter-group relations.

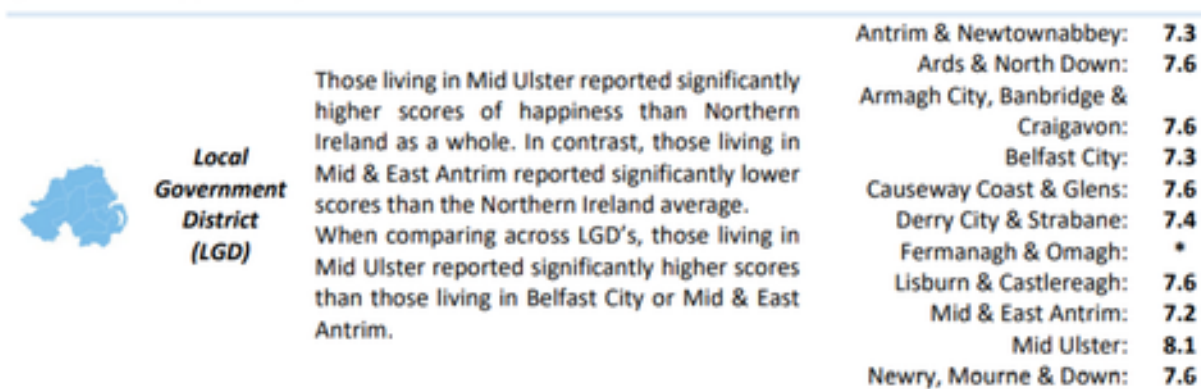
Figure 3.10: Self Efficacy by Council



An individual's thoughts and feelings about their quality of life is an important aspect of their **personal wellbeing**. How satisfied people are with their lives, their levels of happiness and anxiety, and whether or not they think the things they do are worthwhile, all have strong links with many elements of wellbeing. This section contains estimates of reported 'life satisfaction', feeling that things done in life are 'worthwhile', 'happiness' and 'anxiety' for those people interviewed in the reporting period.

Details are given below of Council ranking by 'Happiness' (the other categories are not reported by Council level)

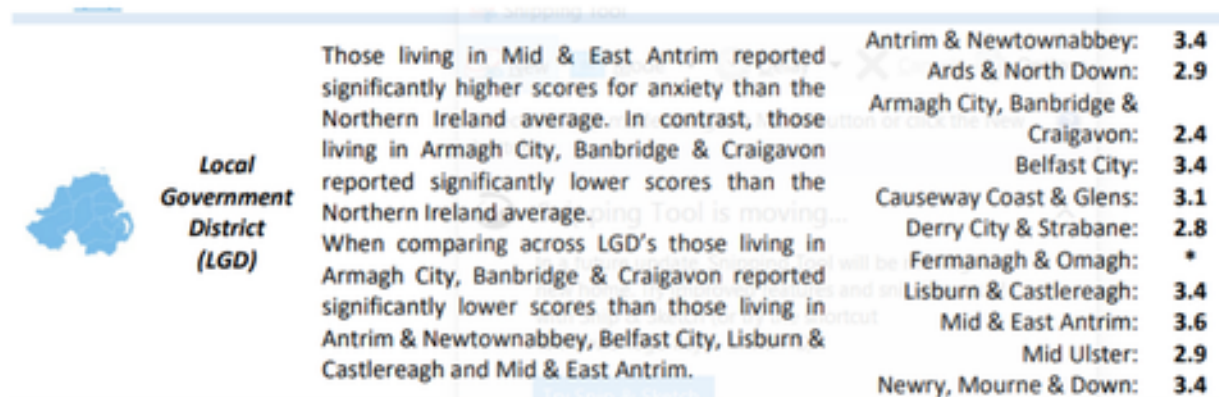
Figure 3.11: Happiness by Council



Councils also reported levels of anxiety:

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Figure 3.12: Anxiety by Council



Improvements in physical and mental health outcomes is to be achieved by provision of a modern, attractive, public infrastructure that will promote cultural events.

Relationships: positive relationships have one of the biggest impacts on quality of life and wellbeing. This includes close relationships, having someone to rely on, as well as wider interactions in a neighbourhood or community. Conversely, feelings of loneliness have a negative impact. A key goal of the proposed project is to encourage increased participation in cultural and community events and to support social inclusion/ reduce social isolation via the activities on offer to the public.

What people do: generally, having a job is good for wellbeing and considered one of the most important factors linked with wellbeing.⁶ Being in a 'high quality' job is even better. Other types of activity can also affect wellbeing, to a lesser extent - from physical exercise to taking part in music or art. How people feel when they take part in activity also matters. For example, giving to others or learning something new can give a sense of purpose, which has a positive effect on wellbeing. Some activities have an immediate impact, others might have a longer-term effect. The proposed investment seeks to enhance the activities open to the residents of Newtownards.

Where people live: an individual's local environment and the type of community in which they live are important, including having a safe, clean and pleasant environment, access to facilities and being part of a cohesive community. A key aim of the proposed investment is to provide public infrastructure that will promote cultural events, increasing community cohesion.

The NI Departments have not been quantifying the impact of projects on wellbeing, as there is no baseline data by project. Accordingly, the wellbeing benefits are noted above but not quantified.

3.7.3 Assessment of tourism benefits

There are potential tourism impacts, as noted in section 2.

The Conway Square project may attract tourists visiting the area, ie those visiting Pickie Park in Bangor, Exploris in Portaferry, where there are already significant Out of State Visitor numbers. This is likely to be a small element of OoS visitors, depending on the offering, ie Jazz evenings.

Estimated visitor numbers

As noted in section 2, it is assumed that Conway Square post redevelopment will cater for festivals, market events, the evening economy, with opportunities for pop-up eateries.

⁶See e.g. Clark and Oswald (1994), Winklemann and Winklemann (2003), Jahoda (1982) as well as a systematic review in What Works Centre for Wellbeing (2017a)

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It is understood that a programme of activity has yet to be developed for Conway Square and the details below are included byway of an example only.

Key assumptions are:

		Indicative Number of annual visitors
Evening events concerts	8 times a year - capacity 1,680	10,752
Christmas lights	Once a year - capacity 2,304	1,843
Pop Up eateries	Summer and holiday periods 22 times a year - capacity 1,280	20,838
		33,434

It is assumed that the market is not additional (and would need to be relocated when Conway Square is in use).

The estimate is that Conway Square will generate 33,434 visits annually (subject to detailed market research).

It is assumed that the majority will be Domestic/local visitors. It is assumed that 5% will be Out of State, of whom 5% could stay overnight at an average of 4.36 nights.

	5% OoS and 5% staying
All visitors	33,434
Local visitors	31,762
OoS visitors	1,672
OoS day Trips	1,588
OoS Night trip	84
OOS Nights	356

It is important to note that this section is based on the contribution to the Northern Ireland economy. It does not consider the tourism impact on ARD which is challenging in the context of information available.

The Gross Impact of Conway Square Tourism Spend

Figures provided by TourismNI suggest that:

- Each day visitor to Northern Ireland will spend £30.50 per day; and
- Each overnight visitor to Northern Ireland will spend £77.50 per day

The Net Impact of Conway Square Tourism Spend

Not all of this spend is additional to the Northern Ireland economy. Some spend might have taken place anyway or would be have been spent at another tourism/event offering in the region. These effects are reflected in terms of:

- Deadweight - indicating the share of people who would have spent money in area anyway
- Displacement - where the benefit is generated to Conway Square at the expense of another tourism/destination offering in NI

In terms of the impact on Conway Square investment, the following assumptions have been made:

- We have calculated **deadweight** to be 95% for local day visits to Conway Square on the basis that the money spent in the facility would have largely been spent anyway. We have also calculated deadweight at 70% for day and overnight visits by OoS visitors.
- We have calculated **displacement** at 20% across all categories of visitor on the basis that some visitor spend may be displaced across other tourism offerings within the Northern Ireland economy.

In order to assess the value added of visitor spending it is important to understand how that money is spent in the region. This is estimated in Table 3.13 below using statistics provided by TourismNI

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and Visit Britain. It sets out how spend by day and overnight visitors is distributed in terms of food/drink, shopping, transport and other spend.

	Day Visitors (%)	Overnight Stays (%)
Accommodation	n/a	27%
Transport/Travel	31%	9%
Eating & Drinking	50%	31%
Entrance charges/parking	4%	7%
Shopping	12%	15%
Other Items	3%	12%
	100%	100%

The different aspects of spend add different value to the Northern Ireland economy which is reflected in Turnover (Spend) per job and GVA per job. Estimates of that impact is set out in Table 3.14 below. Figures have been calculated on the basis of the latest 3-year average (2017, 2018, 2019) using figures from NISRA (Turnover, GVA, FTE) and ONS (workforce jobs) pre Covid.

	Accommodation	Transport	Food	Attractions	Shopping	Other
Turnover ⁷ per job (£)	£48,896	£88,384	£48,896	£14,035	£238,185	£14,035
GVA per job (£)	£36,629	£35,787	£36,629	£6,299	£50,268	£6,299

These figures provide the basis for understanding the visitor impact of the project.

NOTE: TourismNI/DfC evidence highlights that every £45,337 of visitor spend generates one job.

Summary

In summary, the key economic benefits of the annual additional tourism expenditure generated by the project to the Northern Ireland economy is estimated as follows:

5% OoS and 5% staying	
Tourism Direct	45,720
Tourism Direct	2

Net Direct Benefits of the project

- An additional 2 jobs-years annually
- Annual GVA of £45k

3.7.4 Assessment of Non monetary benefits

Consideration is given to wider benefits that cannot be monetised.

The Redevelopment of Conway Square is likely to deliver against a range of Non monetary benefits which have been considered, as follows:

Non Monetary Criterion	Weighting
------------------------	-----------

⁷ Turnover is used as a proxy for spend

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Criterion A: Regeneration of an underutilized assets in Newtownards, providing high quality facilities for the public, increased community engagement, and increased civic pride. This criterion has been awarded 30%.	30%
Criterion B: Opportunity to introduce significant improvements to the infrastructure of Newtownards, will benefits to the traders and potential resultant impact upon private sector investment. This criterion has been awarded 30%.	30%
Criterion C: Creation of year round facilities - a redeveloped Conway Square, with attractive infrastructure, will make the town an appealing year-round visitor destination. This criterion has been awarded 20%.	20%
Criterion D: Opportunity to widen participation in cultural pursuits in Newtownards. This criterion has been awarded 20%.	20%

Each score is given out of 10 with the Weighted Score reflecting the product of the 'Score' and the criterion weighting.

Criteria	Weight	Do Nothing Option 0		Do Minimum Option 1.0		Preferred Option - Option 0.3	
		S	WS	S	WS	S	WS
A	30	0	0	5	150	9	270
B	30	0	0	3	90	8	240
C	20	0	0	3	60	7	140
D	20	0	0	3	60	8	160
Total	100		0		360		810
Rank		3		2		1	

The Do Minimum option does not have any investment and does not score against the criterion.

For Criterion A: Regeneration of an underutilized assets in Newtownards, Option 0.3 scores highest with 9 marks as it includes investment in two canopies and using the full space at Conway Square, with more room for resident to congregate under all weather conditions, for community and cultural events. Option 1.0 scores 3 marks as there is only one canopy.

Criterion B: Opportunity to impact upon traders and private sector investment: There is potential for the investment to have a positive impact upon the traders in Newtownards, increasing employment in the town. The higher investment option, drawing more visitors to Newtownards, score highest. Option 0.3 is awarded 8 marks. The Do Minimum option, with reduced facilities, score 3 marks.

Criterion C: Creation of attractive infrastructure with all round facilities. - There are opportunities to increase the number of visitors and satisfaction with the town, including wellbeing. Option 0.3 scores highest as it includes an all weather facility. It has been awarded 7 marks. Option 1.0 scores 3 marks with reduced facilities.

Criterion D: Opportunity to widen participation in cultural pursuits in Newtownards: Option 0.3 scores highest with 8 marks as it includes investment in two canopies and using the full space at Conway Square, with more room for resident to congregate under all weather conditions, for community and cultural events. Option 1.0 scores 3 marks as there is only one canopy.

Option 0.3 has the highest non monetary score.

3.8 Risks

Risk and uncertainties with respect to any project are a combination of project specific risks and those on a wider macro-economic scale. Project specific risks are those that directly affect the project and which the project promoters should have a high level of knowledge and associated level of control over (e.g. staff, other costs, etc.). Wider macro-economic risks are those that are beyond the control of project promoters yet can significantly influence the success of the project. These macro-level risks cover a diverse range of possible events that can include political occurrences (e.g. new government with different economic policies), environmental dangers and socio-economic climate (e.g. global economic conditions, community unrest). The tables below and overleaf

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document the project level mitigated risk by option, using a scoring approach that considers likelihood ('L') of the risk occurring and impact ('I') if the risk materialises; and these are summed to give the risk score ('S'). The following scoring methodology and Risk Status (RAG status), based on the following Risk Averse Classification matrix:

Table 3.18: Risk Averse Classification Matrix

Likelihood	5	5	10	15	20	25
	4	4	8	12	16	20
	3	3	6	9	12	15
	2	2	4	6	8	10
	1	1	2	3	4	5
		1	2	3	4	5
		Impact				

Table 3.19 Risk assessment

Risk	Description	Option 0			Option 1			Option 0.3			Explanation
		L	I	S	L	I	S	L	I	S	
Cost overruns	The risk is that there is an inflationary impact greater than that anticipated	0	0	0	3	3	9	3	3	9	This risk is across the Do Minimum option and PWF. Costs will be actively monitored by ANDBC. Allowance made for inflation in financially modelling.
Affordability	The risk is that the option is not affordable.	0	0	0	3	3	9	4	4	16	The project fits with ANDBC strategy and the move to outdoor space, support for cultural leisure etc Council budgets are under pressure. Funding options for the Capital project to be considered by Council, subject to assurances from the Newtownards Chamber of Trade in terms of revenue funding
Economic benefits not arising	There is a risk that Uptake and usage is less than anticipated and there is no economic gain to Newtownards	3	3	9	4	4	16	4	4	16	This risk is across all options; There is an opportunity cost under Option 0, with the potential loss of the opportunity to traders. There are challenges in managing events around the existing weekend markets. In the absence of an events budget and resources, there is a risk for both other Do Something options.
Operational/ Financial challenges - no funding for revenue costs	There is a risk that the Conway Square project is not financially sustainable, due to lack of funding for the revenue costs associated with the operation	0	0	0	5	5	25	5	5	25	In the absence of an events budget and resources, there is a risk for both other Do Something options.

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Risk	Description	Option 0			Option 1			Option 0.3			Explanation
		L	I	S	L	I	S	L	I	S	
	and maintenance.										
Total Risk Assessment Score				9			59			66	
Ranking				1			2			3	

The outcome of the above quantified risk assessment presented in the Table is that the risk profile is higher for Option 0.3.

3.9 Optimism Bias

The potential for Optimism Bias (OB) in the capital expenditure estimates has been incorporated into the analysis, using the Department of Finance OB calculator for Building Projects⁸. This weighs the impact of unmitigated OB for a range of factors, covering procurement, project complexity, client-specific issues and external and environmental factors (including political and macroeconomic), to deliver an overall unmitigated OB in terms of cost and duration.

Capital costs in Option 0.3 include contingency of £14,520 (50% in Option 1.0). This is considered to be appropriate.

3.10 Net Present Social Costs

A Net present social cost ratio has been prepared for 10 years. A discount rate of 3.5% is used, given that the project is not revenue generating.

A sensitivity has been applied - with capital costs increasing by 20%.

£	Do Minimum 1.0	Preferred Option - Option 0.3
Base case	880,901	1,207,352
Ranking		
Sensitivity 1 - capital costs increase 20%	973,740	1,372,578
	1	2

There is a Net present cost arising in each option.

3.11 PREFERRED OPTION

A summarised overview of the various analyses undertaken on the shortlisted options is presented in Table 3.21 below:

	Do Nothing Option 0	Do Minimum Option 1.0	Preferred Option - Option 0.3
Capital costs	£0	£436,726	£798,869
Lifecycle costs over 30 years	£0	£50,000	£90,108
Net present social cost	£0	£880,901	£1,207,352
NPSC Ranking	-	1	2
Benefit cost ratio		1: 0.27	1: 0.37
BCR ranking	-	1	2
Revenue costs provided for	£0	£0	£0

⁸ <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/publications/optimism-bias-calculators>

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	Do Nothing Option 0	Do Minimum Option 1.0	Preferred Option - Option 0.3
Non monetized benefit scores ⁹	0	360	810
Risk scores ¹⁰	9	59	66

There are considered to be benefits in investment in the Square. Newtownards town is a popular retail area. There is an active Chamber who have noted the benefits that could arise from the investment in canopies in the square, in terms of opportunities for cultural and community events that are of benefits to the wider traders. It is noted that feedback from the wider traders has not been forthcoming. Feedback from Councillors was to be provided by the Chamber but has not been forthcoming.

There are risks that the benefits to the traders do not materialise, i.e., that there are challenges in managing events around the weekend markets.

In terms of the capital costs, the cost of the investment (£798k) is not included in the Council's capital budget.

A further key issue is the management of the Square and its events. The Council has indicated that it does not have the funding or resources to manage and deliver events in the Square.

The project, under both options, result in a Net Present Social cost and a BCR below 1:1 (a benchmark for value for money).

Based on the limited data available, the project is not forecast to present a Net economic benefit to the economy although there will be non monetary benefits.

The project is not considered to represent Value for Money and is not recommended.

⁹ Highest score depicts highest benefit

¹⁰ Highest score depicts highest risk

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4.0 COMMERCIAL CASE

4.1 Ownership and Operator Model

Conway Square is owned by ANDBC.

Project Promoter during construction phase

Professional advisors have been appointed by the Council - Hall McKnight and Rainey Best.

4.2 Procurement Strategy

The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 applies to public authorities including, amongst others, government departments, local authorities and NHS Authorities and Trusts. These regulations set out the rules for the award of contracts whose value equals or exceeds specific thresholds. Thresholds are net of VAT and are reviewed annually. The ANDBC strategy is based on NI Public Procurement Policy as well as current procedure and guidance from Construction & Procurement Delivery (CPD).

ANDBC is a public body and therefore bound by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

Any works would be through Public Tendering, possibly under Design and Build or Traditional Procurement. As noted in section 3 however, the project is not recommended for funding.

4.3 Specialist Equipment and services: Procurement

Not applicable/

4.4 Marketing Events

There would be a requirement for planning for events at the Conway Square. Resources have yet to be identified. As noted in section 3 however, the project is not recommended for funding.

4.5 Risk Allocation

An indicative risk allocation between ANDBC, as the Contracting Authority, and the Works Contractor/Equipment Suppliers is illustrated in Table 4.1 below. Implicit to this is that the risk of capital cost overrun, in terms of funding, resides with ANDBC and it is not passed on to other funders.

	Area of Risk	Indicative Risk Allocations	
		ANDBC	Contractor
Programme of Works (POW)	Works Information: <i>Spatial Requirements/ (incl. concepts & specification) User experience, etc</i>	✓	
	Capital cost escalation: <i>Pre-contract award Post-contract award</i>	✓ ✓	✓
	POW performance: <i>Adequacy of Works information Specification compliance</i>	✓	✓

4.6 Personnel Implications

Consideration has been given to the complement of staffing required to operate the Conway Square. The Council has confirmed that no additional resources are available from within the Council.

Feedback from the Chamber is that additional resource will be required to manage the events at the Square. The Chamber notes that its members are fully engaged in their trading activities and

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that an additional resource is likely to be needed (and a request has been made to the Council for the same). The budget for this cost has yet to be identified.

4.7 Accountancy Treatment

Any capital cost would be recognised as an asset on the Balance Sheet of ANDBC under Accounting Standard FRS102.

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5.0 FINANCIAL CASE

5.1 Financial Model and Appraisal

Building upon the Economic Case, this section sets out the capital requirements and provide a detailed income and expenditure analysis of the preferred option. Given that, following the monetary and non-monetary analysis, a preferred option has been identified - 0.3. This section considers an affordability analysis for this option.

Unlike the detailed economic case, this analysis incorporates only actual cash flows and, therefore, all opportunity costs and residual values have been excluded. The financial case underpinning this OBC is indicative at this stage and is predicated on a number of key assumptions which are outlined throughout the section. It will, however, contain sufficient detail for the purposes of this OBC and to inform decision-making on funding.

5.2 Key assumptions

General

- Costs are shown for financial years (FY) to March;
- Inflation on revenue costs has been considered on the basis of the National Statistics GDP deflators (March 2022). An inflationary increase of 2% per annum has been applied;
- The Council has noted that VAT will be recoverable;
- All capital costs are stated exclusive of VAT;
- The projections commence on 1st April 2023; and
- The Conway Square development is assumed in July 2024 (completed June 2024).

Capital Cost Pricing:

- Capital costs are stated as at 17th October 2022 and have been advised by Rainey Best;
- Inflation has not been included beyond Q3 2022;
- Capital costs include statutory and professional fees; and
- No land or site acquisition will be required.

Exclusions:

- Rainey Best note the following exclusions on the costs included in their Order of Cost Estimates (October 2022) at Appendix 5.1:

Exclusions

- 1 VAT
- 2 Statutory fees
- 3 Finance costs
- 4 Electrical - power, AV, PA, IT

Notes:

- 1 Assumed no complications with site other than piling required e.g. no utility diversions or underground obstructions etc
- 2 This estimate is based on architectural and structural engineering drawings.
- 3 Assumed no hazardous material to be removed (asbestos or contamination)
- 4 Costs current at date of estimate

Estimated life:

- The works is assumed to have an estimated life of 40 years

Optimism Bias:

- Optimism bias (OB) has been determined for the programme as follows, based on Section 2.6.15 of the Northern Ireland Guide to Expenditure Appraisal and Evaluation, and the Department of Finance Optimism Bias Calculator for Civil Engineering Projects. These have been reviewed to take account of risk mitigation as the OBC has progressed and the extent

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to which costs estimates are at upper levels. At this stage, design risk contingency is included at £29,040.

Revenue costs and income:

- No provision has been made for revenue costs or income associated with the proposed development.
- As noted in the Economic section, there is no additional budget or resources available within the Council, with the Council noting the budgetary constraints to the Chamber.
- Detailed plan to be sought from Newtownards Chamber of Trade as to how the project will be managed and funded.

5.3. Capital costs

Capital costs are as estimated:

Monetary costs £	Preferred Option - Option 0.3
Cost:	£704,347
Fees	£84,522
Sub Total	£788,868
Statutory costs	£10,000
TOTAL	£798,869

No Street Furniture has been included.

Capital costs are spread:

YE March £	2024	2025	2026	Total
Construction	£140,869	£563,478		£704,347
Professional fees	£76,070	£8,452		£84,522
Statutory costs	£10,000			£10,000
TOTAL	£226,939	£571,930		£798,869

5.4 Lifecycle costs

Lifecycle costs are estimated by Rainey Best and includes maintenance of the Square.

Lifecycle costs are as estimated for the first 30 years at £90,108 (before inflation). An additional 2% has been added for inflation.

The first seven year cost is £13,203:

£	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Lifecycle costs					£13,204		

5.5 Revenue costs

Revenue costs have been discussed with the Council and the Chamber.

Costs are likely to arise in respect of the following:

Resources to plan and manage events.	A part-time resource or volunteers from the Traders
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Marketing collateral	Could be through social media, to minimise costs, but out of pocket expenditure still anticipated. However, could be offset by anticipated revenue income streams.
Insurance and maintenance	Insurance cost and reactive maintenance
Utility costs, cleaning costs, security costs relating to events	Depending on the event. I.e for additional markets, may be utility costs or security costs whereas as a concert would need security etc. However, could be offset by anticipated revenue income streams.
Evaluation	Surveys to measure impact

The Council has a budget for events within the town. With the constraints on the Council's budgets, no further events budget is available.

Staffing Plan

Consideration has been given to the complement of staffing required to operate the Conway Square. The Council has confirmed that no additional resources are available from within the Council.

Feedback from the Chamber is that additional resource will be required to manage the events at the Square. The Chamber notes that its members are fully engaged in their trading activities and that an additional resource is likely to be needed (and a request has been made to the Council for the same). The budget for this cost has yet to be identified.

5.6 Revenue Income

While the Chamber anticipate there to be some events in the Square that will be income generation, these are likely to be organised by events promoters.

The generation of income is directly related to the ability to manage events. Given the lack of resource and budget, this is difficult to determine.

Notwithstanding this no income is anticipated to accrue to the Council.

5.7 Sensitivity Analysis

The Capital costs estimate is for £798k. An increase of 20% would bring this cost to £955k. The costs are subject to fluctuations in inflation.

5.8 Affordability

In considering affordability, total costs in the first five years are:

YE March £	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	Total
Construction	£140,869	£563,478				£788,868
Professional fees	£76,070	£8,452				
Statutory costs	£10,000					£10,000
TOTAL	£226,939	£571,930				£798,868
Revenue costs - estimated		£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£200,000
Total	£226,939	£621,930	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£998,868
Funding						

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Request to Council for funding	£226,939	£571,930				£798,868
Revenue funding not yet identified		£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£200,000
Funding requirement	£226,939	£621,930	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	£998,868

There are ongoing pressures to the Council's budgets. The funding for revenue costs have not been identified.

This raises concerns as to the viability of the project.

Value for money has been assessed in Section 3.

The project is not recommended for funding.

5.9 Balance Sheet implications

Not applicable.

5.10 Property Ownership

Not applicable.

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6 MANAGEMENT CASE

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this Management Case is to describes how the Conway Square development project have been developed to date. In the absence of a recommendation of funding of the project, no consideration has been given to planned governance structure for implementation.

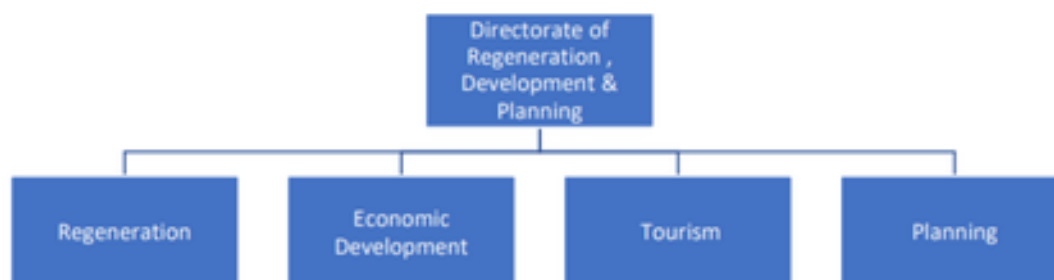
6.2 Operational Governance and Management

The Regeneration Unit is comprised of the following service units and the staff for each:

Table 6.1: Regeneration Unit

Service Unit	Manager	Staff
Head of Regeneration	Brian Dorrian	Sonia Tomblin
Urban Development	David Shivers	David Birch Carly McMullan Geraldine McCann Nick Brown Brendan George
Rural Development	Marguerite Osborne	Mark Christie Pamela Dempster Beverly Skillen

The chart below shows where the Regeneration Unit sits within the organisation.



The Regeneration Unit take responsibility for Project Management with support from an external Integrated Consultancy Team. Its roles and responsibilities include inter alia:

- To advise and support the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO).
- To oversee procurement, ensuring compliance with ANDBC’s Procurement Policy
- To monitor implementation of the risk management and assurance frameworks.
- To ensuring that the Conway Square development is affordable and financially sustainable and deliver in accordance with value for money.
- To monitor the implementation of the Benefits Realisation Plan.
- To ensure adequate resources are committed for all aspects of the Conway Square project.

6.3 Project Governance Roles

Within the Conway Square development project governance structure, key roles have included:

Senior Responsible Owner: The SRO is Brian Dobbins

Project Sponsor: The Project Sponsor is David Shivers

Project Manager: The Project manager is David Birch

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6.4 Key Milestones and delivery

Activity	Date
Draft OBC Submitted	October 22
Final OBC Submitted	February 23

The project has not been recommended for funding.

6.5 Use of Specialist advisers

Not applicable.

6.6 Change and Contract Management Arrangements

Not applicable.

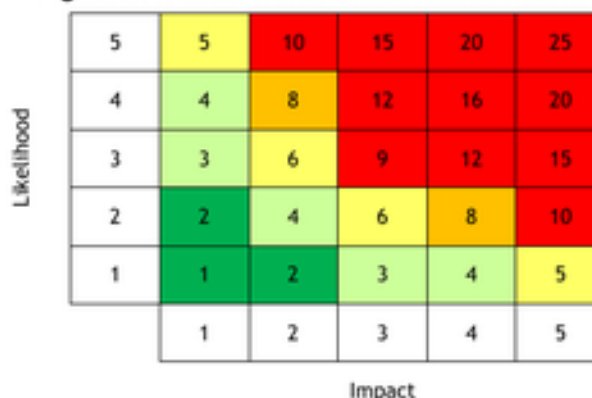
6.7 Benefits Realisation

Not applicable.

6.8 Risk Management Arrangements

The risk management arrangements adopted for Conway Square has generally adopted a 'minimalist' approach to risk classification of risk, as illustrated in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1: Risk Averse Classification Matrix



The key risks captured for the project, including unmitigated and residual risks is listed in Table 6.2 below.

Risk Ref & Category	Risk Description	Unmitigated			Mitigated			Mitigation Measures
		L.	I.	CI	L.	I.	CI	
Delivery Risks								
D.1 Delivery/ Financial	There is a risk that: Capital costs exceed agreed budgets and/or approved levels of expenditure.	3	3	9	2	3	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed Concepts and Works Programme and outline plan for OBC, with supporting independent costings. Experienced Council Estates team responsible for Procurement Adequate Contingency (rather than Optimism Bias) in OBC. Implementation of strong governance and assurance arrangements, including change control.

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Table 6.2: Risks								
Risk Ref & Category	Risk Description	Unmitigated			Mitigated			Mitigation Measures
		L.	I.	CI	L.	I.	CI	
D.2 Delivery/ Programme	<i>There is a risk that: Conway Square is not delivered in accordance with the planned programme</i>	4	4	16	3	2	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding to be secured from Council post-OBC approval Include costed risk provision within the overall capital funding envelope for some programme slippage.
D.3 Delivery/ Programme	<i>There is a risk that: COVID-19: Potential impact on usage due to social distancing requirements.</i>	2	4	8	1	4	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of concepts taking account of social distancing
D.4 Contract Management	<i>There is a risk that: The contract does not provide appropriate allocation of risk, and is not effectively managed.</i>	3	4	12	1	2	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption of industry best practice forms of contracts Reporting and monitoring of contract management performance by Council, and assurance framework.
Operational Risks								
Op.1 Operational/ Financial	<i>There is a risk that: Uptake/usage less than anticipated and there is no economic gain to Newtownards</i>	4	4	16	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No resources available
Op.2 Operational/ Financial	<i>There is a risk that: The Conway Square is not financially sustainable, due to revenue costs associated with the operation and maintenance.</i>	4	4	16	3	3	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed plan not available.
Op.3 Operational/ Benefits Realisation	<i>There is a risk that: Funding from Council is not forthcoming</i>	5	5	25	5	5	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council budgets are under pressure. The funding for revenue costs have not been identified. This raises concerns as to the viability of the project, which in turn raises concerns as to the Council's commitment to the capital costs.

6.9 Post Project Evaluation and Monitoring Arrangements

Not applicable.

Unclassified

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ITEM 27**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Place and Prosperity Committee
Date of Meeting	15 June 2023
Responsible Director	Director of Place
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Regeneration
Date of Report	26 May 2023
File Reference	
Legislation	N/A
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Footpath provision at Shore Road, Ballyhalbert
Attachments	Response from the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Infrastructure dated 24 May 2023

The Council was recently advised of a serious road safety issue in the village of Ballyhalbert. At present there is no footpath on Shore Road between the Village and with the many new homes constructed on the former caravan park site a number of pedestrians have raised concerns as they believe it is intolerable that they must move into the verge or up on the grass bank to avoid oncoming vehicles.

The Council was also advised that a possible solution was for DfI to take control of a path that currently runs from the housing development to the centre of the Village. Although in private ownership, and in poor condition, it was believed this may be a cost-effective solution to the road safety issues.

It was agreed that the Council would write to the Permanent Secretary and request a review of this situation and suggested the Department look at whether the path could be a solution to this matter. Please find attached a response from Dr Julie Harrison.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council notes the response.



**From the Permanent Secretary
Dr Julie Harrison**

Stephen Reid
Chief Executive Ards and North Down
Borough Council

Via email:
Stephen.Reid@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Room 701
Clarence Court
10-18 Adelaide Street
BELFAST
BT2 8GB
Telephone: (028) 9054 1175
Email: perm.sec@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk
Your reference:
Our reference: SCORR-0223-2023
24 May 2023

Dear Stephen,

REQUEST FOR PEDESTRIAN FOOTWAY MEASURES AT SHORE ROAD BALLYHALBERT

Thank you for your email of 9 May 2023 highlighting your concerns about pedestrian safety at Shore Road, Ballyhalbert.

All requests for improvements to the road network, including the provision of footway schemes or upgrading works, are assessed in line with the Department's current policies and guidance and all works are subject to prioritisation with all viable proposals competing for the finite amount of funding available.

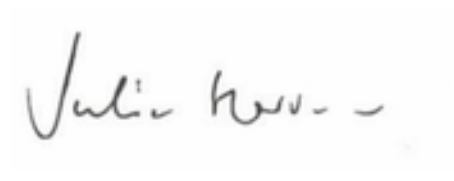
A feasibility study was carried out to identify options for the potential provision of a footway link at this location. The study established that the costs would be significant due to the need to undertake extensive road widening and associated coastal defense works, as well as the need to acquire land from the frontage of properties. On the basis of this assessment this proposal is considered to be a much lower priority in comparison to proposals for many other locations within the council area, little progress has been made in the further development of a scheme for this location.

I can confirm that improved traffic safety measures have been provided in the immediate vicinity to enhance road safety. Measures include edge of carriageway and 'SLOW' road markings as well as advanced warning signage on each approach to alert drivers that there may be pedestrians on the road ahead.

Regarding your suggestion of utilising an existing path from the housing development to the centre of the Village, this route is on private land and runs through an existing Caravan Park adjoining St Andrews Point. As such, the Department would not consider it as a viable alternative option at this time.

I am sorry I am unable to accede to your request at this time but trust this response helps to explain the current situation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Harrison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

JULIE HARRISON