

November 3rd, 2022

Notice Of Meeting

You are requested to attend the meeting to be held on **Wednesday, 9th November 2022** at **7:00 pm** in **Virtual via Zoom**.

Agenda

Zoom Guidance

[Zoom Guidance BRCD.pdf](#)

Not included

Agenda

[09.11.2022 CWB Agenda.pdf](#)

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6. Display Bed Applications

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7. School Growing Clubs

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18. Community Development Grants Assessment 2023-2024

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19. Summer Scheme Evaluation 2022

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20. Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants (WG October 2022)

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21. Ards Peninsula 3G Multi-Use Pitch

Report attached

21. Ards Peninsula 3G Multi-Use Pitch.pdf

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22. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cooper and Councillor Irvine

That this Council opts out of the Service Level Agreement Commitments, under Item 5 , in the Community and Wellbeing Committee in January 2022 and subsequently ratified in Council in January and will write to all other Councils in Northern Ireland to urge them to follow our lead.

23. Any Other Notified Business

Items 24-27 ***IN CONFIDENCE***

24. PCSP Minutes

24. PCSP Meeting 20 June 22.pdf

Not included

25. Coffee Cure Contract Extension

25. Coffee Cure Contract Extension.pdf

Not included

26. Padel Tennis

Report attached

26. Padel Tennis.pdf

Not included

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| 26.1 Appendix 1 Presentation to May 2022 Community and Wellbeing Committee.pdf | Not included |
| 26.2 Appendix 2 Map highlighting population with a 20 minute travel time to Seapark, Holywood.pdf | Not included |
| 26.3 Appendix 3 Map highlighting population with a 20 minute travel time to Ward Park, Bangor.pdf | Not included |

27. Leisure Insourcing - HR Update

Report attached

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| 27. Leisure Insourcing - HR Update.pdf | Not included |
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ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

3 November 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a meeting of the Community and Wellbeing Committee to be held remotely via Zoom on **Wednesday, 11 November 2022** commencing at **7.00 pm**.

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. Victoria Primary School Play Area response to Notice of Motion (Report attached)
4. Item Withdrawn
5. Ashbury Play Park - Linear Park / Ballycrochan (Report attached)
6. Display Bed Applications (Report attached)
7. School Growing Clubs (Report attached)
8. Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2022 – 2032 (Report attached)
9. Cemetery Pricing (Report attached)
10. Groomsport Paddling Pool / Splash Pad Play Upgrade (Report attached)
11. Environmental Health Protection & Development Activity (Report attached)
12. PEACEPLUS Minutes 8th September 2022 (Report attached)
13. PEACEPLUS Vacancy (Report attached)
14. PCSP annual report 2021-2022 (Report attached)
15. 400th Anniversary of Kirkistown Castle (Report attached)

16. Percy French Collection (Report attached)
17. North Down Museum Collections Development Policy 2023-2027 (Report attached)
18. Community Development Grants Assessment 2023-2024 (Report attached)
19. Summer Scheme Evaluation 2022 (Report attached)
20. Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants (WG October 2022) (Report attached)
21. Ards Peninsula 3G Multi-Use Pitch (Report attached)
22. Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor Cooper and Councillor Irvine

That this Council opts out of the Service Level Agreement Commitments, under Item 5, in the Community and Wellbeing Committee in January 2022 and subsequently ratified in Council in January and will write to all other Councils in Northern Ireland to urge them to follow our lead

23. Any Other Notified Business

ITEM – 24-27 *IN CONFIDENCE*****

24. PCSP Minutes (Minutes attached)
25. Coffee Cure Contract Extension (Report attached)
26. Padel Tennis (Report attached)
27. Leisure Insourcing - HR Update (Report attached)

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMUNITY AND WELLBEING COMMITTEE (16 MEMBERS)

Alderman Carson	Councillor Johnson
Alderman Irvine	Councillor Woods
Alderman S Wilson (Vice Chair)	Councillor McArthur
Councillor Boyle	Councillor Moore
Councillor Chambers	Councillor Smart
Councillor Douglas	Councillor T Smith
Councillor Edmund (Chair)	Councillor Thompson
Councillor Irvine	Councillor McRandal

Unclassified

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ITEM 3

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	09 November 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks & Cemeteries
Date of Report	24 October 2022
File Reference	CW4
Legislation	N/A
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Victoria Primary School Play Area response to Notice of Motion
Attachments	N/A

The following motion was agreed by Council in June 2022:

“That this Council task officers to enter into discussions with the Education Authority concerning the redevelopment of the play area fronting Victoria Primary School (which is a shared facility between the school and public) as a potential Peace Plus project to enhance recreation and sports facilities for Ballyhalbert.”

The area of land in question, outlined in red below is currently owned by the Education Authority. Therefore, in order to develop anything on this piece of land agreement with the Education Authority will be required.

Contact has been made with the Department of Education and the Education Authority who stated the following:

Unclassified

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"The Education Authority has a statutory duty to promote and facilitate Community Use of Schools. This includes working with statutory and other partners on capital projects which increase use of school facilities by their local communities.

Any such projects, including those that are substantially funded through external organisations, will be subject to due diligence processes carried out by EA for schools over which it has managing authority (i.e. Controlled schools). As well as confirmation that funding is in place, this due diligence also includes the completion of a business case which demonstrates an identified need for the project within the community and confirms that the use of the facility is financially sustainable in the long term."



In previous discussions with the Education Authority in the past they pointed to the fact that there is a grass pitch and a 3G pitch at Glasty College which is available for community use and which is 0.8km to the west of the village.

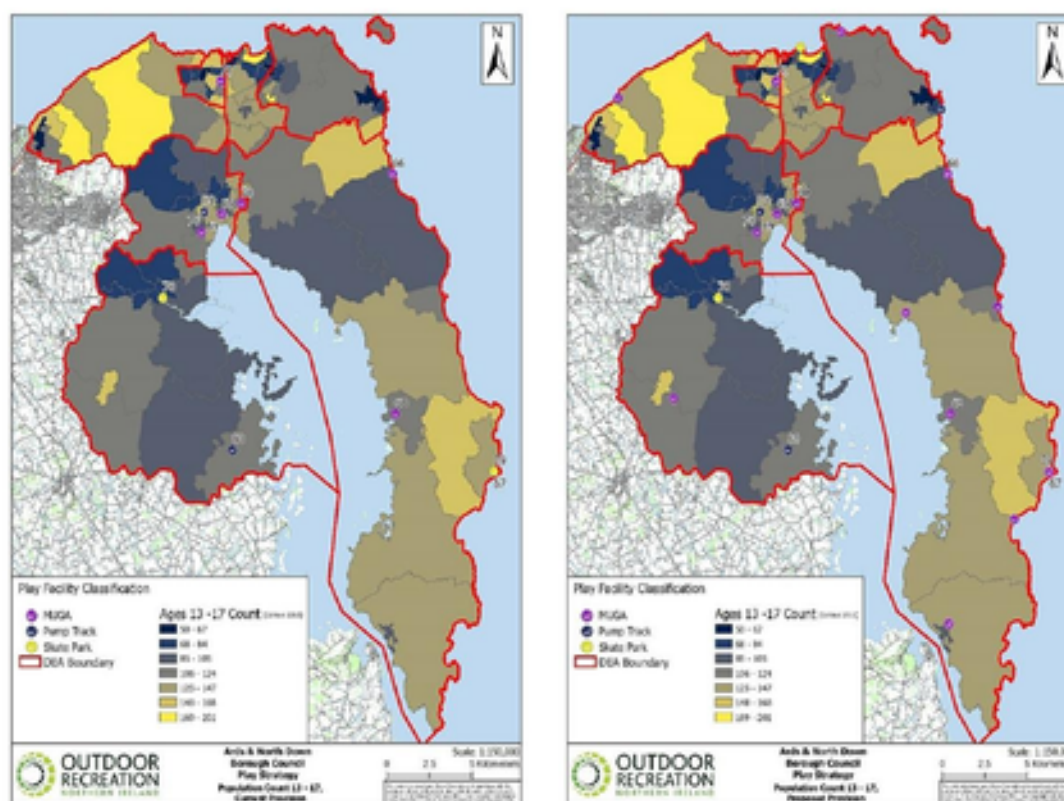


Play Strategy

In terms of older children provision the Play Strategy states the following:

The delivery of such provision is to be focused in areas which are identified as having a higher concentration of older children (from the census data). It will also follow the settlement hierarchy with the larger settlements (in terms of population) being provided for as a priority and also to provide an even geographical spread across the Borough. The availability of Council owned land or the acquisition of additional land (and its associated implications and costs etc) is also a consideration for locating such facilities. For example, Bangor only has one MUGA and Holywood and Donaghadee have no provision at all for older children at present, with Holywood having one of the highest concentrations of older children in its DEA and across the Borough. The aim is to provide an even distribution of such facilities across the Borough with those having the greatest need (population/demographic) being provided for in the first instance.

The delivery of the provision for older children will require the securing of additional capital funds to construct them by completing the required business cases for approval. There may be opportunities to deliver such facilities using external funding which may be location specific (such a Village Renewal funding etc.). In some instances, the delivery of this additional older children provision will be in conjunction with other proposals at a settlement level in terms of upgrades and removals etc. Public consultation exercises will be undertaken in the proposed locations to establish the type of facility that the local community would like to see delivered and where it should be located.



Existing and proposed older children and young people provision.

Unclassified

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Existing Provision

Location	Facility
Bangor	MUGA Clandeboye Road
Newtownards	MUGA x3 West Winds Bowtown (managed by the Community Association) Londonderry Park (partial MUGA) Skate Park, ABMWLC Pump Track, ABMWLC
Comber	Skate Park, Muckers Field
Millisle	MUGA Ballywalter Road
Portavogie	Skate Park, New Harbour Road
Kircubbin	MUGA, Parsons Road (partial MUGA)
Killinchy	Pump Track

Proposed Provision

The locations identified in the Play Strategy for Older Children Provision are as follows:

- Bangor
- Holywood
- Donaghadee
- Groomsport
- Ballygowan
- Ballywalter
- Kircubbin
- Cloughey
- Greyabbey

The type of facility to be delivered and the locations within the settlements will be the subject of local Community consultation. The locations identified in the Play Strategy are to ensure an even geographical spread across the Borough and can be delivered using Council owned land.

Ballyhalbert was not identified for any older children provision over the course of this Play Strategy.

Unclassified

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PEACEPLUS

In terms of identifying projects to be taken forward for PEACEPLUS the Council has established a new PEACEPLUS Partnership for the new PEACEPLUS Programme 2022-2027 for the Ards and North Down Council area. The PEACEPLUS Partnership will oversee the design and implementation of a co-designed overarching PEACEPLUS Action Plan for our area.

The Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC) PEACEPLUS Programme, will build upon the work of previous PEACE programmes and enable and empower local community partnerships, led by the Council to co design, select and deliver priority projects on a cross community basis, which will result in shared and inclusive local services, facilities and spaces and make a significant and lasting contribution to peace and reconciliation.

The three core themes are as follows:

- (i) Local community regeneration and transformation;
- (ii) Thriving and peaceful communities; and
- (iii) Building respect for all cultural identities.

There is a process to follow in terms of which projects will be taken forward for delivery funded by PEACEPLUS.

- Community Consultation
- Online Survey
- Development of a co-design process
- Development of an Action Plan
- Identification of priority projects
- Application submission under the Themes

Therefore, until that process has been completed, it cannot be guaranteed that a project to deliver a facility at Ballyhalbert would be identified as being one of the priority projects identified for PEACEPLUS funding.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council approve that Ballyhalbert community continue to avail of the existing facilities at Glastry College. The potential for a project in front of Victoria Primary could potentially be added to the list of projects being put forward for PEACEPLUS and considered by the PEACEPLUS Partnership and progressed through the process outlined above. Consideration should also be given to the other sites identified in the Play Strategy for older children provision as part of the PEACEPLUS process that can be delivered on Council land.

Unclassified

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ITEM 5

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	09 November 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks & Cemeteries
Date of Report	24 October 2022
File Reference	CW4
Legislation	N/A
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Ashbury Play Park (Linear Park / Ballycrochan)
Attachments	None

Under the legacy North Down Borough Council 2014 Playpark Strategy and the more recent Ards and North Down Play Strategy in 2021, the East Bangor area was identified as having a lack of playground provision. An area around Ashbury Avenue (Ashbury shops) and Linear Park was identified as being the best location to locate a play facility in this area to serve the local population.

A Public Consultation exercise was undertaken in 2019 to determine the preferred site. The sites considered were a site located on the grass area to the front of the shops (Site A) and another site in Linear Park (Site B).

The results were that 42% of respondents favoured Site A and 46% favoured Site B with 3% having no preference and 9% didn't specify a preferred location. At a subsequent Council meeting in August 2020, it was determined that the play area should be delivered at Site A.

Unclassified

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Figure 1. Map which was shown at public consultation events.

Following the Council decision, Council Officers started negotiations with the landowners as well as Land and Property Service to establish if the land could be obtained to deliver the play area and under what conditions. The landowners had aspirations of extending their commercial units at the site and following lengthy negotiations it was finally agreed that they would submit a planning application for their commercial extension. This application included additional commercial units, an extension of the car park and the play area. The play area was designed by the Council's contracted Play Park Installers in line with the normal Council specifications and the drawings were issued to the landowner's agent for inclusion in the planning application. Council also paid the element of the planning fee attributable to the play area (£848). Indication was given by the landowners that when they receive their planning permission, they would then transfer the land needed for the play area to Council and Council would deliver the play park. The conditions of the land transfer will be determined at that point.

Given that the land is not yet in Council ownership the normal planning permitted development rights do not apply, so the play park cannot be delivered and has to be brought forward as part of the wider planning application.

The planning application was submitted on 20th July 2022:

LA06/2022/0750/F: Two class 1 shop units and 1 hot food unit to the ground floor and first floor accommodation for use as class B1(a) or class A2 financial professional and other service use with associated car parking and children's play area.

At present NI Water have responded with the following:

Unclassified

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For the reasons detailed below NI Water recommend that this application for planning approval should be Refused.

There is a public foul sewer within 20m of the proposed development boundary. A high-level assessment has indicated potential network capacity issues. This establishes significant risks of detrimental effect to the environment and detrimental impact on existing properties. For this reason, NI Water is recommending connections to the public sewerage system are curtailed.

The landowner's agent is now required to undertake a study in relation to the network capacity in this area.

Until this has been completed, submitted and reconsidered by Planning and NI Water the planning application cannot be determined.

The play area cannot be delivered until the planning process has been completed. The terms of the transfer will then be determined, and the legal transfer process will need to be undertaken. Should the application not be successful then further negotiations will be required.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council note that the Ashbury Play Area cannot be delivered until the planning application has been determined.

Unclassified

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ITEM 6

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	09 November 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks & Cemeteries
Date of Report	24 October 2022
File Reference	PCA5
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	Display Bed Applications
Attachments	Appendix 1 Display Bed Designs

Members will be aware that on the 27 February 2019, Council agreed a policy for the use of Display Beds in the Borough, this policy requires Officers to report to Council any applications received by external organisations. The Council has received three applications for use of the display beds. Officers have assessed applications and have determined that the requests meet the criteria in the policy and are recommended for approval. The applications were deemed by Officers to not require equality screening.

The Parks team will endeavour to replicate the design as far as possible, however detail design may alter to facilitate installation. If necessary, the Officer will liaise with the applicant if the installation may have to be significantly different from that proposed.

The applications are as follows, and the proposed design of the display is included in the attached Appendix 1.

Unclassified

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Name of Group / Organisation	Display Bed Location	Proposed Dates of Display	Reason for the Display
Glenlola Collegiate School	Adjacent to Bangor Post and Sorting Office	09/01/2023 - 20/03/2023	To celebrate 125 years of educating girls in Bangor
North Down Parkinsons Support Group	Adjacent to Bangor Post and Sorting Office	01/04/2023 – 30/04/2023	Celebrate World Parkinsons Day 11 April 2023
Donaghadee Women's Institute	East Street, Donaghadee	01/05/2023 - 31/05/2023	To mark the 80 th anniversary of Donaghadee Women's Institute

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the above applications for the display beds.

Appendix 1 Display Bed Designs

Glenlola Collegiate School



North Down Parkinsons Group



Donaghadee Women's Institute



Unclassified

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	09 November 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks & Cemeteries
Date of Report	24 October 2022
File Reference	PCA111
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	School Growing Clubs
Attachments	Appendix Starting a School Growing Club Booklet

Ards and North Down has 74 Schools accommodating circa 14,000 pupils. The Council's Parks Service actively engage with many of these schools through Ards and North Down 'in Bloom'. The structure of the 'in Bloom' initiative recognises the importance of educating young people on environmental responsibility, benefiting the Borough now and for future generations. The Community Competitions include categories specifically aimed at entrants aged under 16. Schools are further engaged through the #STAND4TREES initiative which puts young people at the heart of many trees planting schemes and climate change education.

Council Parks Officers regularly hold educational workshops throughout the borough themed around horticulture, biodiversity and the environment. Parks Service hope to build on this success through a new School Growing Clubs initiative.

School Growing Clubs are a great opportunity for schools to promote healthy eating as well as a deeper understanding of sustainable food issues. Pupils and teachers will be inspired to work together in their outside space, learn gardening skills for life and learn to take care of their local environment. Research suggests schools taking part benefit through healthier and happier children spending more of their time outside.

Unclassified

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Schools will be able to use this initiative as a tool for development, enabling them to provide an exciting curriculum for children and young people. Schools can introduce children to the natural environment and in particular to gardening in a variety of ways. Gardening is not just a science subject, but the arts, language, geography, and technology, could all be employed to further a pupil's understanding, knowledge and skills of planting and growing.

Growing areas in schools can be created with as little as a container planting, up to more extensive gardening areas. Growing areas offer students the benefit of practical hands-on activities, helping to motivate and enhance their learning experience. Gardening has many positive benefits, particularly in increasing younger children's likelihood of trying new fruit or vegetables that they have grown and improving all pupils' understanding of healthy eating.

Educating children in the planting and harvesting of fruit and vegetables supports transition to a healthy, sustainable, and more equitable food system, in line with councils' membership of Sustainable Food Places. Ards and North Down Sustainable Food Community recognises the need to support local communities in reclaiming existing outdoor spaces, aiming to connect and support a wider food network to improve partnership working and share skills and ideas.

Our Parks Service is committed to offering guidance to schools through the '[Let's Grow Together](#)' Strategy. We want to assist schools to set-up successful growing areas, developing a positive link with the wider Ards and North Down in Bloom initiative. This School Growing Clubs initiative will provide practical advice and a support package to set-up or improve an existing gardening club within six schools each year. Extension of the In Bloom initiative re-enforces councils' commitment to support communities in achieving horticultural excellence, increasing community participation and promoting environmentally sustainable practices. Since 2019 Ards and North Down In Bloom funding has awarded more than £54,000 supporting 64 projects.

The School Growing Clubs is aimed at promoting sustainable outdoor education to inspire and support learning around horticulture, growing your own, sustainability, biodiversity, the 'reduce reuse recycle' message, and encouraging civic pride within young people. The programme will be delivered by Council's Parks Service and funded within our existing grants budget. Parks Officers will commit to delivering four gardening sessions with each of the six schools (24 sessions in total), to include a celebration event at the end of the programme. The Parks Service will also supply a tool and growing equipment kit to the six schools.

The School Growing Clubs Package aims to support schools and youth organisations to:

- Create a growing area within the school grounds
- Plan, sow, tend and harvest a range of fruit and vegetables at school
- Produce crops which can be eaten in school

Unclassified

- Show schools how you can work together, making the best use of resources.
- Extend pupils understanding of sustainable food issues
- Promote healthier eating and drinking messages for pupils
- Inspire pupils to take care of, and respect, their local environment
- Work towards Eco School criteria and Green Flag

Selected schools will receive: -

- A four-session programme between January and October 2023.
- A Schools Growing Club Starter Kit including tools, equipment and resources.
- Certificates for participating pupils.

All schools in the Borough will be invited to apply to become a School Growing Club in Autumn 2022, with six schools being chosen by the panel (made up of Council Staff), with the programme running from January to October 2023 with publicity throughout.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council supports the implementation of Ards and North Down School Growing Clubs.



SCHOOL GROWING CLUBS



INTRODUCTION

Growing your own fruit and vegetables can provide a great sense of well-being and satisfaction when you see what you can be produced through your own hard work. Many community gardens and growing spaces perform a social or educational function, promoting activities beyond food growing.

Schools Growing Clubs are a great opportunity for schools to promote healthier eating and drinking as well as a deeper understanding of sustainable food issues. Pupils and teachers will be inspired to work together in their outside space, learn gardening skills for life and learn to take care of their local environment. Research suggests schools taking part benefit through happier children spending more of their time outside.

Growing areas in your school can be created with as little as a hanging basket, up to more extensive gardening areas. Growing areas offer students the benefit of practical hands-on activities, helping to motivate and enhance their learning experience. Gardening has many positive benefits, particularly in increasing younger children's likelihood of trying new fruit or vegetables that they have grown and improving all pupils' understanding of healthy eating.

Ards and North Down Borough Council is committed to offering guidance and support to schools through the 'Let's Grow Together Strategy'. We want to assist schools to set-up successful growing areas, developing a positive link with the wider Ards and North Down in Bloom initiative. This Growing Clubs guidance gives practical advice on setting up or improving an existing gardening club in your school.

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- 1.0 Benefits of a Growing Club
- 2.0 What is a Growing Club?
- 3.0 Step by Step Plan
 - 3.1 Getting Started
 - 3.2 Setting up a Growing Club
 - 3.3 What support do you need?
 - 3.4 What roles will people have in the Growing Club?
 - 3.5 Planning your Growing Club
 - 3.6 Locating your Growing Club
 - 3.7 Practical tools
 - 3.8 Designing your Growing Club Area
 - 3.9 Deciding what to grow
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 - 3.11 Managing your Growing Club
 - 3.12 Top Tips
 - 3.13 Promoting your Growing Club
 - 3.14 Evaluating Success
 - 3.15 Growing Club Forum
- 4.0 Growing Club Checklist
- 5.0 Integrating into Schools Projects & Curriculum
- 6.0 Sources of Further Information

1.0 BENEFITS OF A GROWING CLUB

- contributes to pupils' knowledge of healthier eating, e.g., 5 A DAY.
- offers pupils the chance to experience growing food.
- provides a context for looking at food chain issues and understanding where food comes from.
- provides real life links to complement the curriculum.
- can increase the contact between the school and the local community.
- provides an opportunity to involve parents/carers and strengthen the link between home and school.
- acts as a focus in which the whole school can feel proud.
- boosts the confidence of the pupils who take part.

2.0 WHAT IS A GROWING CLUB?

The Schools Growing Club is aimed at promoting sustainable outdoor education to inspire and support learning around horticulture, growing your own, sustainability, biodiversity, the 'reduce reuse recycle' message, and encouraging civic pride within young people. The programme is funded and delivered by Ards and North Down Borough Council. Council staff will commit to delivering four gardening sessions with each of the six schools (24 in total), to include a celebration event at the end of the programme. Council will supply a tool kit and growing equipment to the six schools and all other materials used will be recycled.

The Schools Growing Club Package aims to support schools and youth organisations to:

- Create a growing area within the school grounds
- Plan, sow, tend and harvest a range of fruit and vegetables at school
- Produce crops which can be eaten in school
- Show schools how you can work together to make the best use of the resources and materials you have.
- Extends pupils understanding of sustainable food issues
- Promote healthier eating and drinking messages for pupils
- Inspire pupils to take care of, and respect, their local environment
- Work towards Eco School criteria and Green Flag

Selected schools will receive:

- A four-session programme between January and October 2023 as agreed between the school and Council. Session themes are flexible through discussions with council officers. General themes include, planting and sowing, garden maintenance, harvesting etc.

- A Schools Growing Club Starter Kit including tools, seeds, growing equipment and learning resources.
- Certificates for participating pupils

To take part in this exciting programme, schools are requested to complete an application. Six schools will be selected to participate in 2023. To be considered schools will be required to:

- Commit one class/teacher to the four sessions training programme.
- Commit to providing appropriate Adult: Child ratios
- Commit to continuing to manage, at a material level, the Schools Growing Club programme after the 4-session programme has been completed.

All schools in the Borough will be invited to apply to become a School Growing Club in Autumn 2022, with six schools being chosen by the panel (made up of Council Staff), with the programme running from January to October 2023 with publicity throughout.

3.0 STEP BY STEP PLAN

3.1 Getting Started

Before picking up a spade, ask yourself why you want to develop a Growing Club? What will its purpose be? What needs does your site have to fulfil? Write a statement of what you want your Growing Club to achieve and the potential uses it will offer the school. For example, the Growing Club could be a useful resource for pupils and teachers, both for recreation and as an external teaching and learning resource. Undertake a SWOT analysis for a Growing Club in your school. What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats? This will help you to plan and understand the many opportunities that a garden area can bring, as well as the challenges ahead.

An example SWOT analysis by a school:

Strengths

- Backing from the senior management team (SMT)
- Supportive teaching staff
- Enthusiastic pupils
- Good premises manager

Weaknesses

- Lack of space/equipment
- Little support from parents
- Financial constraints
- Little knowledge of gardening

Opportunities

- Draw in local community and parent interest
- Curriculum links, e.g. food chain issues
- Fund raising
- Raised beds, or adapted tools, for wheelchair users

Threats

- Safety
- Holidays - who will water the plants?
- Vandalism
- Vermin

3.2 Setting up a Growing Club

You should share your early ideas and thoughts with the senior management team (SMT) and the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or other relevant groups that link to a Whole School Food Policy. You will need the support from the Headteacher, SMT and/or governors to ensure success. The full participation of pupils should also be considered in all stages of consultation and decision making.

Setting up the Growing Club, i.e., physically building the garden area, will take several days of hard work, so advertise for willing volunteers to share the workload. Carry out a simple skills and equipment audit amongst the staff, governors and parents to establish what tools and expertise you already have. Recruit help by:

- holding a special assembly;
- producing a flyer with an invitation for people to help out;
- starting a Growing Club notice board;
- advertising in the school newsletter to pupils and parents;
- promoting the idea on the school website, social media or local press.

Advertising for support should enable you to establish a Growing Club team to help take the project forward and avoid all the responsibility being on the shoulders of just one person. This is important for future sustainability.

Ensure the group includes pupils, teachers and, where possible, parents. And remember Ards and North Down Borough Council is at hand should you require any advice or information.

3.3 What support do you need?

- a) Ensure that you have SMT//PTA/Governor commitment to the project.
- b) Consider whether external organisations are needed to help you make the Growing Club a reality.
- c) You may wish to visit other local schools that have gardens or growing clubs and find out what lessons have they learned from the experience.
- d) Use the Growing Schools Garden website for detailed information, curriculum links and links for further information.
- e) Determine the need for training and the level of external support required to make the Growing Club a success.
- f) Ensure that the school's public liability insurance is in place and that it covers your activities.
- g) Contact your local Healthy Schools co-ordinator to find out what support is available in your are
- h) Check for any local garden societies or local web forums and ask for their support.

3.4 What roles will people have in the Growing Club?

- a) Identify key job roles and responsibilities within the team.
- b) Define talents and expertise - is anybody a keen gardener? You may need to advertise for specific help.
- c) Emphasise the links the project has to the particular interest of the person you are trying to get involved, e.g., curriculum links for a teacher.
- d) Inform everybody about what you are doing and what stage the project is at.
- e) Approach Ards and North Down Borough Council for advice and freebies.

- f) Calculate the budget available. You may need to raise funds.
- g) Make links with local business or volunteer organisations that can come into school to help out setting up the Growing Club area, e.g., erecting a greenhouse, making benches, or raised beds.

3.5 Planning your Growing Club

Your Growing Club team should develop an action plan, including the likely time it will take to get the Growing Club established. Develop a month-by-month work plan, including what needs to be achieved, equipment and resources needed and who is going to undertake the task. In addition, consider the following questions:

- What activities need to take place and when? Which of these activities can be completed by the school and for which activities will you need external support?
- Have you conducted a risk assessment for the Growing Club? What are the implications to health and safety?
- What are the objectives for the Growing Club?
- Do you have water and drainage?
- Is there support from your local community?
- Have you determined the budget available?

3.6 Locating your Growing Club

Walk round your school grounds with your premises manager to identify a suitable area. Work with the Growing Club team and pupils to get their views. What exists at present and what has the space got to offer? How is the space being used now and in the future? Important questions to consider include:

- Is it a sunny spot?
- Is it close to a water supply?
- What is the soil like?
- What ground preparation is needed?
- Is access easy for all users, e.g., wheelchairs?
- Are there other activities taking place in the area, e.g., ball games?

Do not be put off if your school grounds are tarmac. Raised beds and container gardening work just as well or even better than a ground level bed. Remember to break drainage holes in tarmac before setting up the raised beds.

Be warned - do not take on too large an area, a raised bed and a few containers would be a great start. However, if you have a large enough space, and have secured adequate funding, work with the pupils to make effective use of the space

you have. You might have enough room for herb and vegetable patches, as well as fruit trees and bushes. In addition, bear in mind the number of pupils who will potentially use the area.

3.7 Practical tools

Tools and equipment you may need include:

- hand tools for the pupils, e.g. trowel, hoe, rake,
- a fork
- a spade
- gloves,
- mini greenhouse,
- seed trays,
- labels and marker pen,
- compost,
- seeds and plants,
- watering can/s,
- hose,
- compost bin,
- project book and camera to record your work,
- raised beds or materials to make raised beds.

You will need a range of tool sizes, including junior spades and small hand trowels for very young children. For wheelchair and/or physically impaired pupils, purchase adapted tools. Some tools might be donated from the community. There are several stockists of child sized tools, including established school suppliers.

3.8 Designing your Growing Club Area

Once you have secured funding, established where the garden area will be and recruited people to help develop and maintain the site, you will need to design your Growing Club area.

- a) Develop a feel or theme to the area, e.g., multicultural, or Victorian kitchen garden (see below for other themes to consider). Do you want to include individual beds, a tool shed, benches or a greenhouse?
- b) Work within the budget you have but consider longer term aspirations and plans.
- c) Sketch out the area, maybe as a pupil activity, looking at the possibilities available for the area. What would they like to see? Some computer simulators are available online to assist design.

- d) Help pupils to design how the area will look in the future and what vegetables / fruit will be grown and when.
- e) Include a composting area or wormery to encourage recycling and a greater understanding of lifecycles.
- f) Ensure that the area has wheelchair access.
- g) Consider what resources you need, e.g. containers, soil, tools, seeds, trees and storage.
- h) Consider water, drainage, maintenance and sustainability in the future.

While any food garden is a centrepiece for nutrition lessons creating thematic gardens to help pupils realise their power to control their own health and that of their families through gardening. Here are a few suggestions:

Cancer Prevention Gardens: Numerous published studies reveal that people who consume large quantities of fruits and vegetables are much less likely to develop cancer than those who don't eat them consistently. A cancer prevention garden should contain abundant cabbage-family crops such as bok choy, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, and mustard greens, which contain a compound believed to stimulate cancer-fighting enzymes. Carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, squash, spinach, red peppers, onions, and garlic are also believed to have a range of cancer-fighting properties.

Cholesterol-Control Gardens: Although vegetables don't contain cholesterol, scientists believe that foods rich in soluble fibre, like many fruits and vegetables, may help to lower cholesterol levels and reduce the risk of heart attacks. Such a garden would include crops rich in soluble fibre such as apples, dry beans, carrots, eggplant, greens, peas, potatoes, and squash. Consider using this garden focus as a springboard for engaging students to notice and perhaps record the fat and fibre contents of foods they eat.

Herb Gardens: Many processed foods have high sodium levels that can lead to high blood pressure and other problems. Consider growing a garden of flavourings such as basil, chives, dill, fennel, garlic, and mint to use in place of salt.

3.9 Deciding what to grow

When deciding what to grow, consult the pupils with a tasting session and strike a balance between favourites like tomatoes, strawberries and fruit and vegetables pupils are less likely to have tried. Once the pupils have decided what to grow, help them find the seeds in a mail order catalogue from which they can order the

plants and have them sent to themselves at the school. Buy some small plants (tomatoes and courgettes for example) to add to your garden.

Pupils will want to see results quicker than nature allows. Keep interest with mustard and cress or red cabbage seeds (sown one week and eaten the next), lettuce leaves, peas and early varieties of potatoes (ready to harvest before the end of summer term) are all relatively quick growing. Minaret fruit trees produce fruit in the 2nd year after planting. Herbs grow well in containers, on the windowsill and in the garden.

3.10 Running your Growing Club

- Timetable your activities to ensure that everyone knows the plan and can take on a specific role in order to get things done.
- Link the project to healthier eating and the curriculum.
- Ensure that the project will go from strength to strength in the future and can be sustained over time.

3.11 Managing your Growing Club

Once you have your equipment, make an inventory. Always ensure that the equipment is checked back in at the end of a session and leave time for tool cleaning.

Do not underestimate the enthusiasm of the children and the need to think through the Growing Club activity session in the same way as you approach a lesson plan. Ensure that you have adequate staff to monitor the space and the pupils involved.

Week by week, month by month, you will need a range of outdoor activities, e.g. planting a fruit tree, filling a container for tumbler tomatoes, sowing seeds, weeding, watering, harvesting and a range of indoor activities, such as designing labels, creating art and writing poems about the garden, creating a scarecrow, writing to a garden centre for donations, making invitations for the open day, keeping records using a spreadsheet. Plan ahead to ensure that pupils have something to do.

3.12 Top Tips

- Leave plenty of time. Plan carefully before you start where, when and who will be involved.

- Start planning and preparing the area in the autumn/winter terms so when things warm up in the spring you can get your plants and seeds ready.
- Share the vision. Ask for specific help from the school community.
- Make sure there are at least 2 people in the co-ordinating team and ensure someone is allocated enough time to undertake the work involved.
- Organise regular workdays.
- Ensure that you have plenty of volunteers.
- If you do not have space in your school grounds make links with local allotments.
- Grow potatoes - you get a lot for your money and you can do lots with them.
- Choose some fast-growing crops, e.g., peas, runner beans and courgettes.
- Try growing seeds in the classroom, establishing window boxes, pots, hanging baskets, containers and grow-bags. If you have no grounds, it is amazing what you can grow in very little space!
- Make raised beds. They look great, are easy to maintain and can be placed in schools which only have tarmac. They are also wheelchair friendly.
- Plan the 'growing' into your school curriculum, e.g., Science, Food Technology, Geography.
- Do not view it as an 'add on' to the school, but as something integral to its ethos.

- Start small and be realistic! Do not be too ambitious. Just one strip of carrots may be enough to get everyone excited.
- Do not be afraid to start even if you do not have a clear idea about what the club will look like in 6 months.
- Ensure that you have activities for rainy days. This could involve looking at and tasting different fruits and vegetables, planning growing areas and using the internet for inspiration.

3.13 Promoting your Growing Club

To promote your Growing Club, you could:

- keep a video diary to play in assembly;
- encourage visitors to visit the Growing Club area;
- invite parents and the local community to view, or take part in, the club;
- grow unusual fruits and vegetables to keep pupil interest;
- make a school Growing Club scrapbook;
- organise an open-house with local schools to help them look at the potential for their schools;
- write topical features in the school newsletter.
- promote the Growing Club in the school newsletter, website or prospectus;
- organise a launch event to open the 'garden' area at school. You could invite the local mayor, MP or a celebrity.

3.14 Evaluating Success

It is important to review and monitor your Growing Club to evaluate its impact. You could:

- keep track of what you have done and compare it to your original statement of activity;

- look at what things are working and what are not and alter the project as appropriate;
- consider whether you need extra support with some aspects of the project;
- keep the project varied and interesting to maintain enthusiasm and motivation of all those involved.

3.15 Growing Club Forum

As a member of the 'Ards and North Down Borough Council Schools Growing Clubs' forum your school will be invited to a meeting once or twice a year to discuss with other members your successes and failures. It is hoped the forum will become a valuable arena for members to learn from each other and ensure their growing clubs grow year on year.

4.0 GROWING CLUB CHECKLIST

1. Have you identified the benefits of a Growing Club for your school?
2. Are you clear about what you want to achieve?
3. Have you involved the School Governors & PTA?
4. Have you engaged the full participation of pupils at all stages?
5. Have you talked to the senior management team and got their support?
6. Is the premises manager supportive of the Growing Club?
7. Have you completed a SWOT analysis
8. Have you decided where the Growing Club will be located?
9. Have you determined who will hold key jobs, roles and responsibilities?
10. Have you identified sources of funding?
11. Have you developed an action plan?
12. Have you designed your Growing Club area?
13. Have you conducted a risk assessment and chosen what to grow?

14. Have you checked equipment and resources?

15. Have you planned a strategy to promote your Growing Club?

16. Have you planned how you will monitor and evaluate the impact of your Growing Club?

5.0 INTEGRATING INTO SCHOOLS PROJECTS & CURRICULUM

There are many natural links which can be made to other Schools Projects, depending on your school. Links to your Growing Clubs include:

- Pupils attending breakfast club could help to water the garden in the morning.
- Some pupils could eat their lunch in the garden if appropriate seating is available. The growing area could be used as a stimulus to inspire pupils about their own lunchbox.
- The garden could grow food exclusively for the school tuck shop.
- Small items, such as cherry tomatoes and carrot sticks could be sold.
- If you have a glut of fruit or vegetables, the cookery club could use these to make a variety of tasty dishes.
- Create an outdoor garden feel to the dining room, e.g. photographs of fruit and vegetables could be used for decoration in the school dining room.
- Growing Clubs provides a context for a wide variety of curriculum links, see figure one below:

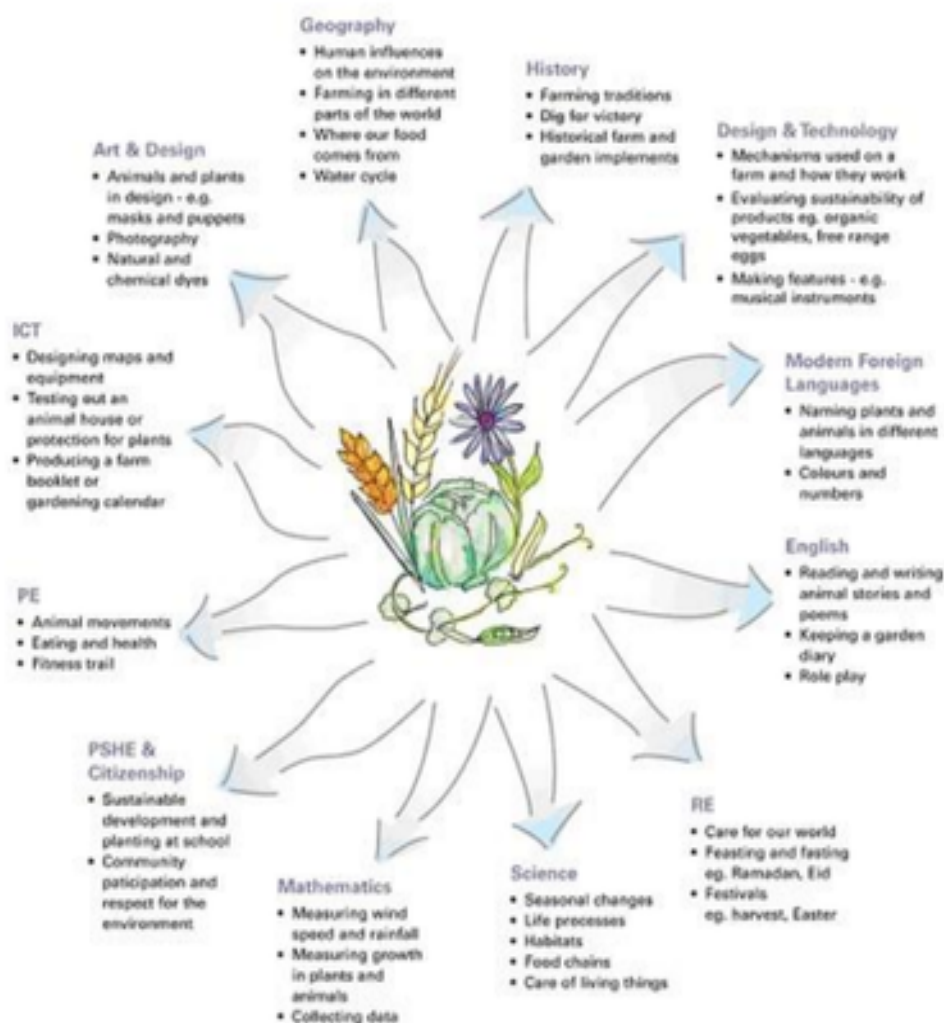


Figure One: Gardening and Growing Curriculum Links

6.0 SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

The following list provides links to further resources and information which may support you in developing your Growing Club.

Ards and North Down Borough Council www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

You can also contact the Parks Service (t: 0300 013 3333 or e: andparks@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk) for help or advice at any time.

Social Farms and Gardens www.farmgarden.org.uk

The Social Farms and Gardens website is packed with useful information Offers support and assistance to existing school-based farms and those wishing to start a new school farm (teachers, assistants and parents).

Eco Schools NI www.eco-schoolsni.org

The Eco-Schools programme provides an ideal way for fostering environmental awareness in the entire school in a way that links to many curriculum subjects. The primary aim of the Eco-Schools programme is to educate and empower young people to make positive decisions and become change makers for an environmentally sustainable world.

Food in Schools www.foodinschools.org

The Food in Schools website contain further materials such as templates, case studies and posters to support you in developing your Growing Club and other related healthier eating and drinking activities in your school. The most up to date materials can be found on the website.

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) www.rhs.org.uk

Britain's gardening charity, with an extensive website, free schools membership scheme, advice and seeds. RHS Online has a wealth of information - including RHS Plant Finder and RHS Plant Selector - on plants for all situations and how to grow them to perfection.

BBC Gardening www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/

Lots of advice and guidance with a useful and free virtual garden designer program.

Global Action Plan www.globalactionplan.org

Global Action Plan is an independent charity which runs an Action at School environmental programme and supports recycling and composting.

Groundwork www.groundwork.org.uk

Groundwork is a leading environmental regeneration charity making sustainable development a reality in communities in the UK which are in need of investment and support.

Learning through Landscapes www.ltl.org.uk

Learning through Landscapes is the national school grounds charity. A membership organisation supporting schools who want to develop their school grounds. Case studies available and lots of links to the formal curriculum available for both primary and secondary.

Soil Association www.soilassociation.org.uk

Provides information and support for schools, including details on farm visits, classroom resources and teacher workshops.

MEMBER APPLICATION FORM

Applicant Details (Please Print)

School / Group Name			
Contact Name			
Headteacher			
Contact Address			
		Post code	
Tel.			
Email.			

Please outline in the box below why you believe your school should be picked to join School Growing Clubs. (500 words max)

Details could include but not exclusive to:

- current school growing schemes
- reason for starting a growing club
- support network available within school
- objectives for the growing space

Applicant Signature _____ **Date** _____

Headteacher Signature _____ **Date** _____

Ards and North Down Borough Council use only

Date Received	
Acknowledgement Sent	
Application Assessed	
Selected (Y/N)	
Outcome Letter Sent	

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

CONTACT:

**Parks Service
Ards and North Down Borough Council
2 Church Street
Newtownards
Co. Down
BT23 4AP**

t: 0300 013 3333

e: andparks@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

w: www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk

Unclassified

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ITEM 8

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	09 November 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks & Cemeteries
Date of Report	14 October 2022
File Reference	PCA1
Legislation	The Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2022 - 2032
Attachments	Appendix 1 Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) Report Appendix 2 LBAP Actions

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the public consultation of the Second Ards and North Down Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2022–2032.

Biodiversity is the variety of plant and animal life in the world, or in a particular place or habitat, and includes all species of plants and animals, and the habitats in which they live. Humans are a part of biodiversity, and the way we make use of the land and manage various habitats can have a knock-on effect for many other species.

The biodiversity of Northern Ireland is of international importance and around 20,000 species are found here in a wide variety of habitats.

A vast range of habitats can be found throughout the Ards and North Down Borough Council area including saltmarsh, rivers & lakes, fens, sand dunes, woodland, and grassland. Urban habitats within parks, cemeteries and gardens are also important for biodiversity. Notable habitats within this Borough and the species they support are

Unclassified

outlined in this plan. Many of the habitats present in Ards and North Down, such as unimproved grasslands, species rich hedgerows and inter-drumlin wetlands are under severe risk of severe damage or loss. The main drivers of biodiversity loss include:

- Habitat Loss and Fragmentation
- Invasive Species
- Invasive Non-native Plant and animal Species
- Pollution
- Climate Change
- Land Management

The Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) places a statutory duty on all public bodies to "further the conservation of biodiversity in exercising any function." The production of this Local Biodiversity Action Plan will assist in demonstrating Council's compliance with the statutory duty. Under the WANE Act, the Council is responsible for considering five key aspects of biodiversity. These are:

- Protection of Biodiversity
- Maintenance of Biodiversity
- Enhancing Biodiversity
- Restoring Biodiversity
- Promoting Biodiversity

The development of this Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) for ANDBC, Appendix 1, is an important step in recognising the importance of our local biodiversity. It aims to ensure that international, national, regional and local biodiversity objectives are achieved through a range of partnerships.

An essential part of the LBAP process was to establish, through a biodiversity audit, which of the internationally important, and UK and Northern Ireland priority, habitats and species occur in the Council area. The audit provided essential information on local species and habitats under threat. This was then used to identify those habitats and species to be prioritised for conservation action. A total of six Priority Habitats and 29 Priority Species were identified through the audit process. The LBAP report expands further providing additional information on each of these habitats and species, identifying key locations within the Borough where they can be found and the specific threats they face.

A series of actions have been designed to conserve and enhance the priority habitats and species identified that are of international, national, regional, and crucially local significance within the Council area, Appendix 2. The proposed LBAP Actions fall under one of four themes:

- Theme 1: Education and Awareness
- Theme 2: Research and Monitoring
- Theme 3: Land Management
- Theme 4: Building Partnerships

A total of 77 Actions have been proposed across all four Themes.

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The habitats and species listed in in the LBAP represent a selection of what is present in the North Down and Ards area. This selection will be prioritised for action. It is likely that other habitats and species may be added to this list as priorities may change over the life span of this plan.

The Plan will be a dynamic document which will be subject to constant review. It will guide the protection and enhancement of biodiversity in Ards and North Down Borough Council over the next ten years. Progress towards the targeted actions will be assessed and reported annually and LBAP will be reviewed after five years. Reporting on progress will be undertaken by the Council on behalf of the LBAP Partnership.

To conserve our habitats and the species they support; we must take ownership and get involved now in protecting them.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the Local Biodiversity Action Plan for ANDBC 2022 – 2032, Appendix 1, and associated actions, Appendix 2, for public consultation.

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ARDS AND NORTH DOWN

LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL

<INSERT COVER PHOTO>

<http://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk>

<INSERT COUNCIL LOGO>

ARDS AND NORTH DOWN

LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

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Foreword

1.0 Introduction

Ards and North Down Borough Council area stretches from the shores of Belfast Lough to the north and the southern tip of the Ards Peninsula to the south.

The Borough covers almost 330 km² with nearly 350 km of coastline, which combines attractive coastline with many pleasant open spaces.

The largest population centres are Bangor and Newtownards together with the small towns of Holywood, and Donaghadee and other small settlements. There are many groups of residential dwellings scattered along rural roads throughout the area. Settlements are also often clustered at intersections to roads. There are also numerous scattered occupied and abandoned stone dwellings and farms, often prominent on upper slopes and connected by a network of winding, hedged roads.

Figure 1 illustrates the extent of the Borough Council Area.

INSERT MAP

Figure 1: Map of Council Area

The Ards and North Down Borough Council area has a rich diversity of scenic countryside ranging from the Strangford Shores in the west to the Outer Ards Peninsula to the east, reflecting local patterns of geology, landform, land use, cultural and ecological features. It is the interactions between geology, vegetation, and soils as well as topography in combination with a long history of settlement and land use which have formed the visually attractive landscapes that are part of our shared cultural heritage.

The Borough is notably rich in historic heritage supporting a number of large iconic land estates, most of which are included on the Register of Parks Gardens and Demesnes of Special Historic Interest. One of the largest estates is Mount Stewart, owned and managed by the National Trust which is open to the public for recreation. Many of these estates are known to support important wildlife habitats including mature broadleaved, conifer and mixed woodland, parkland and lakes with fringing wetlands such as wet woodland and reedbeds as well as veteran or ancient trees of important for invertebrates of the deadwood habitat and fungi. These sites reflect planned and managed landscape enhancement carried out since the 17th century.

The unique geological landscapes of the Borough have been shaped over millions of years as a direct result of the erosional and depositional effects of the impacts of water, wind and ice. Some of these unique geodiverse sites have been designated as ASSIs on account of their important geological features.

Scrabo Hill is the highest peak (540 feet (160 m) in the Council area and is a prominent local landmark of significant amenity and geological value making it of national importance. The Hill also has areas of nature conservation interest which are designated as Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCIs) which support important heath and grassland communities.

The east coast of the Borough is gently sloping, with an exposed rocky coastline that extends into the sea to form small off-shore rocky islands. The intertidal foreshores supply a wide range of habitats and support a high diversity of wildlife. This coastal strip alternates between open, exposed pastures and wooded areas including stands of pine and beech, usually associated with country estates.

The Borough area also includes the Copeland Islands with their rocky shores, cliffs and internationally important breeding sites for gulls and terns.

Strangford Lough, which is of global environmental importance, forms the central geographical and landscape feature of the area. This island studded Lough, part of the Strangford and Lecale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, is a key feature with downed drumlin swarms in the lowlands.

The Craigtlet escarpment, Hollywood Hills and Scrabo Hill make up the higher ground. The Bangor coastline consists of a rocky shore with gorse scrub, stands of Scots pine and steep, narrow glens. The fields and uplands of the Craigtlet Hills are mostly farmed with livestock with lands grazed from April to October. This extensive type of farming and local ground conditions give rise to a wide variety of bog and fen, species rich grassland and rush pasture.

Within the District agriculture is the basis of the rural economy, farms being mainly owner-occupied family units. In total there are 696 farms in Ards and North Down which is 3% of the total number of NI farms. Of those, most farm businesses in Ards and North Down are classified as very small (64%).

Arable land, which includes land under grass re-seeding, is scattered through the Council area with some concentration in areas that are relatively well drained, as for example the Ards Peninsula. Arable land is often of low biodiversity interest but can be significant for farmland birds; priority species such as tree sparrow *Passer montanus* and yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* have been recorded in areas classed as arable.

Cairn Wood in North Down covers an area of 40 hectares (98.84 acres) supporting a semi-natural woodland of oak *Quercus* sp., beech *Fagus sylvatica*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, willows *Salix* sp, and alder *Alnus glutinosa*. There are fine views from the top of the hill over the County Down countryside. Cairn Wood supports the threatened and legally protected red squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris* and pine marten *Martes martes* which appears to be spreading in Northern Ireland.

The Council has made significant investment in their open spaces and parks. Five locations in Ards and North Down have achieved a Green Flag Award, an internationally recognised certification for environmental quality management.. Hollywood's Ballymenoch Park, Newtownards' Kiltonga Nature Reserve and Londonderry Park, as well as Bangor's Castle Park and Linear Park, have each received the prestigious award supplying excellent open space and recreation opportunities.

These parks also support a diverse range of grassland, woodland and wetland habitats. In the summer, the swift *Apus apus*, a bird in serious decline, can be seen and heard flying over these public parks. Threatened and legally protected bats also forage over the grasslands and woodlands of the public parks.

Fishing rivers such as the Comber, Enlar and Ballystockart within the Borough supply coarse, game and trout fishing. These rivers support kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*, grey wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* and Irish dipper *Cinclus cinclus hibernicus* as well as the elusive otter *Lutra lutra*.

The Walled Garden at Castle Park in Bangor is managed by the Council. It has a diverse range of trees, shrubs and perennials that sustain declining pollinating insects.

2.0 What is Biodiversity and Why is it Important?

Biodiversity is the variety of plant and animal life in the world, or in a particular place or habitat, and includes all species of plants and animals, and the habitats in which they live.

Humans are also a part of biodiversity, and the way we make use of the land and manage various habitats can have a knock-on effect for many other species. All living things are dependent upon each other and the environment around them for survival; this is called an ecosystem. Each species within an ecosystem has an important role to play – for example most plants have a special link with fungi living in the soil, without which they could not grow and reproduce.

The biodiversity of Northern Ireland is of international importance and around 20,000 species are found here in a wide variety of habitats. It is the duty of us all to protect this biodiversity for current and future generations, to ensure the continued survival of other species.

A vast range of habitats can be found throughout the Ards and North Down Borough Council area including saltmarsh, rivers & lakes, fens, sand dunes, woodland, and grassland. Urban habitats within parks, cemeteries and gardens are also important

for biodiversity. Some notable habitats and the species they support are outlined in this plan.

The challenge is to encourage everyone to enjoy and access the natural environment without degrading biodiversity. Some habitats are more fragile than others but generally most problems can be avoided with some planning and forethought.

Many habitats managed for the benefit of biodiversity also provide us with relaxing and picturesque places to relax or exercise; research shows that such places are also beneficial for both our physical and mental health and well-being.

Reference has been made to recreation and health as two important reasons for improving biodiversity. Equally important are the cultural aspects of our Biodiversity. Many of the habitats and species that we wish to conserve and enhance are valued because people can remember them and related to them in days past.

Our wild places are embedded in our culture and our wish to enhance them is because they existed and were important to earlier generations and because we wish to pass these values and treasures onto our children and future generations.

Many of these habitats are also 'outdoor classrooms' for us all to learn about the natural world. Conserving biodiversity is part of living in a sustainable way, something we must all learn to do. This is essential as otherwise many resources we need to thrive will become scarce and more costly to acquire; an example would be the importance of pollinating insects in the apple-growing industry. Insects pollinate our crops and can supply natural pest control. If we did not have insects such as bumblebees to pollinate our food crops, growers in the UK would have to find an extra £220 million - £400 million every year to fund this service themselves.

Grasslands provide habitats for insects which in turn provide natural pollination and pest control services to our agriculture industry. The decline in bumblebees, a vital economic pollinator, is linked to a decrease in traditionally managed grassland habitats.

A natural, appealing landscape with a range of habitats also attracts tourists, which provides a direct benefit to the local economy.

The natural environment also helps regulate the climate and buffers against high water flows and weather extremes. Wetlands provide flood defence services worth £1,279 per hectare per year and storm defence services worth £722 per hectare per year. Without them we would have to pay for these services. Over-development of wetland habitats leads to the loss of natural flood defences which then must be replaced by inadequate, and extremely costly, engineered solutions.

Marine environments are important for providing food (fish, shellfish), reduction of climate stress (carbon and other biogas regulation), genetic resources (for aquaculture), bio-technology (medicines), fertiliser (seaweed), coastal protection, waste detoxification as well as disease and pest control. The waste processing and purification services provided by marine habitats ensure that food from the sea is safe to eat and the water is clean enough to use for recreation.

3.0 What Threatens Biodiversity?

Many of the habitats present in Ards and North Down, such as unimproved grasslands, species rich hedgerows and inter-drumlin wetlands are under severe risk of severe damage or loss. When damaged or destroyed many of our habitats are impossible to restore or re-create. Most significant risks to our biodiversity are often caused by human activity. Fortunately, this means that we can change our behaviour to stop the damage we are doing to these habitats and the biodiversity they support. Nature recovery networks aim to address these treats through creating, enhancing and linking habitats.

Habitat Loss and Fragmentation

The biggest threat to biodiversity at a global, regional and local scale is the loss of natural habitats and fragmentation of existing habitat into smaller pockets. Much habitat loss and fragmentation has occurred because of our increasing human

population which has required us to replace natural habitats with land that is used for agriculture, housing, leisure activities, commercial units and industrial complexes. Many species require habitats of a certain size to thrive and when this habitat is lost or becomes too small to sustain such species, local extinction of that species can result.

Building and development can lead to habitat destruction, fragmentation and loss. Even on a smaller scale, building single dwellings in inappropriate places can have a negative impact on the biodiversity of an area. When a number of these dwellings are added together, they have a significant impact. The removal of hedgerows for development or sightlines also has a significant impact on the local wildlife. Hedgerows act as wildlife corridors and allow many species to travel from one habitat to another.

Invasive Species

The arrival and spread of invasive non-native species is also a major threat to biodiversity. This includes pest species, which often arrive with no natural diseases or predators and so spread without any natural methods of control, often to the detriment of our native biodiversity. As global travel and trade continues to increase, the risk of greater numbers of invasive species arriving and harming our natural and built environments will also increase.

Invasive Non-native Plant and Animal Species

Non-native invasive plant and animal species are one of the greatest threats to Ireland's native biodiversity, second only to the threat posed by habitat destruction. Invasive species have negative impacts on human health, the economy and biodiversity. These impacts include altering local food webs by making food resources for native flora and fauna scarce, preying on native species thereby reducing or eradicating populations of native species, out-competing native flora and fauna, possessing toxic substances that impact on human health, acting as a reservoir for new parasites or a vector for pathogens. They are spread from one

continent to another via the global agricultural, horticultural, aquaria and pet trades - or by transportation in ballast water and on the hulls of ships.

Many invasive non-native species have been introduced into our environment intentionally in the past; others have escaped from private gardens or estates. These species were imported without their natural pests, diseases or predators which would usually help to control their numbers. The result is that they often spread rapidly through the countryside, to the detriment of native species.

Council has begun to map the distribution of invasive species on Council-owned land as a first step to their effective control. Those posing the greatest threat to local biodiversity include Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*, Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* and giant hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum*.

In addition to damaging our natural habitats and species, invasive non-native species can often also have a significant impact on the local economy.

Ash dieback *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* and Larch Tree Disease *Phytophthora ramorum*, both of which are fungal diseases have been recently introduced on imported trees. Japanese Larch disease (*Phytophthora ramorum*) is a major problem which has affected larch stands at Cairn Wood. These diseases often arrive with no natural diseases or predators and so spread without any natural methods of control, often to the detriment of our native biodiversity.

Pollution

Pollution is the introduction of contaminants into the natural environment and can take a variety of forms. Water bodies can become polluted through the introduction of sewage, industrial waste, agricultural run-off and litter.

Pollution is a further threat to biodiversity and includes acts such as chemical pollution of our waterways, illegal dumping of rubbish, illegal poisoning of wildlife, agricultural intensification, increasing industrialisation, and air pollution caused by our continued reliance on fossil fuels. The inappropriate use of rodenticides, for example, can poison non-target animals such as birds of prey and owls.

Litter is a problem particularly in our marine and coastal environment. Sea based sources include fishing vessels, pleasure craft and commercial shipping. Marine litter can be consumed by marine animals when they mistake it for food and can cause entanglement and smothering of seabed communities.

Climate Change

Climate change also threatens our biodiversity. This has happened many times in the Earth's history, however research shows that this is currently occurring at a faster rate than ever before. As a result, many species do not have time to adjust to these changes and are at significant risk of extinction. Our continued reliance on fossil fuels is contributing to climate change.

Although climate change is largely accepted, the specific impact it is having, and will have in the future, is difficult to predict. The distribution of species and valued habitats may contract or expand or be wiped out completely. Non-native species may expand their range and provide a threat to native biodiversity.

Increased storm surges are predicted to be one of the impacts of climate change. Fully functioning coastal and wetland ecosystems will help to absorb some of the impact, such as flooding, but the storms themselves may cause damage to habitats making it difficult for them to perform other functions such as regulating water quality.

Insects are very sensitive to climate change: our changing climate results in plants flowering at slightly different times of the year and insects are slow to adapt to these changes, perhaps emerging from hibernation too early or too late to find flowers to pollinate.

Northern Ireland faces changes to its climate with the prospect of hotter, drier summers, warmer winters, and more frequent extreme weather events.

Nature-based solutions to climate change are urgently required. Nature-based solutions to climate change, involve conserving, restoring, or better managing land to remove carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere. Examples include allowing forests to regrow, restoring wetlands, and switching to agricultural practices that

support healthy soils. They also provide a wide range of other important benefits, such as cleaner air and water, and increased biodiversity.

Land Management

In the past changes in agricultural practices leading to farm intensification have resulted in the loss of important habitats and species, in particular hedgerows and species rich hay meadows. An important challenge is to implement measures improving biodiversity on agricultural land and to remove native invasive species such as gorse *Ulex europaeus* and bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* from semi-natural grassland sites and non-native species such as balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* from river corridors. Countryside Management Schemes are helping to improve these issues and landowners are key to halting biodiversity loss in the area.

Most woodland in North Down and Ards need to be actively managed by either planting new trees or managing natural regeneration of existing woodland to maintain biodiversity. Diseases such as Ash dieback disease pose an added threat to our woodlands and the species which inhabit them.

4.0 Developing Our Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)

The LBAP seeks to address the biodiversity and closely related Climate Change crisis through targeted actions over a 10-year period. The LBAP development timeline is presented in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2: LBAP Development Timeline

1992

UK signed up to the Convention on
Biological Diversity at the Rio de
Janeiro Earth Summit

1995

UK Biodiversity Strategy

2002

Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy

2011

The Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011

2013

Publication of the first
Biodiversity Action Plan 2013-2017 for the
North Down and Ards Borough Council area

2022

Publication of the second Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-2032
for the North Down and Ards Borough Council Area

5.0 What is a Local Biodiversity Action Plan?

A Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) sets out how the Council can work alongside a number of governmental and non-governmental partner organisations to develop and complete actions and fulfil targets which promote and enhance biodiversity within the Council area.

With time these partnerships will grow, and the Action Plan will naturally evolve; the Action Plan is designed to create real changes that benefit local biodiversity.

6.0 The Need for a Local Biodiversity Action Plan within Ards and North Down Borough Council

Biodiversity can be used to improve relationships between staff, local stakeholders, and the community. Biodiversity can be used as a driver for stakeholder involvement and engagement.

Although the Local Biodiversity Action Plan is led by Ards and North Down, it is a Plan which everyone can become involved with; everyone can do something to contribute to the Plan and make a difference for local biodiversity.

The Council has produced this Local Biodiversity Action Plan which aims to ensure that international, national, regional and local biodiversity objectives are achieved through a range of partnerships that will benefit both current and future generations.

Ards and North Down Borough Council is committed to the protection of the natural environment. Under the WANE Act, the Council is responsible for considering five key aspects of biodiversity. These are:

- **Protecting Biodiversity:** ensuring that biodiversity is protected from removal, damage, and disturbance on Council-managed lands
- **Managing Biodiversity:** ensuring that existing biodiversity is maintained using appropriate management techniques such as removing invasive species
- **Enhancing Biodiversity:** where possible, biodiversity is enhanced by actions such as the planting of native trees, creating wildflower meadows, creating wetland habitats, or erecting bat roosting and bird nesting boxes
- **Restoring Biodiversity:** actions are taken where and when possible, to restore former biodiversity where it has been lost from a site by e.g., restoring an area of wetland or woodland, or extending the habitat available for priority species
- **Raising Awareness of Biodiversity and its Importance:** Council engages in several internal and external events which raise awareness of biodiversity issues such as littering, habitat loss, invasive species, and climate change,

often in partnership with other public, private, community and charitable organisations

The development of a LBAP is an important first step in recognising the importance of local biodiversity.

The LBAP has enabled us to identify the habitats and species that are important to our area; either because they appear on the Northern Ireland priority habitats and species list or because they are local iconic species that have a strong association with the Ards and North Down area.

Community Planning is a new function for councils which came into effect in April 2015. The Council must initiate; and having done so, maintain, facilitate and participate in, Community Planning alongside a number of named partners. Sustainable development is one of the guiding principles underpinning the Community Plan. The plan recognises that wild better places to live and while our environment is vital to our wellbeing, the wellbeing of our environment relies on our sense of stewardship. Therefore, the Plan stated that the Council will produce a comprehensive and achievable Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) to protect, maintain, enhance, restore and educate on biodiversity issues.

The LBAP aims to conserve biodiversity through local partnerships, considering both national and local priorities by involving local people and local community and conservation organisations through practical delivery of biodiversity conservation.

Local people know and appreciate their own resource and for this reason alone a local plan is necessary. The plan provides the opportunity for local people to decide on the priorities in their area and to have a full say in the development and implementation of the plan. It provides the opportunity for everyone to be involved and contribute to the actions that we are all agreed upon. The LBAP helps to ensure that national and Northern Ireland targets for species and habitat conservation in the Northern Ireland Action Plans are translated into effective action at the local level on

the ground. It includes species and habitats that are not included on the national or regional plans but are of local importance.

This Biodiversity Action Plan is an integral part of the Local Development Plan. The Local Development Plan (LDP) for Ards and North Down Borough Council is the Council's first statutory spatial Plan which will provide a framework for the future development of the area.

7.0 International, National and Regional Legislative and Policy Framework

The Ards and North Down Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) derives from a number of international, national and local processes.

7.1 International Commitments

International obligations which are adopted in Northern Ireland legislation and policies require the protection of biodiversity including flora, fauna, and habitats as well as protection of green and blue infrastructure to enhance the services that natural resources provide.

As international concern grew over loss of Biodiversity, 178 countries, including the UK and Ireland, signed the Convention on Biodiversity at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. The aim of the Convention was to obtain formal commitment from all governments to act to conserve the world's biodiversity, considered to be under threat as never before. It was agreed to work towards the sustainable use of the earth's resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of the range and variety of animals and plants.

In the same year, the European Union adopted the Habitats Directive which requires member states to designate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) to protect some of the most seriously threatened habitats

and species across Europe. Although Brexit has resulted in the UK leaving the EU, environmental legislation to date still applies in Northern Ireland.

Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)

The Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) is a United Nations-led initiative to tackle the root causes of biodiversity loss. Set to be completed in early 2022, the GBF's draft sets out targets for protecting marine and land habitats, reducing pesticides and plastic waste, and increasing investments.

7.2 National Commitments

Biodiversity Net Gain

Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is an approach to development, and/or land management, which aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand through habitat creation or enhancement after avoiding or mitigating harm.

The provisions for BNG only apply to England at present and won't kick in until after a two-year transition period, i.e., from late 2023 at the earliest. However, the principles are fast gaining momentum amongst developers and landowners, and certain local authorities already have policies in place for BNG requirements. It is widely expected that Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland will follow suit.

Natural capital is the world's stock of natural resources, which includes geology, soils, air, water and all living organisms. Some natural capital assets provide people with free goods and services, often called ecosystem services. All of these underpin our economy and society, and thus make human life possible. It is expected that biodiversity gain will result in the creation and the avoidance of loss of several thousands of hectares of habitat for wildlife each year, which represents annual natural capital benefits of around £1.4 billion.

UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP)

To meet the UK's obligations under the Convention to "develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity", the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) was launched in 1994. Its overall goal is "to conserve and enhance biological diversity within the UK, and to contribute to the conservation of global biodiversity through all appropriate mechanisms". Through a steering group, it identified a list of species and habitats which were priorities for action. Targets set nationally for species and habitats of conservation concern will be translated into actions which are achievable in a local context. In addition, BAPs will provide a focus for the conservation of locally-valued species and habitats.

Nature Positive 2030

In response to the crisis of biodiversity loss, many Heads of State around the World have recently made hugely significant commitments for nature, notably through the Leaders' Pledge for Nature launched at the United Nations General Assembly in 2020, and the 30by30 commitment to protect 30% of our land and seas for nature by 2030. These commitments are far reaching, requiring transformational change across sectors in the way we protect, value, use and engage with nature.

The UK has committed to become Nature Positive by 2030 which means reversing the current declines in biodiversity, so that species and ecosystems begin to recover. This is an essential first step on the path to full nature recovery. If species populations are to begin recovering by 2030, wildlife habitats need to be restored and created now. Nature recovery is within our grasp: we know what to do and how to do it.

In combination with more sustainable management across Northern Ireland, 30x30 could create the foundation for recovery of habitats and species, provide the backbone of a country wide Nature Recovery Network, and foster a nature-positive economy for everyone.

Existing protected sites alone will not achieve wildlife's recovery or help us in our fight against climate change. A network of wild places that are bigger, better, more

and joined up is needed. Recent research has shown that NI ranks as the 12th-worst performing country for biodiversity loss out of 240 countries. We have lost more wildlife than anywhere in the UK, with 97% wildflower meadows gone, 11% species at risk from extinction from the island of Ireland, and just 1 of 21 lakes in good quality. 74% of people across Northern Ireland are demanding a nature rich Northern Ireland. Scientific evidence proves that protecting at least 30% of land can have a significant impact on extinction risk and climate change.

Nature-based Solutions

'Nature-based solutions' look to protect or enhance nature in a way that helps tackle climate change and other challenges, while benefitting biodiversity and improving human wellbeing. A wide variety of nature-based solutions, such as tree planting, peatland restoration and coastal salt marshes, have the potential to help.

Green/blue Infrastructure

Green/Blue infrastructure allows the essential benefits of nature to be provided to people. These essential benefits are known as ecosystems services and include the provision of food, clean air and water, regulating the effects of climate change, and cultural benefits such as providing opportunities for recreation and exercise.

7.3 Regional Commitments

An important product of the 1992 Earth Summit was 'Agenda 21' - a comprehensive programme of action needed throughout the world to achieve more sustainable development into the next century. Local Agenda 21 is the local community element of a national and international initiative of the United Nations to protect and preserve planet Earth and the way of life of its people.

The Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 introduced a number of offences relating to killing, injuring or removing wild birds or wild animals listed in Schedule 5, and prohibits interference with places used for shelter or protection. Additionally, the

Order makes it an offence to uproot or trade in any wild plant listed in Schedule 8. The Order aims to prevent the spread of non-native species (i.e., Japanese Knotweed) which may be detrimental to native wildlife.

The Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011, sometimes known as the WANE Act, is the main piece of legislation in Northern Ireland concerned with protecting our biodiversity. It has also tightened control on invasive non-native species and has increased the penalties for wildlife crime. This legislation places a statutory duty (called the Biodiversity Duty) on public bodies such as local councils to further the conservation of biodiversity in ways that are consistent with carrying out their main functions.

Under the WANE Act, the Council is responsible for considering five key aspects of biodiversity. These are:

- **Protecting biodiversity**
- **Managing biodiversity**
- **Enhancing biodiversity**
- **Restoring biodiversity**
- **Raising awareness of biodiversity and its importance**

The Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy 2020

The Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy 2020 includes national targets and actions for a range of important habitats and species. To achieve these targets local biodiversity action must also be taken.

This report approaches the conservation of biodiversity from an ecosystem services approach, meaning that it recognises the need to conserve biodiversity in a way that provides us with the materials and services we depend upon for our own survival.

It includes recommendations on how to best sustain biodiversity within an international and national context. Priorities in terms of habitats and species were identified and set out in the strategy.

Many sites in the Council area support habitats which are of particular importance for declining, rare and protected priority species.

This strategy has become the reference point in the development of LBAPs and identifying priority habitats and species within local areas.

The strategy sets out the role of the work that businesses, local government, and the voluntary sector do to achieve the overarching aim of halting biodiversity loss. Halting such loss will allow us to continue to benefit from all that nature has to offer, particularly at a time when the planet's climate is changing, with all the challenges that such change brings. It sets out the role of the LDP in this process and the principle of taking forward biodiversity issues in the LDP preparation. The LDP must consider its impact on the integrity of Natura 2000 sites (these comprise SACs and SPAs as well as Ramsar Sites).

All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025

One third of our bee species is threatened with extinction from Ireland. This is because we have drastically reduced the amount of food (flowers) and safe nesting sites in our landscapes. The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan is about all of us, from farmers to local authorities, to schools, gardeners and businesses, coming together to try to create an Ireland where pollinators can survive and thrive. The first Plan covered the period 2015-2020 and a new version has been developed for 2021-2025.

Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy 2021-2040

The Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy identifies the ecosystem services provided by healthy peatlands, including climate regulation and adaptation, specialised biodiversity, good water quality, flood alleviation and a historical archive. Peatlands also provide a unique landscape for recreation and education.

A cross-sectoral group, the Northern Ireland Peatland Partnership will provide oversight and ensure delivery of the Strategic Objectives and Actions contained within the Strategy.

Draft NI Environment Strategy

The Environment Strategy is intended to be an overarching document setting out Northern Ireland's environmental priorities for the coming decades and will form part of the Green Growth agenda (the Green Growth Strategy will provide more detail on actions in respect of climate change & greenhouse gas emissions).

Draft Green Growth Strategy for Northern Ireland

The Green Growth Strategy is the Northern Ireland Executive's multi-decade strategy, balancing climate, environment and the economy in Northern Ireland. It sets out the long-term vision and a solid framework for tackling the climate crisis in the right way.

Nature Recovery Networks

The previous Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) for Ards and North Down Borough Council (ANDBC) (2013-2017) was the first ever biodiversity plan for the Borough. It involved a comprehensive desk-based biodiversity audit of the local area and extensive stakeholder consultations which allowed the steering group to develop specific local habitat and species action plans. The previous LBAP can be found on the councils website:

https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/images/assets/Local_Biodiversity_Action_Plan_2013-2017.pdf.

This revised plan covering the period 2022-2032 will reflect changes in the national and international approach to conservation by moving towards a Nature Recovery Approach of protecting and enhancing our local biodiversity.

To reverse the declines in biodiversity and realise nature's recovery at scale, we need to work together and on the landscape-scale to embed the principles of Bigger, Better, More and Joined Up into our policies and strategies. This means protecting and enhancing our existing natural habitats, but also making them bigger, creating new areas of species-rich habitat, and, critically, ensuring they join up to create functional and resilient ecological networks that enable nature and people to thrive.

A Nature Recovery approach will provide ANDBC with a comprehensive picture of the habitats and species within our Borough and allow us to work closely with partners and stakeholders to produce actions on a larger and connected scale than within the previous LBAP. Ulster Wildlife Trust (UWT) and their partners were awarded Heritage Lottery Funding in 2020 to carry out a Northern Ireland wide Nature Recovery Network Study. As a part of the project, they completed a large mapping exercise to understand what current land cover looks like in Northern Ireland, how connected it is, and how this could be improved, at a landscape-scale. Many biodiversity corridors have been identified and through this LBAP, such networks can be protected, enhanced and managed to assist in conserving our biodiversity (**Figure 3**).

(To Be Inserted)

Figure 3: Nature Recovery Network (Source: Ulster Wildlife)

This includes the protection and enhancement of green spaces within urban areas which provide 'green oases' for residents, businesses and visitors.

There are great opportunities for a local nature recovery network in the ANDBC area where governmental, local authority, landowner, non-governmental partners and community groups could come together and achieve more, bigger, better and more joined up spaces for nature.

The Marine Plan for Northern Ireland

The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (MCAA) and the Marine Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 (The Marine Act), require the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) as the Marine Plan Authority (MPA), to prepare marine plans. The Marine Plan for Northern Ireland will inform and guide the regulation, management, use and protection of Northern Ireland's marine area. It is a single document made up of two plans, one for the inshore region and one for the offshore region. The marine area comprises all marine waters including seabed, subsoil, sea loughs and tidal rivers, so far as the tide flows at Mean High Water Spring Tide.

The draft Marine Plan takes account of the economic, social, and environmental needs of the marine area, and provides guidance and operational policies.

A Marine Mapviewer (<https://apps.d.aera-ni.gov.uk/marinemapviewer/>) which shows the uses and activities and protected designated sites that occur in the Northern Ireland Marine Area is available.

8.0 Development of the LBAP

The key stages in the development of our LBAP are presented in **Figure 4**.

Figure 4: Key Stages in the Development of our LBAP



8.1 Biodiversity Audit

An essential part of the BAP process was to establish, via a biodiversity audit, which of the internationally important and UK and Northern Ireland priority habitats and species occur in the Council area, and where available, include information on population size or habitat extent, trends, threats, and information sources. This audit forms a record of 'best current knowledge'. It is not a definitive statement of biodiversity in the Council area. However, over time it will be amended and added to as our knowledge is increased. Nonetheless, the audit highlights the remarkable biodiversity that occurs

in the Council area from the common and widespread, to nationally rare species and habitats.

The audit provided the information about the species and habitats that are under threat. The information was then used to decide what habitats and species should be prioritised for conservation action in the Ards and North Down area. These are our priority habitats and priority species. In addition to priority habitats and species, locally important species and habitats are also highlighted.

The audit also highlights where there are gaps in information, which through the LBAP process can stimulate new data collection and research.

The Ards and North Down LBAP will be based largely on the targets set out in the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy. The Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy is the blueprint for conserving and improving biodiversity in Northern Ireland. This strategy identifies a distinct role for local councils in conserving biodiversity through the production of LBAPs.

8.1.1 Internationally, Nationally and Locally Designated Sites

Designated sites are wildlife-rich sites that have been selected for their nature conservation value. They vary in shape and size and can have important, distinctive and threatened habitats and species. Designating sites helps to ensure that the species present are properly protected. Sites that are designated tend to be the best examples of natural and semi-natural ecosystems and are managed to conserve their unique features. In Ards and North Down sites have been designated to preserve a wide range of Northern Ireland priority habitats and species. Many of these designated areas are in private ownership which is why partnership work is so important to the success of this LBAP.

Habitats are designated as important when a specific area of land has an important ecosystem which helps to support a particular species, or a group of species.

There are over 60 designated sites of regional, national and international importance in the Ards and North Down area. These sites are listed in **Appendix 1**.

Special Protection Areas (SPAs)

In 1979 UN member states including the United Kingdom, adopted The Birds Directive which aimed to protect all European bird species. These sites deemed important for breeding, over wintering and migrating birds are designated as Special Protection Areas (SPAs). There are three SPAs designated in the Borough.

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

In 1992 the European Union also adopted a directive on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna, often called The Habitats Directive. This required all member states, including the UK, to designate a series of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to protect some of the rarest or seriously threatened habitats and species in a European context. There are currently only two SACs within the Borough.

Sites designated under both directives for their conservation interest are often known as 'Natura 2000' sites. In 1995 the EU Habitats Directive was transposed into

Northern Ireland legislation as the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended). This legislation provides protection for our most vulnerable habitats and species.

Despite the UK exiting the EU, the level of protection to our habitats and species in the wider countryside and in our protected areas will remain unchanged. The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) (Amendment) (NI) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 limits changes, only to those needed, to ensure our legislation continues to operate effectively from 1 January 2021. Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) will become part of the UK national site network. There is no practical difference to these designated sites, and the requirements of those that manage them or make decisions related to them, remains the same. They will continue to be referred to as European sites.

Ramsar Sites

Wetlands listed under the Ramsar Convention to protect those of international importance. Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance, listed under the Ramsar convention, where signatories are required to conserve such areas through the highest form of protection. A wetland is defined as an area of marsh, fen, peatland, or water, whether natural, or artificial, permanent, or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish, or salt and including areas of intertidal marine water. There are two Ramsar sites in the Borough.

Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs)

ASSIs are sites of special interest by reason of their flora, fauna, geological and/or physiographical features and are designated under the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 (as amended). ASSIs are areas of land that have been identified through a scientific survey as being of the highest degree of conservation value, based on their flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features. They have a well-defined boundary and by and large remain in private ownership. There are nine ASSIs within the Borough, either in whole or part.

National Nature Reserves/Nature Reserves

These are designated under the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (NI) Order 1985 and are managed by the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs or by agreement with another Department, a District Council, or a voluntary conservation body. Nature reserves are chosen from among the very best examples of our wildlife, habitats, and geology. They contain a wide range of species, communities and geology and their designation is a public recognition by Government of their importance. These sites are reserved and managed for conservation as well as providing special opportunities for study and/or research.

Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance

Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCIs) were designated in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 2 Planning and Nature Conservation. Sites were identified based on their flora, fauna, or earth science interest. Policies for the protection and/or enhancement of SLNCIs were included in the Local Development Plan. As the Council's new Ards and North Down LDP process progresses, the Local Policies Plan will identify SLNCIs. Where such sites are confirmed in adopted plans, specific planning policies will be applied to development proposals on those sites.

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)

LNRs can be designated by local Councils under the Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985. Local Nature Reserves protect sites of local importance for nature conservation, education, and amenity. There are two Local Nature Reserves designated within the Borough Balloo Wetland and Balloo Woodland both managed by Ulster Wildlife in partnership with Ards and North Down Borough Council.

Ulster Wildlife manages a network of nature reserves throughout Northern Ireland. Ulster Wildlife also carries out conservation management of notable habitats including lowland meadow as well as conservation actions for notable species such as red squirrel and barn owl.

8.1.2 Habitats within Ards and North Down Borough Council Area

The Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group has developed lists of Priority Habitats and Priority Species which detail the habitats and species most at risk in Northern Ireland..

The Borough contains a variety of habitats including saltmarsh, semi natural grasslands, woodlands, wetlands, peatlands including bogs and fens, agricultural grassland and areas of geological interest.

Coastal, Island and Marine Habitats

The Borough contains a 350 km stretch of coast from Belfast Lough to the tip of the Ards Peninsula.-With such a significant length of coastline-it is not surprising that coastal habitats have been identified as integral elements of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

Marine Habitat

The marine environment supports a significant percentage of Northern Ireland's biodiversity. Many birds are associated with the coast, including the instantly recognisable oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*, that walks the shores, feeding on cockles and mussels. Other common seabirds include both the Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* and shag *Gulosus aristotelis* which are often spotted standing on offshore rocks.

Strangford Lough, with its at least 70 islands, is the only marine nature reserve in Northern Ireland and one of only three in the UK. The Lough supports over 2000 marine species which is more than 70% of the known marine species off the coast of Northern Ireland. Strangford Lough and the Outer Ards Area support internationally important breeding populations of sandwich tern *Sterna sandvicensis* and Arctic tern *Sternus paradisaea*. A wide range of habitats are also found including rocky shores, sand and shingle beaches, mud flats, seagrass beds and horse mussel beds supporting a diverse flora and fauna.

Copeland Islands SPA/ASSI viewable from Donaghadee, is located off the North Down coastline and comprises Big Copeland, Light House Island and Mew Island. The site is most importantly known for its breeding seabirds and waders, these include significant populations of razorbill *Alca torda*, kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* and common guillemot *Uria aalge*. Other species of significance include the fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*, and black guillemot *Cepphus grylle*. It is important to note the islands also contain some particularly unique coastal plant communities and geological features.

The shoreline of Belfast Lough comprises a series of mudflats and lagoons while the outer Lough is restricted to mainly rocky shores with some small sandy bays. The Lough has been designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Ramsar Site as it regularly supports internationally important numbers of migrating waterfowl and wildfowl. Belfast Lough has also been declared an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI).

Sightings of harbour porpoise *Phocoena phocoena* and bottle nosed dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* are quite common at all times of the year. Strangford Lough and the Outer Ards Peninsula are home to colonies of grey seal *Halichoerus grypus* and common seal *Phoca vitulina*. The waters of Strangford Lough include reef and sandbank habitats that support and are vital for a variety of rare marine life.

The plant perhaps most commonly associated with our coastline is thrift *Armeria maritima*, exhibiting an abundance of pink or sometimes red, purple or white flowerheads on stalks. Other species with colourful flowers to look out for include red valerian, sea mayweed *Tripleurospermum maritimum*, sea campion *Silene uniflora*, common scurvygrass *Cochlearia officinalis* and rock-sea spurrey. The fern sea spleenwort *Asplenium marinum* occurs on coastal rocks.

Sea-kale *Crambe maritima*, a plant of shingle beaches, is generally said to be extremely rare in Northern Ireland.

Other rarities of the upper beach include oysterplant *Mertensia maritima* found at Kearney NT, Ards Peninsula. This is a scarce attractive plant found on shingle and sand sea-shores in the east and south of the county.

Sand Dune Habitat

Sand dunes are diverse habitats that support a range of common and rare plants, mosses, insects, birds and mammals. They support a substantial proportion of our butterfly, moth, ant, bee and wasp species. Sand dunes also provide nesting habitat for breeding birds such as stonechat *Saxicola rubicola* and meadow pipit *Anthus pratensis*. Most of the habitat in the area can be found in the Outer Ards and around Cloughey Bay. Vegetation includes dune scrub/slacks, together with saltmarsh, strandline vegetation, and dry grassland. Cloughey Dunes comprises a complex habitat mosaic of sand dunes, scrub and dense bracken. Sand dune plants include lyme-grass *Leymus arenarius*, sand couch *Elymus junceiformis*, sea sandwort *Honckenya peploides*, mayweed *Tripleurospermum maritimum*, sea rocket *Cakile maritima*, sea radish *Raphanus raphanistrum* ssp *maritimus*, perennial sow-thistle *Sonchus arvensis* and several species of orache *Atriplex* spp.

Mudflat Habitat

Extensive areas of mudflat occur around Strangford Lough. Mudflats contain a great abundance of species, including invertebrates such as the Lugworm, which in turn support large numbers of predatory birds and fish. Mudflats provide valuable feeding and resting areas for significant numbers of passage/wintering waders and wildfowl such as light-bellied brent geese *Branta bernicla hrota*, shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, red-breasted merganser *Mergus serrator*, shoveler *Anas clypeata*, wigeon *Anas penelope*, turnstone *Arenaria interpres*, oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*, ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula*, golden plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, redshank *Tringa totanus*, greenshank *Tringa nebularia*, knot *Calidris canutus* and bar-tailed godwit *Limosa lapponica*.

There was an over 60 per cent decline in breeding numbers of curlew, lapwing and redshank in Northern Ireland between 1987 and 1999. The decline of these waders

has been largely caused by the loss of mixed farming and spring cropping, and the intensification of grassland management through drainage.

The road from Newtownards to Portaferry provides a good vantage point to view the extensive intertidal mudflats notably at Mount Stewart. The upper parts of the mudflats are fringed with saltmarsh vegetation. Saltmarsh is one of the rarest coastal habitats in Northern Ireland as most of the original habitat has been reclaimed and improved for agriculture. Strangford Lough supports one of the most extensive saltmarsh areas in Northern Ireland with the Comber estuary harbouring one of the most valuable saltmarsh areas. The saltmarsh located at Ballymacormick Point ASSI contains several plant species with a restricted distribution in Northern Ireland, including salt-marsh flat Sedge *Blysmus rufus* and sea purslane *Atriplex portulacoides*.

The best time to view this habitat is in August when, from the road, an abundance of the colourful yellow and purple flowers of sea aster can be seen, mingling with innumerable tiny purple-pink flowers of lax-flowered sea-lavender *Limonium humile*. Saltmarsh is rare in the British Isles and in Northern Ireland the total area amounts to only c. 250 ha.

Saline Lagoon Habitat

Saline lagoons are bodies of water that have a restricted connection to the sea which creates an environment where the salinity of the water body is neither marine nor fresh. Saline lagoons provide important habitats for large numbers of wildfowl and waders. They often provide important locations for high tide roosts as well as offering habitats for migrating birds. In the North Down and Ards area saline lagoons are present at The Dorn in Strangford Lough and at Castle Espie.

Brackish Water Habitat

Brackish water habitats are uncommon and can be associated with rare species. These include rare molluscs and plants e.g. spiral tasselweed *Ruppia cirrhosa* noted at Strangford Lough, Comber and Newtownards. This species has declined, in some

cases due to development, and there are only two recent known locations. The county population of this species may be endangered due to continued development.

Shingle Beach Habitat

Shingle beach associated with raised beaches occur at Ballyquintin Point ASSI/ NNR, a site that is notable for its extensive vegetated shingle banks. Coastal vegetated shingle also occurs at the National Trust property at Kearney, Templecowey and at Horse Island in Strangford Lough. These habitats also support breeding birds such as ringed plover *Charadrius hiaticula* and oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus* and support specialised plant and invertebrate communities.

Maritime Cliff and Slope

Maritime cliffs are often significant for their populations of breeding seabirds. They provide nesting sites for breeding birds such as the black guillemot *Cephus grylle*, six species of gulls and the fulmar *Fulmarus glacialis*.

Maritime Grassland

The flora of maritime grassland varies depending on exposure to salt spray and soil type but includes red fescue *Festuca rubra*, sea plantain *Plantago maritima*, buck's-horn plantain *Plantago coronopus*, thrift *Armeria maritima*, wild thyme *Thymus polytrichus*, biting stonecrop *Sedum acre*, English stonecrop *Sedum anglicum*, and spring squill *Scilla verna*. Maritime grassland occurs locally over exposed rocky headlands and outcrops at Ballyquintin Point and at Templecowey.

Horse mussel *Modiolus modiolus*

The horse mussel *Modiolus modiolus* in Strangford Lough is hugely important to the Lough's biodiversity as clumps of their shells form a living reef over large tracts of seabed. Over 270 other species have been recorded living on or in the horse mussel beds. Horse mussels are a long-lived species and individuals within beds are frequently 25 years old or more. However, they and their associated community of animal species are in serious decline.

Seagrass *Zostera* spp.

Seagrass *Zostera* spp. (often referred to as eelgrass) are marine flowering plants which often grow in dense, extensive beds in shallow coastal areas. The northern mudflats of Strangford Lough support luxuriant beds of the seagrass. Such extensive beds are rare in the British Isles. Seagrass beds provide nursery and foraging areas for commercially important fish, improve water quality by removing dissolved nutrients, stabilise sediment and are a valuable food resource for wildfowl. Over 30,000 pale-bellied brent geese *Branta bernicla hrota* make the 3,000-kilometre journey from northeast Canada each autumn to feed on the Lough's succulent seagrass.

Smelt *Osmerus eperlanus*, a small, shoaling fish that lives in estuarine and coastal waters and spawns in the lower reaches of rivers, has been noted in sea loughs including Belfast Lough. Grey mullet *Chelon labrosus* and flounder *Platichthys flesus*, which are also commonly found in estuaries, have also been recorded from Belfast Lough and some of the lagoons.

Belfast Lough regularly supports nationally important numbers of overwintering birds including goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*, great crested grebe *Podiceps cristatus*, red-breasted merganser *Mergus serrator*, oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*, purple sandpiper *Calidris maritima*, dunlin *Calidris alpina*, black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa*, bar-tailed godwit *Limosa lapponica*, curlew *Numenius arquata*, turnstone *Arenaria interpres*, shelduck *Tadorna tadorna*, greenshank *Tringa nebularia*, redshank *Tringa totanus* and common gull *Larus canus*. Internationally significant numbers of light-bellied brent geese *Branta bernicla hrota* have been recorded at the southern end of the lough, overwintering after migrating from northern Canada.

Little egret *Egretta garzetta*, a distinctive medium-sized white heron, has in recent years extended its range northwards in Europe and is now breeding in Ireland and is regularly spotted at Belfast Lough, feeding on the mudflats.

Twite *Linaria flavirostris*, the rarest of our breeding finches, has been spotted wintering by the coast in this area, feeding on seeds around the saltmarshes in

Strangford Lough. Strangford Lough supports an internationally important population of light-bellied brent geese in winter.

The otter *Lutra lutra* can be spotted along the coast and if you take a stroll along the attractive coastal footpath from Bangor to Helen's Bay you might also be lucky enough to see a common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, our only native reptile, sunning itself on rocks or on one of the picnic tables. Lizards are frequently reported from this area and, in addition to coastal habitats, are particularly associated with sites that have coniferous woodland, heath or bog. However, it is thought that in lowland areas populations may be small and isolated due to habitat loss.

Invertebrate species to look out for near the Ards and North Down coast include the moth rosy rustic *Hydraecia micacea* at Ballyquintin Point NNR/ASSI and the grayling butterfly *Hipparchia semele* at Helen's Bay.

A walk at low tide along a rocky shore reveals a richness of marine life. This includes seaweeds, sponges and shelled creatures such as the common mussel, barnacle, limpet, whelk and periwinkle. However, there is concern about a growing number of non-native invasive species that have been accidentally introduced and are spreading in the local marine environment. These can take over habitat and displace native species and cause other problems including fouling the hulls of ships and impacting aquaculture industries. Once established, marine invasive aliens are almost impossible to eradicate. The slipper limpet *Crepidula fornicata*, a North American species, first appeared in Belfast Lough around 2005. In 2012, the carpet sea squirt *Didemnum vexillum*, which is thought to be a native of the waters around Japan, was found at Strangford Lough, and it may spread to other sites. Wireweed *Sargassum muticum*, an alga native to the shores around Japan and Korea, has been present in Europe for several decades, growing up to 16m in length and quickly forming dense mats. It now occurs at several sites along the coast in County Down.

Coastal, Island and Marine Habitats to Visit

- Ballymacormick Point

- Ballyquintin Point
- Copeland Islands
- Crawfordsburn Country Park
- Orlock Point
- Island Hill
- Ardmillan Bay
- Barr Hall Bay
- North Down Coastal Area
- Strangford Lough

Threats to Coastal, Island and Marine Habitats

- Water pollution
- Habitat loss to development
- Marine litter
- Recreational pressure

Farmland Habitats (Grassland, Arableland and Hedgerow)

Intensification of agricultural practices has had a dramatic impact upon grassland habitats. The application of fertilisers, herbicides and pesticides as well as frequent re-seeding of agricultural grassland on lowland farmland has favoured only a small number of nutrient-loving plant species with field boundaries of maintained hedgerows or barbed wire fencing. Most grasslands in the Borough are of the species-poor, improved and generally of low conservation value. In some locations however they do provide grazing for NI priority wildfowl species, e.g., whooper swan *Cygnus* and Bewick's swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*.

The result is that very few semi-natural grasslands now exist and many of our once-abundant wildflowers, as well as their pollinators, are now much more localised. It is estimated that Northern Ireland has lost around 97% of its species-rich hay meadows within the last 50 years.

The priority habitat lowland meadow, includes many unimproved and semi-improved grasslands which are used for hay or grazing rather than for silage. Lowland meadows have all but disappeared in Northern Ireland, but some examples of this habitat type can be found in Crawfordsburn Country Park. They are important habitats for many wildflowers and diversity of grasses which in turn support a wide range of pollinating insects including butterflies, moths and bumblebees. Damp and dry lowland meadow is a rare habitat in the Council area sites being small and rather isolated. The Council has recently begun to manage Council-owned sites (e.g. Ballyphilip Playing Fields) to improve species diversity under its Rewilding Initiative.

Many roadside verges inadvertently act as valuable corridors for the dispersal of plant and animal species across the landscape. In many areas of countryside they provide the only resources for wildlife such as sources of nectar for pollinating insects, seeds for farmland finches and buntings, cover for small mammals and a wide range of invertebrates and also foraging habitat for bats and raptors.

Rough grassland is common in the uplands. Areas of both wet and dry rough grasslands are associated with heath in upland areas, sometimes of gorse *Ulex europaeus*, but also of heather *Calluna vulgaris* in a complex mosaic with rocky outcrops. Rough grasslands are also important for the NI priority species Irish hare *Lepus timidus hibernicus*, whose range has been limited by the extension of improved, intensively managed grassland.

Lowland dry acid grassland is scattered across rocky knolls and can form minor components within other habitats. It can also be found as lawns associated with old gardens, church yards and other amenity areas.. Heaths occur as a mosaic within this habitat and are characterised by nutrient poor, mineral soils and thin peat. These have a high value for biodiversity and provide shelter for nesting birds.

Patches of wet grassland occur in inter-drumlin hollows and alongside small streams. Some of these wet grassland parcels can be species-rich and are important breeding sites for NI priority wetland birds, e.g., redshank *Tringa totanus*, curlew *Numenius arquata*, lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, and snipe *Gallinago gallinago*. These

wet grasslands may be associated with wetland habitats for example marsh, fen, fen carr and reedbeds.

Arable land is scattered throughout the Council area often on the drier better drained broad upper slopes and ridge tops of drumlins. Arable crops with their associated elevated levels of fertiliser herbicides and pesticides can have low conservation interest, though it can provide a food resource for Northern Ireland priority farmland bird species including yellowhammer *Emberiza citronella*, tree sparrow *Passer montanus* and linnet *Linaria cannabina* if winter stubble is left in place after harvesting and spring-sown cereals grown instead.

Arable field margins are strips of land between cereal crops and the boundary of the field and are key areas for seed-eating birds. They are deliberately managed under agri-environment agreements to benefit wildlife. Arable field margins provide nesting and feeding sites for many birds as well as a vast variety of insects. Many species of wildflower can be found in these margins.

Calcareous grassland is associated with thin basic soil. Plants on calcareous grassland are typically short and hardy and include a variety of grasses and herbs. It is an important habitat for insects, particularly butterflies and is localised in its distribution across North Down and Ards area but occurs notably as fragmented patches in Whitespots Country Park.

Hedgerows are linear strips of shrubs often interspersed with trees that form land or property boundaries. These have largely been deliberately planted in the past with the most frequent hedgerow species present being hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, gorse *Ulex europaeus* and holly *Ilex aquifolium* with ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, beech *Fagus sylvatica*, oak *Quercus* sp. and hazel *Corylus avellana*. They also support climbers and may provide conditions for a diverse ground flora.

To qualify as a priority habitat, a 30m section of hedgerow needs to have six species of native trees or woody shrubs present, excluding climbers. A hedgerow that

possesses less tree and shrub species than this but has a rich ground flora, may also be included in this category.

Hedgerows in Northern Ireland are in decline often due to lack of management. Adequate management and replanting of hedgerows would help to avoid this besides retaining the wooded character and ecological value of the landscape.

There is an estimated 250,000km of field boundaries in Northern Ireland, which comprises 13% of the resource of linear broad habitats in the UK. Some parts of the Council area have a low density of woodland, but this is partly made up by a high density of hedges.

Hedgerows are important within the landscape as they represent the dominant form of tree cover in an otherwise open and agricultural landscape. Their linear and often inter-connected nature as well as their structure (which is like that of woodland) allows them to act as a network of corridors across the landscape, which can be vital for plant and animal species dispersing across the countryside.

Associated farmland priority species that rely on hedgerows include common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, linnet *Carduelis cannabina*, reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*, tree sparrow *Passer montanus*, bullfinch *Pyrrhula*, song thrush *Turdus philomelos* and Irish hare *Lepus timidus hibernicus*. As many as 170 plant species of plants have been recorded in hedgerows throughout Northern Ireland.

Hedgerows act as buffers and offer wildlife protection in the landscape and fundamentally assist biodiversity through protecting and nurturing soil systems.

Grassland Sites to Visit

- Ballyquintin Farm (National Trust)
- Creighton's Green Reservoir
- Redburn Country Park
- Ballyphilip Playing Fields

Threats to Farmland Habitats

- Over-grazing
- Cessation of annual management e.g., no longer mown or grazed resulting in invasion of scrub and tall ruderal vegetation
- Use of inorganic fertiliser, supplementary addition of organic fertiliser and herbicides thereby reducing species diversity
- Drainage of wet grasslands
- Ploughing and re-seeding of old species-rich permanent grasslands
- Loss of hedgerows to development
- Lack of management of hedgerows resulting in the creation of gaps reducing their value as bird nesting habitats
-

Woodland, and Parkland Habitats

Most of Northern Ireland would have been cloaked in woodland in prehistoric times. Clearance of this vast woodland began around 6,000 years ago to provide land for agriculture and settlements, and to provide timber for building and for use as fuel.

Northern Ireland is one of the least wooded areas of Europe with only 8% of the land covered by woodland, compared with the European average which is 44%. Even by these standards woodland cover is generally low in the Ards and North Down Borough Council with little planted or mature woodland.

Well established semi-natural woodland is vital for wildlife. In Northern Ireland woodland can be divided into two types: coniferous woodland or broadleaved and mixed woodland. Broadleaved semi-natural woodland accounts for only 1.2% of land cover in Northern Ireland while the rest is conifer plantation.

Most of the broadleaved or mixed woodlands in the Borough is associated with present or former estates. Many of these estate woodlands are 'long-established', Notable wooded estates in the Council area include Clandeboye, Mount Stewart and Carrowdore as well as several smaller demesnes.

The Borough's estate woodlands are known to support a diverse range of native and non-native trees including oak *Quercus* sp., ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, elm *Ulmus* sp., lime *Tilia* sp., beech *Fagus sylvatica*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* and horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum* and conifers including Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris*, Monterey cypress *Cupressus macrocarpa*, Wellingtonia *Sequoiadendron giganteum* and fir *Abies* sp. However, many of the demesne woodlands are infested with non-native invasive shrub species such as rhododendron sp. and cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* in the understorey which shade out the native woodland herbs and prevent native tree regeneration.

Often carpets of spring-flowering ground flora such as bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, wood anemone *nemorosa*, ramsons *Allium ursinum* and lesser celandine *Ranunculus ficaria* are present. Such woodland can also be an important habitat for woodland fungi, lichens, and mosses, and for bird species .

The non-priority habitat coniferous woodland consists of areas planted with non-native species such as sitka spruce *Picea sitchensis*, Norway spruce *Picea abies* and larch *Larix* spp. While such woodlands harbour relatively few plant and animal species when compared to native woodlands, they can be important for priority Species such as pine marten *Martes martes* and red squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*.

Wet woodland priority habitat occurs on poorly-drained land or an area that is waterlogged seasonally. It is found on the margins of water bodies and streams throughout the Borough, on nutrient-enriched hill-side flushes and appear on fens and cutover acid bogs (e.g., on Council owned land, known as the Carrogs, east of Killinchy Road Comber and in small patches along the banks of the Comber (Enler) and Ballystockart rivers.)–The species present and its structure will vary but will largely contain components of willows *Salix* spp., alder *Alnus glutinosa* and downy birch *Betula pubescens* with ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and oak *Quercus* sp. occurring where soils are drier. There is normally a varied herb layer consistent with this habitat. The high humidity present beneath the tree canopy also favors the growth of a variety of mosses and liverworts. Priority species associated with wet woodland include song thrush *Turdus philomelos*, spotted flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*, and common pipistrelle bat *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*.

Mixed ash woodland priority habitat occurs in small isolated stands throughout the Borough while ash *Fraxinus excelsior* is the dominant tree species, oak *Quercus* sp., downy birch *Betula pubescens*, wild cherry *Prunus avium*, rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, hazel *Corylus avellana* and hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* can all be present. Such woodland often has a rich diversity of plants in the ground layer including scattered ferns as well as carpets of bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, wood anemone *nemorosa*, opposite-leaved golden saxifrage *Chrysosplenium oppositifolium* and wood sorrel *Oxalis acetosella*.

The oakwood priority habitat is characterised by the predominance of either sessile oak *Quercus petraea* or pendunculate oak *Quercus robur* and downy birch *Betula pubescens* in the canopy layer. The understory species consist of holly *Ilex aquifolium*, hazel *Corylus avellana* and rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*. Priority species associated with oakwood include red squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*, common pipistrelle bat *Pipistrellus*, song thrush *Turdus philomelos*, spotted fly-catcher *Muscicapa striata*, and starling *Sturnus vulgaris*.

Lowland wood-pasture and parkland priority habitat is not commonly found in Northern Ireland. It is an historic land management creation, associated with country houses and estates of the 19th century. Some demesne woodlands in the Borough e.g., Castle Park, Bangor are classified as priority lowland wood-pasture and parkland habitat.

Parkland includes old or veteran trees where the land has often been converted to other uses such as arable farming and amenity land and where the surviving trees are of nature conservation interest. It generally contains some of the oldest and largest trees in Northern Ireland. This is strongly linked to parkland continuity over time and the presence of old and dead wood.

Old or veteran trees are a key feature in some local parklands. They are an indicator and an essential element of a healthy ecosystem. Diversity in tree age structure in Parklands has greatly reduced over the last century this is linked not only to loss of trees but also to lack of regeneration.

Characteristically veteran trees will have a wide trunk which is hollowing in many instances as well as having rot holes, they can support a wide range of specialised invertebrates, lichens and fungi. Those with hollows may support cavity-nesting birds such as great tit *Parus major*, blue tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*, spotted fly-catcher *Muscicapa striata*, starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, Coal Tit *Periparus ater* and barn owl *Tyto alba* as well as roosting common pipistrelle bat *Pipistrellus pipisrellus* and brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auratus*.

Overall Parkland in Northern Ireland is threatened or in declining condition.

Woodland and Parkland Sites to Visit

Woodlands to Visit

- Balloo Wood
- Cairn Wood
- Crawfordsburn Country Park
- Killynether Forest Park
- Mount Stewart

Parklands to Visit

- Castle Park
- Mount Stewart House
- The Ulster Folk and Transport Museum
- Cultra Manor

Threats to our Woodlands, and Parkland

- Tree diseases such as ash dieback
- Woodland felling and fragmentation
- Hedgerow removal (wire fences are easier to maintain)

- Invasive non-native species such as rhododendron *ponticum*, cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, salmonberry *Rubus spectabilis* and grey squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis*.
- Inappropriate management such as cutting hedgerows too frequently
- Planting of non-native tree species such as beech and field maple
- Application of herbicides and fertilisers to field edges which causes a decline in hedgerow and woodland species diversity

Peatland Habitats (Bog and Heath)

There are no sizable areas of peatlands left in the Council area. Most peatlands are small, and fragmented. They have been cut-over and converted into fen or have been drained for farmland. Cut-over peatland can retain a diversity of habitats, not only those that are relatively dry but also water-logged sites or small pools that provide a habitat for invertebrates (e.g., dragonflies). One of the largest areas of degraded old cutover bog is Inishargy Bog, an Ulster Wildlife Reserve.

Nestled in an otherwise intensively managed landscape, the undisturbed position of Inishargy attracts a range of birds of conservation concern including linnet *Linaria cannabina*, reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* and meadow pipit *Anthus pratensis*. The buzzard *Buteo buteo* can also be seen or heard circling overhead, and sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* and kestrel *Falco Falco tinnunculus* regularly hunt here. Butterflies spotted on the wing in spring and summer include orange-tip *Anthocharis cardamines*, speckled wood *Pararge aegeria*, small heath *Coenonympha pamphilus* and small copper *Lycaena phlaeas*. Day-flying moths include common heath *Ematurga atomaria* and silver hook *Lithacodia uncula*. One of the most impressive and interesting plants found at Inishargy is the royal fern, in decline elsewhere because of wetland drainage. The colony here is the largest in the east of Northern Ireland.

Most of our larger mammals seek refuge at Inishargy including fox *Vulpes vulpes*, Irish stoat *Mustela erminea hibernica*, badger *Meles meles* and Irish hare *Lepus*

timidus hibernica. The otter *Lutra lutra* have been reported nearby and likely use the reserve to move between habitats.

At Inishargy, invasive scrub and bracken is controlled to provide the right conditions for wildlife to thrive.

Lowland Raised Bog Habitat

Raised bogs have a fascinating history. They are generally located in shallow basins and in the flood plains of rivers, places that would have been poorly drained. With the growth of vegetation these sites develop into marsh and fen, and, over a long period of time, the continued accumulation of organic material creates conditions that encourage the growth of peat-forming mosses. Lowland bogs typically have a raised, domed, profile. They are rainwater-fed and associated with a distinctive range of plants that can survive the waterlogged, nutrient-poor and acidic environment. Most of the lowland raised bogs have been affected by cutting.

Lowland raised bog is a rare habitat in the UK, and Northern Ireland has a large proportion of the UK's lowland raised bogs and they are therefore of national and European importance.

Areas of lowland raised bog have largely been destroyed due to commercial peat extraction and much has been colonised by downy birch *Betula pubescens* woodland as a result of drainage. Several have been converted to fen, wet woodland or damp grassland. There can also be patches of lowland heathland; this may be found where the peat left after cutting or reclaimed from pasture is shallow. In the best examples there is a diversity of structural features including hummocks and hollows and pools that give rise to micro-habitats related especially to the height of the water table.

Lowland raised bogs, together with blanket bog, are significant stores of carbon helping to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Cutover bogs can retain an impressive complex mosaic of habitats. This diversity of habitats can support a range of plant and animal communities associated with acid bog, rich fen and swamp.

The drains, pools and old peat cuttings are important for wetland invertebrates especially aquatic beetles, aquatic bugs and dragonflies. The Irish damselfly *Coenagrion lunulatum* is found on some sites (e.g. Aughnadarragh Lough ASSI). It is in decline with the UK population restricted to Northern Ireland, and stronghold of the Irish population being Northern Ireland. Cutover bog also supports a rich terrestrial insect fauna, especially moths and butterflies, including the threatened marsh fritillary butterfly *Euphydryas aurinia*.

Blaeberry Island Bog, located approximately 6km NE of Newtownards, is of special scientific interest because of its physiographical features, peatland flora and associated fauna. The area occurs in low-lying hollows between a series of drumlins. Blaeberry Island Bog represents one of the last remaining and largest examples of active, regenerating, lowland raised bog in the south-east of Northern Ireland.

Blaeberry Island Bog is a remnant of the much larger Cottown Bog, which was extensively cut for turf in the past and much of it converted to agricultural land. The remaining bog, although extensively cutover, still contains some areas of deep peat and consists of a mosaic of bog, acid grassland, fen, bog woodland, pools and drains that have developed on the old peat cuttings. Recovery of the bog is evident in places, with hummocks, hollows and shallow pools supporting a diverse cover of vegetation, including bog-mosses *Sphagnum* spp. and ericoid dwarf-shrubs.

Most of the bog vegetation is characterised by heather *Calluna vulgaris*, cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix*. In early summer, the surface of the bog is transformed by the appearance of innumerable fluffy, white heads of common cottongrass *Eriophorum angustifolium* and hare's-tail cottongrass *Eriophorum vaginatum*. By mid-July these have almost all vanished and vast numbers of spikes of bog asphodel *Narthecium ossifragum* with ochre-yellow flowers appear. By the beginning of autumn, the pink flowers of cross-leaved heath and purple flowers of heather dominate, and the bog asphodel spikes change in colour to brown. As winter

approaches, and the vegetation dies back, russet, silver and grey colours predominate on the bog surface. Shrubby species include bilberry *Vaccinium myrtillus* has berries that by end July have changed in colour from red to blue-grey and bog myrtle *Myrica gale*, which grows in wetter areas and has an attractive eucalyptus-like fragrance.

The insectivorous round-leaved sundew *Drosera rotundifolia* also occurs on the bog-moss hummocks. A wide variety of bog-mosses are frequent over the surface of the bog, in wetter cuttings and at the edges of pools the nationally rare golden bog-moss *Sphagnum pulchrum* can be found growing.

Royal fern *Osmunda regalis* and narrow buckler-fern *Dryopteris carthusiana* are frequent throughout but these two species have declined considerably in the east of Northern Ireland as a result of habitat loss.

Other habitats associated with the bog include wet woodland, scrub, acid grassland, heath, fen and wet ditches.

Peatland Sites to Visit

- Blaeberry Island Bog

Threats to Peatland Habitats

- Overgrazing
- Drainage
- Dumping

Wetland Habitats (Fen, Reedbed, Lakes and Rivers)

Wetlands are extremely important habitats as they support a variety of plants and animals such as invertebrates, fish, amphibians, mammals and birds. The North Down and Ards area has many good quality examples of wetland habitat including lowland fens, reedbeds, rivers, streams, ponds, and lakes. The largest wetlands are found around the shores of Strangford Lough.

In general wetlands are threatened by draining (for pastures), landfill, dumping, nutrient enrichment (which can change species composition) from surrounding land and conversion to wet woodland by natural succession.

Lakes located in the Borough with important wetland communities include Ballyalolly Lake, Heron and Carrigullion Lough and Glastry Clay Pits.

Reedbeds often occur as discrete stands but can also occur in a complex mosaic with other habitat types such as lakes, fen, wet woodland, coastal and floodplain grazing marsh and in modified examples of lowland raised bog. Reedbeds are dominated by stands of the common reed *Phragmites australis* our tallest native species of grass and are of particular value for a range of specialist bird species including reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* and sedge warbler *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*. Reedbeds also provide nesting cover for a number of species of waterfowl such as great-crested grebe *Podiceps cristatus*.

The main watercourses/rivers in the Borough are the Comber (Enlar) and Ballystockart rivers. The non-priority canal habitat Newtownards Canal also traverses the Council area. The bankside and channel of this canal supports a diverse range of habitats (e.g., reedbeds, scrub), flora and fauna including several NI priority species such as the otter *Lutra lutra*.

The meandering Comber (Enlar) River flows across the Council area, through rolling drumlins, farmland, woodland, parkland and Newtownards Town itself. The Enlar supports the NI Priority Species the brown trout *Salmo trutta* as well as the eel *Anguilla anguilla*, the latter declining in Northern Ireland. Otter *Lutra lutra* have made a significant return along with Irish dipper *Cinclus hibernicus*, kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*, several species of bats, and brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*.

Although the Comber (Enlar) River supports a wide range of biodiversity, its various tributaries and even the smallest stream are equally of great importance to wildlife within the Council area. They are especially important as wildlife corridors linking other semi natural habitats.

Many of the rivers in the Borough drain into Belfast and Strangford Loughs. Sections of these rivers have experienced some previous modification but still attract grey wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*, Irish dipper *Cinclus cinclus hibernicus* and heron *Ardea cinerea*.

Ponds are scattered throughout the landscape and represent areas where the water table rises above the surrounding land, or areas which become waterlogged due to impermeable poorly drained soils. Many ponds have been lost as a result of agricultural-intensification, pollution, lack of management and invasive species and with them we have lost many local populations of amphibians, fish, wetland invertebrates and wetland plants. Ponds are often home to a rich diversity of wetland plants which in turn support a wide range of aquatic invertebrates, dragonflies and damselflies, smooth newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*, birds such as kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*, and occasionally a visiting otter *Lutra lutra*.

There are a variety of ponds scattered across and include the Mill Pond at Comber, as well as at Kiltonga Nature Reserve, Mount Stewart, Balloo Woodland, Balloo Wetlands and Stricklands Glen.

Strangford Lough, covering a huge 150 km² (58 sq mi) is almost fully enclosed by the Ards Peninsula and linked to the Irish Sea by a long narrow channel at its southeastern edge. The main body of the lough has at least seventy islands along with many islets (pladdies), bays, coves, headlands and mudflats. It is part of the 'Strangford and Lecale' Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and was designated as Northern Ireland's first Marine Conservation Zone in 2013, it is also designated a Special Area of Conservation for its important wildlife.—Strangford Lough ASSI, is also a SPA and part of a Ramsar listed site due to the internationally important numbers of wildfowl which spend the winter in these areas. It has a wide variety of habitats including submerged and floating aquatic vegetation swamp, fen and fragmented wet woodland.

Fens are wetlands with permanently high-water levels at or just below the surface. They receive most of their water and nutrients from soil, rock and ground water and are of national and international significance, not only for their plant life, but as part

of a complex of open water, reedbeds, wet meadows and carr woodland that provides a diversity of habitats for mammals, insects (e.g., dragonflies, damselflies, and aquatic beetles), aquatic plants and birds. This type of habitat receives water and nutrients from rainfall and groundwater and are rich in minerals..

Lowland fens such as those located at Heron and Carrigullion Lough and Whitespots, have a range of vegetation types making them a diverse habitat with particular importance for invertebrates. Inishargy Bog near Kircubbin is notable as having one of the longest established colonies of the marsh fritillary butterfly *Euphydryas aurinia* in Northern Ireland. A local site under Council ownership, known as the Corrogs located on lands east of Killinchy Road Comber was recently surveyed and found to comprise a central area of rank fen surrounded by wet alder-willow woodland with broadleaved plantation woodland in drier areas.

The fen habitat classification for Northern Ireland includes swamp which is considered species poor with the dominant species being bulrush *Scirpus* spp., reed-mace *Typha latifolia*, reed canary grass *Phalaris arundinacea*, branched bur-reed *Sparganium erectum*, flowering-rush *Butomus umbellatus* and sedges. Associated priority fauna species include curlew *Numenius arquata*, redshank *Tringa tetanus*, lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, Irish hare *Lepus timidus hibernicus*. There can also be a rich invertebrate fauna in fens including butterflies such as marsh fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia* and green hairstreak *Callophrys rubi*, and dragonflies and damselflies, including Irish damselfly *Coenagrion lunulatum*.

Wetland Habitats to Visit

- Strangford Lough (Ramsar, SPA, ASSI)
- Aughnadarragh Lough
- Balloo Wetland
- Castle Espie
- Heron and Carrigullion Lough
- Lough Cowey
- Mount Stewart
- Whitespots

Threats to Wetland Habitats

- Nutrient enrichment of water from pollution incidents such as agricultural run-off
- Alteration of water levels
- Invasive non-native species e.g., Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*, giant hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum*.
- Loss to development

Urban Habitats (Industrial Land, Cemeteries, Parks and Gardens)

These include man-made habitats such as quarries, road verges, cemeteries, old mill sites, golf courses, and waste ground on industrial sites and are widely distributed around the Council area especially near to the larger urban centres providing feeding stations and breeding sites for birds, butterflies etc.

A brownfield site is an area that has previously been developed and has since ceased to have been used and natural processes have been left to take their course. The most important brownfield sites for wildlife are characterised by a nutrient-poor soil such as gravel or sand that create microclimates a situation that suits many opportunistic species such as ephemera/short perennials and invertebrate species (bees, beetles, butterflies and moths)..

Brownfield sites have been recognised in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan process and have been identified as a priority open mosaic habitat. Its combination of bare ground, flower-rich grassland, patches of scrub, and sometimes shallow ponds, is vitally important for a diverse range of invertebrates.

Open mosaic habitat is threatened prone to misuse such as fly-tipping or antisocial behaviour. Many sites are in private ownership and therefore at risk of development. These areas tend not to fall under any management and therefore are prone to being lost by scrub encroachment.

Quarries can support remnant areas of species-rich grassland, heath, scrub, woodland and ponds as well as rare flora (e.g., orchids) and fauna (e.g., nesting peregrine falcon *Falco peregrinus*). The biodiversity value of these sites can be

enhanced further through best habitat restoration practices after extraction of the rock, sand or gravel.

Occupied and derelict buildings can support bat roosts as well as nesting birds such as swallow *Hirundo rustica*, house martin *Delichon urbicum* and the threatened swift *Apus apus*.

Green spaces within built-up areas provide an oasis where people can relax and unwind. Parks, golf courses, gardens and school grounds provide sanctuaries for at least some of the more common species of flora and fauna and are important nature conservation education resources.

Cemeteries in both rural and urban areas are also havens for wildlife. Gravestones in some of the older cemeteries can harbour a diverse range of lichens including rare species. They are often enclosed by hedgerows and incorporate scattered tree and shrub planting, all of which provide suitable nesting sites for birds as well as foraging habitat for bats and a range of bird species. Flowering and fruiting trees (e.g., Irish yew *Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata'), shrubs and bedding plants will also attract pollinators such as bumblebees and butterflies. The quiet nature of cemeteries means that for the most part, they are undisturbed areas where wildlife can flourish;

Gardens can harbour a wide range of plant and animal species depending on how manicured or 'wild' they are. Urban gardens can provide important nesting, roosting and foraging habitats for birds and bats in the form of trees, hedges and shrubs. Flower beds provide bare soil where mammals and ground-dwelling birds can forage. Flowering plants provide a source of nectar for pollinators such as bees and butterflies.

Less manicured gardens or gardens which have a 'wild' corner are of greater benefit to biodiversity as often log piles and branch piles can shelter hedgehogs, nesting birds and a range of invertebrates. A garden pond can attract animals to drink and bathe as well as aquatic plant and animal species who may take up residence. The biodiversity value of our gardens can also be enhanced by installing bird tables and hanging feeders to attract seed-eating birds.

Green spaces within schools which are not used for sports activities can often be developed into wildlife 'gardens' which would function as an outdoor classroom.

Allotments are also a refuge for both people and wildlife supporting grasslands, hedgerows, as well as annual plants that favour cultivated ground. Many of the plants and animals that struggle to survive on intensively managed farmland find a refuge on allotment sites.

Urban Sites to Visit

- Public parks, allotments and gardens
- Cemeteries

Threats to Biodiversity in Urban Habitats

- Development of species-rich brownfield sites
- Invasive non-native species such as Japanese Knotweed *Fallopia japonica* and Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*; some are planted in gardens including Himalayan honeysuckle *Leycesteria formosa* and Russian vine *Fallopia baldschuanica*
- Excessive grass cutting
- Excessive use of herbicides and pesticides
- Lack of cavities suitable for roosting bats and nesting birds such as swift *Apus*
- Tree diseases such as Ash Dieback
- Air pollution from industrial activity and motor vehicles
- Inappropriate street lighting affecting bat foraging activity and roosts
- Fragmented nature of green spaces

8.1.3 Local Species Selected for Action

In Northern Ireland several species have been identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action; these are referred to as priority species. The Northern Ireland priority species list now stands at 481 species, an increase of 271 on the 'old' list when the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy

was being prepared. These include species of bees, beetles, birds, butterflies, crustaceans, fish, fungi, lichens, liverworts, mammals, molluscs, mosses, moths, reptiles, and vascular plants.

Priority species are those which require conservation action due to the degree of their decline, rarity and importance in an all-Ireland and UK context.

These Priority Species lists formed the basis for selecting species requiring Northern Ireland Species Action Plans (SAPs).

NI priority species that occur in the Council area are presented in **Appendix 2**.

ANDBC is conscious that they can make a significant impact to the quality and quantity of habitats and species through its management and project practices and recognise that further improvements can be gained through formally including biodiversity within its project and maintenance programs. This is particularly important where Council holdings infringe upon designated conservation areas.

The LBAP for the North Down and Ards area has drawn on this list of priority species and used it to identify which species we want to take action to conserve. Many of the species listed below and over the following pages are of specific importance in a Northern Ireland context . Others, while not necessarily of regional importance, have a local interest value and in our LBAP have been classed as being Local Priority Species.

The benefits of undertaking a local biodiversity project are that locally important non-priority species can be identified that are specific to the Council area. While these species may not be of concern in an international context, paying attention to their requirements will contribute to the overall health of biodiversity.

Appendix 3 presents a list of locally important species relevant to the Council area. Some species represent old records and may no longer be extant in the Council area.

The following species have been selected for Action within the Local Biodiversity Action Plan as they are a Northern Ireland Priority Species, are of local significance, easily visible, iconic, and or would encourage people to act by engaging in environmental activities which benefit biodiversity.

Many of the species and species groups selected for action will also benefit from Actions listed previously under each habitat category.

Mammals

Bats (Chiroptera)

An all-Ireland species action plan for bats has been produced. There are currently eight species of bats known to live and breed in Northern Ireland. The most recent bat (and our newest mammal), Nathusius' pipistrelle *Pipistrellus nathusii*, was only discovered as recently as 1996.

The Leisler's bat *Nyctalis leisleri*, is our biggest species weighing in at around 15 grams, less than a packet of crisps. Our smallest bat, the pipistrelle *Pipistrellus* sp., can eat around 3,500 small insects, such as midges, in one night.

Habitat change in the wider countryside and roost loss, or disturbance are the two major threats to bats on the island of Ireland.

Habitat change has two major effects: it can result in a loss of roosts and a loss of adequate foraging. Habitat fragmentation is also a major concern as bats rely on commuting routes such as treelines and mature well-managed hedgerows to link their varied seasonal habitat requirements. Gaps in hedgerows can cut bats off from a foraging site.

On the island of Ireland all bats predate insects.—Habitats especially used by bats include woodland edges and wetlands. However, bats also forage over pastoral grassland and in some cases around white street lighting.

Loss of foraging habitat and prey can arise from a change in land use or land management measures resulting in the loss of adequate invertebrate habitat and therefore the number of invertebrates present.

The place that a bat lives is called a roost. Bats can have a number of different roosts which they occupy at different parts of the year namely summer maternity roosts, spring gathering roosts, mating roosts, night roosts and pre-hibernation roosts. Bats do not construct roosts but use structures that are already available such as tree hollows, caves, bridges and a variety of buildings and built structures. Bats and their roosts face a number of threats and pressures including development, trimming and felling of trees and closure of caves and mines for health & safety reasons, bridge improvements, climate change and potentially wind turbines.

Other Threats to Bats

- Exclusion from or entombment of bats in their roosts both unintentionally and intentionally due to loft conversions and other building work (e.g., bridge repairs).
- Bats can become entangled by the use of breathable roof membranes at bat roosts.
- Lighting (e.g., the illumination of the underside of bridges) can adversely affect bat roost emergence, commuting routes and foraging areas.

Irish Hare *Lepus timidus hibernicus*

Found only in Ireland, the declining Irish hare *Lepus timidus hibernicus* is a subspecies of the mountain hare. Hares are much larger than rabbits and have long back legs with big feet. In summer, the upper fur is reddish-brown while the belly fur is a much lighter cream colour but greyer in winter. The ears are long with black tips and the tail is usually white and easily seen when the hare is running away. They prefer undisturbed areas where there is plenty of ground cover and a variety of cover height, grasses and other food plants. They have been seen at Ballymorran and Ballyquintin Point, Strangford Lough and Crawfordsburn County Park.

Threats to Irish Hare

- Changes in farming practice – the increased use of farm machinery, high livestock (cows and sheep) densities and the decrease in the variety of grasses grown on farmland have all contributed to the decline in the Irish hare population.
- Loss of daytime resting sites particularly rushes and good quality hedgerows
- Introduction and spread of non-native brown hare species to mid-Ulster
- Illegal hare coursing in urban fringe areas.

Harbour Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena*

The Harbour Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena* is one of the smallest marine mammals found in the coastal waters of Northern Ireland and are protected by various pieces of legislation.

These mammals are under threat and have declined by 50% in the last 50 years. Due to their small size, they often end up accidentally caught by fishing boats. Conservation efforts that focus on reducing the impact of fisheries by-catch and underwater noise, coupled with wider surveillance, are most likely to achieve effective conservation of the Harbour Porpoise.

They are present all year round in many areas. Porpoises are usually seen in small groups of two or three, but where feeding is good, 20 to 30 animals may be seen together. They feed mainly on small shoaling fish such as herring, mackerel and sand eels but will also take squid and octopus. Harbour porpoises are capable of diving to depths of 200m and can stay underwater for up to six minutes.

Threats to Harbour Porpoise

- By-catch – the accidental killing associated with commercial fishing equipment – trawls, seines, cod traps and bottom-set gill nets are the biggest threat to harbour porpoise populations.
- Disturbance and injury by speedboats and jet skis
- Climate change

- Ocean pollution (chemical and noise). Whales and dolphins communicate mainly by sound; they also use sound to navigate and find food. Many man-made sounds are introduced into the oceans, some of these, such as noise due to seismic exploration for oil and gas and disturbance from marine traffic, may pose a threat to whales and dolphin populations.
- Many species of fish eaten by porpoises are also fished commercially (herring, mackerel, sprat, pilchard, whiting, cod). Reduction in fish numbers due to commercial fishing may threaten porpoise populations.

Common Seal *Phoca vitulina*

The common seal *Phoca vitulina* and the grey seal *Halichoerus grypus* are both found around the Northern Ireland coast. The common seal is the smaller of the two species and has a more rounded head with a short muzzle and large eyes.

Strangford Lough is the most important breeding site in Ireland for the common seal *Phoca vitulina* (also known as the Harbour Seal). Over half of the breeding population of Strangford Lough is found in 'The Narrows'. Other areas where these species are often present are the Copeland Islands and along the North Down Coast. They are seen regularly hauled out on rocky shores and sandbanks. In 1988 the European common seal population was decimated by a viral disease, phocine distemper virus (PDV) – it is estimated that around 18,000 seals died, about 50% of the total population. Eventually the population recovered, and numbers increased but an outbreak of the disease in 2002-2003 killed a further 22,500 seals. In Northern Ireland around 350 seals died during the two disease outbreaks.

Common seals eat a wide variety of different fish such as plaice *Pleuronectes platessa*, flounder *Platichthys flesus*, herring *Clupea harengus*, mackerel *Scomber scomber*, whiting *Merlangius merlangus*, etc and may swim long distances (up to 50km) from their haul out sites to find food. Much of their time is spent alone in the sea, feeding, and they are only found in groups at haul out sites (places where they rest, mate, give birth and moult). Seals can live for up to 30 years; females usually live longer than males.

Threats to Common Seal

- Chemical pollution
- Organochlorines that may interfere with seal reproduction
- Oil pollution
- Disease – phocine distemper virus

Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*

Squirrels are easily recognised by their distinctive body shape and bushy tail. The red squirrel is smaller than the invasive grey squirrel and is generally more brown in colour. In the winter the red squirrel's long dark ear tufts are very noticeable, ear tufts are absent on grey squirrels. Both species are active during the day; red squirrels are more likely to be seen high up in the tree canopy, while grey squirrels are often seen feeding on the ground.

Red squirrels usually give birth twice a year, once in spring and again in summer. Litter size varies but the average number of young (kittens) produced per litter is three. They eat a variety of seeds, nuts, fungi, bark, buds and berries. In late summer and autumn when food is plentiful, they hide stashes of seeds and nuts on the ground – much of which is probably eaten by grey squirrels who spend more time foraging on the ground, especially in winter. Squirrels do not hibernate; in very cold weather they will stay in their nests for a day or two, but they cannot survive for longer periods without food.

Coniferous woodland is found scattered throughout Northern Ireland, usually in upland areas and provide a refuge for the red squirrel, it is critical habitat to the species' survival.

Red squirrels are protected in Northern Ireland by Schedule 5 and 6 of the Wildlife (N. Ireland) Order 1985. It is also listed in Annex III of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention).

Introduced into County Longford in 1911, the grey squirrel has since successfully colonised most central and eastern counties of southern Ireland and much of

Northern Ireland. As the grey squirrel expanded its range across the province it largely replaced red squirrel populations especially in deciduous woodland. Grey squirrels seem to be better adapted to live in deciduous woodland. Red squirrels appear to be able to compete more successfully with grey squirrels in coniferous woodland and are less likely to be displaced .

Red squirrels are susceptible to a potentially fatal viral disease – Parapox virus. Grey squirrels can carry and spread the disease but appear to be unaffected by it.

The UK Strategy for Red Squirrel Conservation – Action Plan for Northern Ireland was produced in 2000, and there is a UK Species Action Plan which was published in 1995.

A Northern Ireland Squirrel Forum (NISF) has been established to bring together statutory and non-statutory organisations as well as representatives of country parks and local volunteer organisations dedicated to protecting the red squirrel in Northern Ireland

Implementation of the Northern Ireland habitat action plans for Oakwoods, Mixed Ashwoods and Parkland will also help red squirrel populations to recover.

The Ards peninsula has an established population of Red Squirrels notably in the estate woodlands of Mount Stewart and Ballywalter but also in Carrowdore, Greyabbey, Portaferry and Clandeboye. Red squirrels can also be seen in Cairn Wood North Down.

Threats to Red Squirrel

- Competition with grey squirrels
- Loss of woodland habitat;
- Disease (Squirrel poxvirus)

Pine Marten *Martes martes*

The mustelid the pine marten *Martes martes* with chocolate brown fur and a creamy yellow bib is about the size of a domestic cat and just as adept at climbing trees. The

beautiful pine marten is one of our most elusive mammals due to its habit of being most active at night and frequenting woodland habitats, particularly older areas of woodland.

A true omnivore and skilled hunter the pine marten is native to Ireland and is one of our rarest mammals. Once common throughout the country, by the 20th century this species had become extinct from most of the island. This decline was the result of hunting of martens for their fur, loss of habitat, and both direct and or indirect poisoning and general persecution.

The numbers and range of the pine marten has expanded at a brisk pace over the last decade, until recently they were largely restricted to remote forests of counties Fermanagh and Tyrone. They have now spread out across all six counties traversing a variety of habitats. There are recent records of this species from Cairn Wood, Craigtantlet. The pine marten *Martes martes* is found primarily in woodland but have adapted to scrubland and urban fringes, with inner city sightings not unheard of.

Being an omnivore, the pine marten *Martes martes* has a wide and varied diet that includes meat, carrion, nuts and berries. The breadth of its diet clearly benefits its survival, being able to switch between food resources should one dry up. Pine marten *Martes martes* will raid the bird feeders, pet food trays, bins and vegetable patches. They also will hunt domestic fowl and game birds particularly when the latter are accessible in the release pen.

Threats to Pine Marten

- Habitat Fragmentation

European Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*

Hedgehogs are found on farmland as well as in parks, cemeteries and gardens. Hedgehogs are 20–25cm long and typically weigh up to 1.2kg. They have a distinctive waddling gait and are covered in characteristic brown spines. They have long snouts and no spines on their underbellies, faces or limbs. Invertebrates are a

hedgehog's favoured food, with beetles, slugs, earthworms and caterpillars high on the menu. Occasionally, they also eat carrion and the eggs of ground-nesting birds. They're very partial to food left out by humans too, with cat food and leftovers being an urban hedgehog staple.

Hedgehogs have been known to live for seven years, but a lifespan of two to three is more typical. Hedgehogs spend much of their life asleep, hibernating through the winter months in a nest made from fallen leaves in a sheltered spot. They emerge in spring but will spend the day sleeping, becoming active after the sun has gone down. Your best chance of seeing a hedgehog is by putting out some suitable food in your garden, such as wet cat food or our hedgehog food, and hope you are visited in the night. Hedgehogs are also surprisingly noisy, so listen out for their distinctive huffing and puffing sounds.

Hedgehogs are found across the UK and can live in a variety of habitats including woodland, farmland, parks and gardens. They are however in serious decline. While it is difficult to accurately monitor hedgehog numbers, it is believed they could be down by over half in rural areas and a third in urban areas since 2000.

Threats to Hedgehogs

- Loss and damage of suitable habitat, such as hedgerows and woodland, may be a major factor in hedgehog decline, depriving the species of both food and shelter from badger predation. That's why we stand up for woods and trees, and the biodiversity they bring.
- The use of pesticides on farmland and in gardens may also have reduced the hedgehog's food supply.
- In urban areas, the use of impermeable fencing, loss of greenery in gardens and increasing development is thought to be negatively impacting hedgehog populations too.
- Many thousands of hedgehogs killed by cars each year.

Birds

Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

The black-headed gull is the smallest gull likely to be encountered commonly in Northern Ireland. It nests colonially, sometimes in large colonies of over 1,000 pairs. The nests are an untidy pile of readily available material such as seaweed or straw, a slight depression in the top of the structure hosts the four or five eggs. Pairs raise only one brood annually but will often re-lay if the first clutch is lost. In winter large numbers of immigrants arrive from northern Europe to augment our resident population. Wintering birds are also extremely gregarious and will move considerable distances in search of easily available food.

As a breeding bird the largest colonies are found in various Loughs across Northern Ireland including Strangford Lough. Seabird Census 2000 estimated a Northern Ireland population of a little over 10,000 pairs, of which just over 4,000 were coastal. This represents a significant decline from the previous survey in 1985-88 when over 38,000 pairs were counted. Most of the losses relate to Lough Neagh, but there was also decline at sites in County Down.

The species is listed as amber in both Irish and UK Birds of Conservation Concern as its breeding population has undergone a moderate decline in the past 25 years and more than 50 per cent is concentrated in ten or fewer sites. The reason for the decline at some Northern Ireland breeding sites is unclear.

Threats to Black-headed Gull

- Predation of eggs by mammals, crows and other gulls is a known problem.
- Habitat changes, egg collection and destruction could be an issue on some sites.

Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*

The herring gull is a large, classically coloured gull, found commonly around the coast but also inland on freshwater lakes and at refuse tips..

Although traditionally a breeding bird of offshore islands and rocky coastline in vegetation or shingle, it increasingly chooses to nest on flat rooftops and chimneys in urban environments. The nest is a large accumulation of available vegetation with a cup lined with finer material.

Easily seen throughout the year but numbers greatly increase in winter. Following a period of population growth between the 1950s and 1970s there has been a subsequent period of rapid decline. During the period 1985-88 Seabird Colony Register and the Seabird Census 2000 the colony on Copeland Island declined from 7000 to 355.

Threats to Herring Gull

- Disease associated with feeding on rubbish dumps
- Competition with lesser black-backed gull at some breeding sites
- Culling for public health and safety as well as conservation measures for terns
- outbreaks of disease including botulism and salmonella, possibly increased as a result of the introduction of plastic refuse sacs
- Reduction of food availability through better refuse management

Light-bellied Brent Goose *Branta bernicla hrota*

The best place to see Light-bellied Brent Geese in Ireland is Strangford Lough where from October onwards upwards of 30,000 congregate before moving on to other estuarine sites. Smaller numbers can also be seen along the Irish Sea coastline, most often on the beach at Crawfordsburn. During the winter they feed on seagrass, which grows in muddy estuaries, and on grasslands, when the eelgrass has been depleted at estuarine sites.

Threats

- Increase in water levels due to climate change affecting feeding areas.

Little Tern *Sternula albifrons*

The little tern is the smallest of the five species of terns which regularly breed in the British Isles. It is on the edge of its most suitable range here and may never have been particularly common. Small numbers of pairs have bred in Northern Ireland in the past, but at best it should be considered an erratic breeder. Indeed, only a handful of sightings are recorded here in most years.

Summer visiting tern species breed erratically in Northern Ireland. Poor tern breeding success is directly related to disturbance by man of breeding beaches, predation by rat populations, feral cats, avian predators, and crows and foxes. Some nesting sites are vulnerable to very high tides. The unseasonably cold and wet summer in 2012 resulted in a lot of young dying in their nest as they were not able to be kept warm. Little tern sightings are now a matter of chance in Northern Ireland. Rare terns often turn up at breeding colonies of other terns, so any coastal tern colony would be worth a look in spring and summer. Little terns have been seen at Crawfordsburn Bay and Brigg's Rocks, Belfast Lough, and Strangford narrows.

Threats

- Disturbance of nesting sites by dogs

Black Guillemot *Cepphus grylle*

The black guillemot is a small auk that breeds among rocks at the base of cliffs, on lower slopes, or on rocky islands; they tend to be seen in small numbers. Black guillemots eat fish and crustaceans. They dive down from the surface of the water, and swim to catch their prey. Many thousands of black guillemots breed in the UK, scattered along the coast in pairs or small groups. Not moving far between seasons, in winter, you are likely to spot them in their breeding places.

It is a very distinctive bird that spends most of its life at sea, only coming near to land to breed. They nest in nooks in cliffs and on harbour walls which can make them vulnerable to predators.

The Black Guillemot often is seen in harbours such as at Bangor, Groomsport and Donaghadee.

Threats

- Disturbance by recreational users

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*

These brilliant fliers are also excellent swimmers, but dreadful walkers, only coming on land to breed. They have a distinctive cackle which can make breeding sites exceptionally noisy. The Copeland Islands provide an important habitat due to their rocky cliffs and other suitable habitats.

Threats

- Invasive non-native predators at breeding sites
- Artificial light pollution
- Risk of accidental bycatch by fishermen

Curlew *Numenius arquata*

The curlew (*Numenius arquata*) is a large ground nesting wader. It is a characteristic breeding bird of upland areas, where it nests on moorlands and lowland wet grasslands. It occurs in winter in coastal areas with Belfast Lough and Strangford Lough holding numbers of national importance.

There has been an overall UK decline of curlew of 42 per cent between 1995 and 2008. In Northern Ireland, there has been a 60 per cent decline in breeding numbers in Northern Ireland between 1987 and 1999.

The curlew is included on the red list of Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland. DAERA's agri-environment programme under the Higher Environmental Farming Scheme contains habitat prescriptions of benefit to curlew.

Threats to Curlew

- Low productivity levels because of predation of eggs and chicks are currently the major factor limiting breeding success. This is believed to result from increased populations of predators (foxes, crows and gulls), possibly brought about by reduced levels of control and increased feeding opportunities arising from higher stocking densities and other agricultural improvements.
- Past and current loss, fragmentation and reduced quality of breeding habitat as a result of agricultural improvement, afforestation and peat extraction have reduced the area in which breeding can occur and, by concentrating breeding birds into smaller areas, also may have increased vulnerability to predators.

Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

This familiar farmland bird has suffered significant declines recently and is now a Red List species. A Northern Ireland wide survey of breeding waders in 1986/7 estimated that the lapwing *Vanellus vanellus* population was between 4,000-6,000 pairs. By 1999 a survey of breeding waders in the wider countryside recorded a decline of 66% in lapwing, and the population was estimated at just over 1,770 pairs. Further declines at most of the key sites were also recorded in 2000. Strangford Lough is an important site for lapwing in Northern Ireland.

The lapwing is a red-listed species in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland. In Northern Ireland a Species Action Plan for lapwing has been produced that details conservation actions to reverse a decline in breeding lapwing populations.

Threats to Lapwing

- Lapwing are threatened by agricultural improvement - the wet grasslands which are so important for breeding lapwing in Northern Ireland, have incurred severe losses over the last 50 years. Drainage, land improvement, and changes in grazing patterns have all greatly reduced and fragmented the area of suitable breeding habitat. Other habitats suitable for breeding lapwing, such as cut-over bogs and marginal upland grasslands, have also been affected by agricultural improvement.

The loss of mixed farming systems has also been a factor in the decline of lapwing populations. The area of arable land in Northern Ireland has been reduced to under 3% and this is mostly concentrated in the cereal growing areas of eastern Co. Down. As a result, nesting sites in arable crops are now rarely found next to extensively managed damp grasslands, which are important for chick rearing.

The replacement of spring sown cereals with winter wheat or barley has also affected lapwing populations. This is due to winter-sown crops becoming too dense early in spring, more frequent agricultural operations and heavy applications of chemicals, all of which lead to reduced nesting success and productivity.

- Breeding lapwing suffers high rates of nest failure because of predation by crows and foxes. It is thought that this may be due in part to habitat loss and fragmentation, which concentrates breeding birds into smaller areas.

Redshank *Tringa totanus*

The Irish breeding population of redshank (*Tringa totanus*) was estimated at between 4-5,000 pairs in the late 1980s, a decline of 15% from the early 1970s. In Northern Ireland, the population was estimated at 550 pairs in 1987. Non-breeding wintering populations of Redshank occurs in nationally important numbers on Belfast Lough and Strangford Lough.

The Northern Ireland Countryside Survey 2000 indicated a decline in habitat potentially used by redshank between 1987 and 1998 including a 20% decline in fen marsh and swamp. The redshank is a red-listed Bird of Conservation Concern in Ireland.

DAERA has developed a series of agri-environment schemes. Their objective is to protect and enhance semi-natural habitats and species by encouraging more sensitive management practices. These schemes include a range of prescriptions

which have potential to be of benefit to redshank such as creating wader scrapes and raising water levels.

Threats to Redshank

- Given that redshank is almost exclusively a wet grassland species in Northern Ireland, the loss and fragmentation of this habitat is a key factor in its decline.
- More frequent agricultural operations such as increased livestock numbers, rolling and fertilizer application inevitably lead to increased nest losses. A shift from cattle to sheep grazing in some areas has also had an impact, as intensive sheep grazing creates a more uniform sward with few tussocks which are important for redshank.

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Kingfishers are small unmistakable bright blue and orange birds of slow moving or still water. They are found by still or slow flowing water such as lakes, canals and rivers in lowland areas which are clean enough to support abundant small fish. Fast-moving streams and polluted waters do not contain enough available fish, and hence do not contain kingfishers. In winter, some individuals move to estuaries and the coast. Occasionally they may visit garden ponds if of a suitable size.

They fly rapidly, low over water, and hunt fish from riverside perches, occasionally hovering above the water's surface. Kingfishers are amber listed birds of conservation concern because of their unfavourable conservation status in Europe.

Kingfishers eat mainly fish, chiefly minnows and sticklebacks, but they also take aquatic insects, freshwater shrimps and tadpoles etc to top up their diet. Each bird must eat at least its own bodyweight of fish each day. An ideal fishing spot is a firm perch overlooking a clear, shallow pool of water.~

Territory is extremely important for kingfishers all year round. Any bird that is unable to secure a territory with an adequate food supply is likely to perish. This is particularly important before the onset of winter. The birds start to contest territories by mid-September. Freezing weather can sometimes force the birds out of their

territories, which often takes them to less suitable habitats or into conflict with other resident kingfishers.

Threats to Kingfisher

- They are vulnerable to hard winters and habitat degradation through pollution or unsympathetic management of watercourses.

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Widely distributed across the UK, and indeed the world, this bird has suffered declines through the 20th century and is thought to have been adversely affected by organochlorine pesticides such as DDT in the 1950s and '60s. Although well-known, the Barn Owl is one of our most endangered species which has been in decline for many decades; today it has an estimated population of fewer than 30 breeding pairs remaining in Northern Ireland. This species is extremely hard to see on account of its rarity but there have been sightings at Scrabo Hill, Mount Stewart and Portavo (Kearney's Hill) Reservoir.

This species requires tree cavities, outbuildings and other suitable sheltered places for roosting and nesting; it forages over rough grassland (including field margins and roadside verges) hunting for small mammals such as wood mouse *Apodemus sylvaticus*, house mouse *Mus musculus*, brown rat *Rattus norvegicus* and pygmy shrew *Sorex minutus*.

Threats to Barn Owl

It is threatened by lack of suitable nesting and roosting sites, and sufficient hunting habitat, accidental rodenticide poisoning, collisions with cars and crashes in small mammal populations. In addition, wet spring and summer weather (due to climate change) can prevent birds breeding successfully

Farmland Seed-eating Birds

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*, tree sparrow *Passer montanus*, reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*, and linnet *Linaria cannabina* have been grouped together

here as they form a group of four Northern Ireland Priority Species which are seed-eating farmland birds.

All four species can be found in flocks within farmland during the winter months, when they rely heavily on grain split in stubble fields and weed seeds as a source of food. Such seed-rich fields are sometimes referred to as 'giant bird tables'.

Tree Sparrow *Passer montanus*

The tree sparrow in the British Isles is often considered the 'country cousin' of the far more familiar house sparrow. In 1959-61 it was extinct as an Irish breeding bird. Immigration of birds in 1962 is considered to have re-established breeding stock.

The tree sparrow has undergone the largest population crash of all our commoner bird species. The UK tree sparrow population has suffered a severe decline, estimated at 93 per cent between 1970 and 2008. Records in Northern Ireland 1995-97 show a 65 per cent increase in number, although this is based on a very low population level of several hundred birds.

There are some unusual facets to this species, in Ireland it breeds almost exclusively in holes in old farm buildings, old trees and cliffs or even old sand martin burrows. They will readily use nest boxes and are small enough to fit into holes used by great tit *Parus major* and blue tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*. Tree sparrows largely shun higher ground in the British Isles.

Arable and mixed farmland areas hold a large proportion of the tree sparrow (*Passer montanus*) population. It is perhaps most easily encountered when it flocks in winter and frequents stubble fields. They are also common close to waterbodies and along waterways.

The tree sparrow is listed as a priority species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. It is amber listed in the Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland. It is also a Northern Ireland Priority Species under the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy.

It is listed as a Species of European Conservation Concern (SPEC 3) – a species of unfavourable conservation status in Europe although its global population is not concentrated in Europe. This is due to its declines across much of north-western Europe.

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*

The yellowhammer is one of the larger buntings, which is a family of plump sparrow-sized birds with triangular bills, which are perfectly designed for eating both seeds and insect food.

The yellowhammer builds its nest on or close to the ground in dense vegetation, often at the base of a thick hedge, bank or gorse bush. The nest is made of grasses, leaves, moss and straw and lined with fine grasses. The young are fed on insect food such as caterpillars, but throughout the rest of the year, yellowhammers feed extensively on grass and weed seeds or spilt grains from stubble fields. In winter, birds tend to gather in flocks, often with other seed-eating birds, scouring the countryside for suitable sources of food.

It was once a widespread and familiar farmland bird, but is now scarce and localised in Northern Ireland, where its remaining stronghold is mixed arable and livestock farming areas of eastern County Down. In Northern Ireland, Yellowhammers declined by 65% in the 1990s.

Some work with landowners has already been taking place, mainly in agri-environment schemes, to raise awareness of the species. These initiatives are having a positive impact on population numbers.

Reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*

Reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus* nest on the edge of wetland habitats such as wet grassland, reedbeds, ditches and fens, as well as farmland; they rely on farmland during the autumn and winter to forage for seeds.

Linnet *Linaria cannabina*

The linnet is a small member of the finch family. Found on open farmland with gorse and scrub, linnets are widespread in Northern Ireland, though they have undergone a decline in recent years. The UK population is estimated to have declined by 57% between 1970 and 2008. As seed eaters, it is likely that the loss of mixed farming and the increased use of herbicides have been instrumental in causing declines.

Linnets frequent open habitats with dense hedgerows and areas of scrub, particularly where gorse is present. Nests are built within hedges and scrub..

Linnets feed on a wide variety of seeds, and unlike other finches, feed their chicks on seeds as opposed to insects. They are therefore highly dependent on the availability of seeds as a food source.

The Linnet is an amber listed bird of conservation concern in Ireland.

The main cause of the decline in linnet, and other seed-eating farmland birds, is thought to be agricultural intensification and specialisation, which has led to the loss of suitable nesting and feeding sites. This decline can also be attributed to increasing use of herbicides, fertilisers, aggressive scrub removal and excessive hedge trimming.

There is a UK Species Action Plan which was published in 1998. The population in Northern Ireland is monitored under the Breeding Bird Survey, a joint BTO/NIEA/RSPB initiative, which has monitored common breeding bird populations since 1994.

Threats to Farmland Birds

- The threats to farmland birds are changes from arable or mixed farming to livestock farming, the change from traditional spring sowing of crops to autumn sowing of crops which clears winter stubble feeding sites, loss of scrub and excessive trimming of hedgerow nesting habitats, loss of rough grassland and meadows which are a source of weed seeds, increased use of

herbicides and pesticides, and inappropriate hedge management e.g. trimming during the nesting season.

- In all areas, management of hedgerows is important for yellowhammers, since hedges which are cut too frequently, or which are full of gaps are not suitable for nesting.
- The intensification of grassland has also meant the loss of species-rich grasslands, with intensive pasture and silage again providing little in the way of seeds and invertebrates.
- More efficient harvesting methods and intensification of existing arable land means that there is less spilt grain, and fewer weeds to provide seeds and associated invertebrates.
- A lack of traditional nesting sites such as holes in mature trees and buildings, and the loss of ruins and inappropriate management of old buildings could be limiting nesting opportunities for tree sparrows.

Swift *Apus apus*

A summer visitor from Africa, the swift arrives in Northern Ireland during May to begin its breeding cycle and leaves again in August, so is with us for a relatively brief period of time. This species spends most of its year flying, only perching when it returns to the nesting site during its short breeding season! During its stay it requires suitable cavities for nesting; these are often found in old buildings. It feeds on flying insects in open air and so can forage anywhere these are plentiful.

During the period between 1994 – 2016 we have lost between 69,000 and 138,000 pairs of swifts and the downward trend has continued since 2016 with a decline both in their breeding grounds and over-wintering grounds. There was a loss of 28,000 pairs of swifts between 2009 and 2016. That's a drop of 32% in just 7 years with an average annual decline of 5.4%. As a result, they are a red listed bird of conservation concern in Ireland.

Most new modern buildings give little or no opportunities for swifts to nest. They are habitual nesters, returning to the same site each summer after migrating from Africa. If their site is removed, they do not nest that year. This lowers the overall

reproduction rate of swifts. They are slow to move to a new nest site, usually needing to be attracted there by a caller system.

Translink and Ulster Wildlife working together have provided advice and guidance to staff and contractors and members of the public on reducing the decline of the common swift *Apus apus* by erecting swift boxes on buildings.

Threats to Swift

- One of the factors causing the decline in swift numbers is the loss of nest sites in the local area. Buildings are a favoured nest site. Building renovation and demolition remove potential nesting sites for swifts.
- Swifts are also threatened by wet summers that reduce the availability of flying insects, resulting in fewer young being produced or failed breeding attempts.
- A gradual loss of natural habitats such as woodland, wetland, meadow and bog results in fewer aerial insects upon which swifts feed.

Invertebrates

Marsh Fritillary Butterfly *Euphydryas aurinia*

The wings of this beautiful butterfly are more brightly patterned than those of other fritillaries. Its habitat is open damp or heathy grassland dominated by tussock-forming grasses.

The marsh fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia* was once widespread in Britain and Ireland but has declined severely over the last century, a decline mirrored throughout Europe. Its populations are highly volatile, and the species probably requires extensive habitats or habitat networks for its long-term survival.

The food plant of the marsh fritillary caterpillar is devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*.

The butterfly forms close-knit colonies on discrete patches of habitat (typically 5 - 20 ha). Adults rarely fly more than 50-100m, but a small proportion seem to disperse

further. The butterfly is renowned for its large fluctuations in population size that make it highly prone to local extinction.

The butterfly requires extensive habitat networks to survive (probably comprising many tens of hectares) and all potentially suitable habitat in a region needs to be targeted for management.

This species is vulnerable to adverse weather conditions. Unfortunately, this charming butterfly is one of our most threatened species and has suffered severe declines in recent decades. Marsh fritillary can still be seen at Inishargy Bog.

Pollinators

Pollinating insects include the familiar butterflies, moths, bees and bumblebees – but did you know that many flies, particularly hoverflies, are also important pollinators? Ireland has 21 native bumblebee species.

Of these, 6 species are cuckoo bumblebees. These cuckoo species don't make their own nests, but instead lay their eggs in the nest of a true bumblebee who will inadvertently bring up their young.

As with all bees, only the females can sting! Bumblebees are not at all aggressive and are interested only in collecting pollen and nectar. Bumblebees can travel up to 5km to feed but commonly forage within 1km of their nest

Four of Ireland's bumblebees are endangered and 2 are vulnerable. The great yellow bumblebee is on the verge of extinction from Ireland.

Bumblebees are more primitive and don't make honey like honeybees. Like the honeybee, bumblebees are social bees. They live in colonies with a queen, many female workers, and some males. Instead, they store a little bit of nectar in wax nectar pots in their nests for emergencies. This means that a bumblebee colony is never more than a few days away from starvation, making Ireland and its climate a challenging place to live!

Solitary bees, a little-known group of insects, are another important group of pollinators. While we have only 18 species of bumblebee in Northern Ireland, there are 77 species of solitary bee.

When pollinators visit a flower, they are dusted with pollen grains, and are in return rewarded with food in the form of sugar-rich nectar. On visiting other flowers to gather more nectar, pollen is deposited onto the flowers and results in fruit and/or seeds being produced which are essential for the continued existence of the plant as well as the animals it supports. When numbers of our pollinators decline, this therefore has a drastic knock-on effect for many plant species.

A loss of pollinators is not just disastrous for biodiversity and our local landscape, it can also be detrimental to our economy. For example, the annual value of pollinators for human food crops has been estimated at €153 billion world-wide. The value of the apple-growing industry in Northern Ireland is estimated at £7 million per year and is dependent on pollinators for apple production. Other pollinator-dependent crops in Ireland include apples, strawberries, raspberries, currents, tomatoes, peas and courgettes. A decline in pollinators translates into a decline in fruit production, which leads to higher prices in the supermarket. It is a problem which affects us all!

The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2015-2020 aimed to address pollinator decline and protect pollination services across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The Pollinator Plan recognised that Councils, working locally in partnership, can play a leading role in providing habitat where pollinators can survive and thrive. A new All-Ireland Pollinator Plan has been developed to cover the 2021-2025 period.

Threats to Pollinators

- Pollinators are losing their homes: habitats such as woodland, hedgerows and species-rich grassland are lost every year because of increasing agricultural intensification and urban sprawl.
- There are relatively few places where wildflowers can thrive due to the frequent cutting of roadside verges, a change from hay production to silage production,

and the tendency to keep recreational areas such as gardens and parks 'well-maintained'. Pollinators therefore find it difficult to find adequate sources of food.

- Insects are sensitive to climate change: our changing climate results in plants flowering at slightly different times of the year and insects are slow to adapt to these changes, emerging from hibernation too early or too late to find flowers to pollinate.
- The use of certain pesticides to improve crop yield may pose a risk to pollinating insects if used inappropriately
- Introduced diseases and pests such as the Varroa mite can devastate populations of honeybees.

Reptiles

Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara*

The Northern Ireland priority species common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* is Ireland's only native reptile. Lizard distribution was likely to have declined during the 19th and 20th centuries due to conversion of suitable lowland habitats to agriculture.

The common lizard occurs throughout Northern Ireland, in a variety of habitats, including heathland, bogland, coniferous forest, disused railway tracks, gardens, sand dunes and coastal cliffs but population numbers are not known. Common lizards are only active during the day and hibernate from October to March. They can be hard to spot since they run and hide as soon as they are disturbed.

There is a lack of understanding as regards good lizard habitat, as they require a mix of bare ground plus tall vegetation for shelter and insect food.

Threats to Common or Viviparous Lizard

The conversion of lowland habitat to farmland has probably had the most impact on this species. The loss of upland heath and coastal dunes also pose a continuing threat.

Amphibians

Smooth Newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*

Our only native amphibian and protected at all times by law is the Smooth Newt . Like frogs, this species makes its way to ponds in early spring where it lays its eggs. These will similarly develop into tadpoles and slowly emerge as miniature versions of the adults. Although newts are widespread across Northern Ireland, suitable habitat for the species is in decline. Newts have aquatic young and require ponds and areas of standing water with aquatic vegetation for breeding, including garden ponds and field ditches. After breeding has completed, they disperse into nearby rough grassland and woodlands. Newts hibernate over winter under rocks, logs and other sheltered areas that can sometime be a distance from their breeding waterbody.

Threats to Smooth Newt

- Newt breeding ponds are exceptionally vulnerable to drainage, infill and pollution.

Fish

Sea Trout *Salmo trutta trutta*

The Ardmillan River, Crawfordsburn stream and the Comber/Enler River are productive rivers for sea trout *Salmo trutta trutta*, and have been shown to have self-sustaining populations of brown trout *Salmo trutta*. These rivers also have the potential to support Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar*.

Threats to Sea Trout

- Pollution
- General habitat degradation
- Reduction in the availability of prey
- Introduction of non-native aquatic animals
- Diseases and parasites
- Creation of artificial barriers to upstream migration

- Predation by birds and mammals.
- Interbreeding with non-native farm-reared brown trout results in the loss of the genetic integrity of unique trout populations.

Flora

Great Burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*

A member of the rose family, great burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* can survive for decades due to its extensive root system. This flower is extremely rare in Northern Ireland but is recorded on the old railway embankment at Donaghadee. A rare native perennial of open pasture. It was first recorded before 1863 and only from Donaghadee, where it grew in pastures until after 1878. It seems that after the species was lost from the pastureland, it persisted along the railway line, where it was recorded from 1893. A small number of plants now grow on a short stretch of bank beside a footpath, previously the railway line, close to a housing development.

Threats to Great Burnet

- Trampling by recreational users
- Overshading by trees and shrubs

Lower Plants (Bryophyte and Lichens)

Using a hand lens, mosses, liverworts and lichens are seen to consist of a diverse range of growth forms and colours a world of beauty in miniature.

Bryophytes play a huge role in the establishment of plant communities because they can colonise almost bare rock faces, existing in the minutest of crevices and turning what was barren rock into productive material. They along with a few other plants considered 'primitive' like algae and lichens prove themselves to be incredibly valuable building blocks in plant communities ever reaching their full potential.

They are also important in recycling nutrients and changing the chemistry of an area to be able to support higher plants because they can withstand and tolerate conditions which would normally be unsuitable for larger plants.

So, the greening of many places is started not by your magnificent ferns and trees but by the ever-so humble, yet massively important bryophytes.

Lichens are a group of terrestrial organisms, which are abundantly found growing in various places, including on rocks, gravestones, walls, tree barks, on roofs, soil, etc. They require a clean atmosphere with sufficient air for their growth. Some species of lichens are also found in many environmental conditions as they can grow on almost any surface from sea level to high alpine elevations. According to fossil records, these organisms were found about 400 million years ago.

These organisms are found in different colours, shapes, sizes and forms. Based on their physical features, they are further classified into diverse types.

Lichens hold a great economic importance and are essential for the environment in several ways.

- Some species of lichens help with the conversion of rocks into soil.
- Lichens also plays a key role in the nitrogen cycle by fixing nitrogen from the atmosphere.
- Lichens serve as an important source of food for humans across the world..
- Based on the size of these lichens, we can study and find out the age of rocks.
- Since ancient times, these species are well known for their various colouring agents and dyes. They are a good source of natural dyes.
- Lichens can degrade polyester, lead, copper, radionuclides and other pollutants, polluting the planet earth.
- Apart from the pharmaceutical industries, lichens are widely used by various cosmetic industries and are also a natural medicine for various types of skin diseases and rashes.
- Lichens are also a great source of food for many aquatic organisms and are widely used as anti-infective agents in pharmaceutical industries to produce antibiotics, anti-mycobacterial, antiviral, anti-inflammatory products.

These beautiful plants have been sorely neglected in previous LBAPS in Northern Ireland hence they have been included for conservation actions in this LBAP.

Threats to Lower Plants

- Habitat loss
- Modification of habitats through drainage
- Water and air pollution

Sea Grass *Zostera* spp.

Sea Grass is a grass like flowering plant with dark green, long, narrow leaves with rounded tips. Leaves shoot from a creeping rhizome that binds the sediment. Sea grass forms dense swards in the subtidal zone, supporting a diverse fauna and flora. It acts as a nursery for fish and shellfish, as well as being a source of food for wildfowl (e.g., brent geese).

The distribution of *Zostera* in Strangford Lough and its exploitation by wildfowl have been well investigated and documented. Records show in October 1991 there was an estimated 1100 tonnes (fresh weight) of *Zostera* in the Lough covering some 6.3 km² of the northern mudflats and representing some 12% of the total intertidal area of the Lough.

Threats to Sea Grass

- Industrial and agricultural run-off
- Coastal infrastructure development, and dredging increasing water turbidity and physically damaging seagrass

8.2 Partnership and Community Involvement

The habitat and species actions plans that are being developed as part of the LBAP process would not be possible without the expert knowledge and experience of government agencies, local authority staff, non-governmental conservation organisations, landowners and local community groups and individuals. Community involvement in the management of the biodiversity in our area will be key to the

success. It is local communities who benefit most from protection of local habitats and their species.

The LBAP has been drawn up after consultation with a wide group of people. The LBAP requires the Council to work alongside several governmental and non-governmental partner organisations to develop and complete actions and fulfil targets which promote and enhance biodiversity within the Council area.

The LBAP has committed a partnership of statutory and non-statutory organisations, and local communities that is keen to realise the biodiversity goals enshrined in the plan. The implantation of actions outlined in this LBAP will also include other local community groups, the farming community, schools and businesses and individuals who will become or are already actively involved in biodiversity actions.

'The most recent State of Nature Report for NI (2019) showed an overall decline in the average abundance of wildlife in Northern Ireland with some species facing extinction. This is despite legislation and policy to protect biodiversity and wildlife. It is critical to understand it is not only our protected sites that are important for biodiversity but all areas in between including farmland, hedgerows, rivers, gardens, recreational and amenity sites, canals even our built environment. As a community we can all make space for nature. With the continued effort of our wonderful local groups, organisations, inspiring volunteers, and the overall support of the ANDBC community I have no doubt together we can help local biodiversity recover.'

ANDBC Biodiversity Officer

'We are convinced that we are to preserve this rich biodiversity it is vital to involve the local community in the stewardship of areas. This can be done by informing people and giving them a role in preserving it, for example identifying important habitats and encourage everyone to be proud of them and help with monitoring and custodianship'.

Donaghadee Community Association

Research by the Natural History Museum and RSPB also shows that Northern Ireland ranks 12th worst out of 240 regions for biodiversity loss. There must, therefore, be a step change in action by all public authorities to halt and reverse declines in biodiversity to make Northern Ireland Nature Positive by 2030.

RSPB Northern Ireland

Insert Quote from Ulster Wildlife Trust

Only by this partnership working together and by inspiring and encouraging others to become involved will the action plan be successful. All of us have a part to play in conserving our wildlife.

With time these partnerships will grow, and the LBAP will naturally evolve.

The partner organisations are:

- Bat Conservation Ireland (BCI)
- British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)
- Buglife
- Butterfly Conservation (Northern Ireland Branch)
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
- Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
- Grass Roots Conservation Group
- Groundwork Northern Ireland
- Local Businesses
- Local Community Groups
- Local Schools
- National Trust (Northern Ireland)
- NI Raptor Study Group (NIRSG)
- Northern Ireland Bat Group (NIBG)
- Northern Ireland Swift Group
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)

- The Farming Community
- The Woodland Trust (Northern Ireland)
- Translink
- Ulster Wildlife
- Mineral Products Association Northern Ireland
- Department for Infrastructure

It is anticipated that as the LBAP continues to evolve, more partners will be invited to participate.

8.3 Selection of Priority Species and Habitats for Action

Ards and North Down Borough Council are responsible for and manage extensive landholdings which make a considerable contribution to the local landscape and provide habitats for wildlife. The Council acknowledges the wider environmental and conservation value of much of its infrastructure and property portfolio, incorporating an objective “to protect and enhance the biodiversity value of our land, properties and associated infrastructure” within its corporate and development plans.

The Council land resource comprises three types of land all of which support their own complement of flora and fauna: green space, grey space and brown space.

Green Space

Green space or ‘green infrastructure’ is land that is currently vegetated. It can clearly have a value for biodiversity. However, it can also play a key role in flood protection, air quality regulation and pollution control as well as having an amenity value. Green space includes modified and artificial habitats e.g., formal gardens around residential properties to those in institutional lands such as hospitals to much larger areas under different management regimes such as designated sites.

Grey Space

Grey Space is the built environment including buildings, roads and pavements. Grey space can be enhanced for biodiversity particularly at the design stage of development to include green roofs and walls and bird and bat boxes. Built heritage and man-made structures have been adopted by many of our native plants and animals as a refuge, nesting or feeding sites. For example, bridges, tunnels and buildings provide opportunities for wildlife which will vary according to building materials, location or aspect. Grey space provides habitat for over-wintering butterflies and moths, bat roosts or nesting opportunities for swallows and swifts.

Brown Space

Brown Spaces are vacant or unused sites that have the potential for redevelopment. They have been used in the past but are not currently managed. The biodiversity of such sites can vary. They can be diverse in pioneer and tall herb species that thrive in disturbed ground or in nutrient poor conditions and support associated diverse invertebrate communities. These communities may develop into scrub and grassland due to natural ecological succession if left alone and not tidied up.

Council makes a significant impact to the quality and quantity of habitats and species through its management and project practices. Further improvements can be gained through formally including biodiversity within its project and maintenance programs. This is particularly important where Council's land holdings infringe upon designated conservation areas.

The plan will naturally allow for the identification of actions that the Council can undertake to conserve biodiversity under its influence. The Ards and North Down Borough Council (LBAP) will contribute to the targets set out in the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy.

8.4 Objectives and Actions

Ards and North Down Borough Council Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) has been created to initiate a series of actions designed to conserve and enhance habitats and species that are of international, national, and regional importance, but also crucially habitats and species that are of local significance within the Council area. Many of these habitats and species are important to local communities.

The objectives of the LBAP are:

Objective 1: Help and conserve habitats and species

Objective 2: Raise awareness of the ecosystem services provided by key species in Ards and North Down Borough Council area.

Objective 3: Involve people in biodiversity projects and develop partnerships

Actions fall into one of four themes

Theme 1: Education and Awareness

These actions build support for biodiversity through education and awareness events for local communities for example participation in recording schemes to monitor the flora and fauna in the Borough or participation in practical conservation activities (e.g. tree planting, native seed harvesting or removal of invasive species).

Theme 2: Research and Monitoring

Research and monitoring actions are fundamentally important to determine the distribution, extent and condition of all key habitats, flora and fauna in the Council area so that actions can be instigated as early as possible to reverse declines in the most threatened.

Theme 3: Land Management

Lack of or inappropriate land management is a key threat to the key habitats, flora and fauna in the Council area. Hedgerows can develop gaps if not cut, wetlands can be polluted by the runoff of fertilisers from farmland or species-rich grassland can be overshadowed by scrub encroachment. Land management actions for example implementation of appropriate mowing or grazing regimes on sand dune or grassland sites or creation of buffer zones around wetlands will be implemented to address this threat.

Theme 4: Building Partnerships

Actions under this theme seek to form partnerships between the Council, conservation NGOs and local communities. It is only through joint actions between all stakeholders that reverses in the decline of our most threatened habitat, flora and fauna can be achieved.

Actions will be focused on Council owned land (parks, sports fields, cemeteries, , leisure centres, allotments, and other open spaces).

Actions will be tied into priorities and policies of the different Council sections or where appropriate on private land where a partnership between the landowner and Council is feasible.

Several local habitats and species have been selected for inclusion in the LBAP using several selection criteria:

- National and regional priority – whether they are contained on the EU, UK or NI's priority habitats and species list by virtue of extent.
- National and regional priority – whether they are contained on the EU, UK or NI's priority species list by virtue of population size.
 - Rapidly declining in Northern Ireland (2% per year over the last 25 years).
 - Declining (1% year) with Northern Ireland being a stronghold consisting either: -
 - >50% Irish population or

- >20% UK population/range.
- Rare (e.g., a small population and/or confined to one or two sites in Northern Ireland) with Northern Ireland being a stronghold consisting of either: -
 - >50% Irish population or
 - >20% UK population/range.
- Significant proportion (>20%) of the international population of a species (or well-recognised subspecies) occurring in Northern Ireland.
- Published or proposed Irish Red Data Book species classed as either critically endangered, endangered, or vulnerable.
- Red-listed species in either the Ireland or UK Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) lists.
- Habitats and species which are of local significance.
- Species which are easily visible or iconic that encourage people to act by engaging in environmental activities which benefit biodiversity.
- Importance to local people – the cultural significance of the habitat or species.

8.4.1 Habitat Actions

Five broad habitat types have been identified for conservation actions in the Council area.

- Coastal, island and marine habitats
- Farmland habitats (grassland, arableland and hedgerow)
- Woodland, and parkland habitats
- Peatland habitats (bog and heath)
- Wetland habitats (fens, reedbeds, lakes and rivers)
- Urban habitats industrial land, cemeteries, parks & gardens

8.4.2 Species Actions

The following species have been selected for action within the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. Many of the species and species groups selected for action will also benefit from actions listed previously under each broad habitat type category.

Lower plants (bryophytes and lichens)

Trees

Invasive flora and fauna

Pollinators (bees, butterflies, wasps, flies, beetles)

Smooth Newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*

Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara*

Farmland birds

Swift *Apus apus*

Sand martin *Riparia riparia*

Dipper *Cinclus cinclus hibernicus*

Wintering and breeding waders and wildfowl

Barn owl *Tyto alba*

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*

Red Squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris*

Pine Marten *Martes martes*

Bats (Chiroptera)

Irish Hare *Lepus timidus hibernicus*

European Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*

9.0 Implementation, Monitoring and Review of the Actions

The habitats and species listed in this document represent a selection of what is present in the North Down and Ards area. These are the ones that will be prioritised by the LBAP. It is likely that other habitats and species may be added to this list as priorities may change over the life span of this plan.

The Council at a practical level will continue to engage with the LBAP process and allocate specific responsibilities regarding the implementation stage. In fully acknowledging the Council's natural heritage, the Council will continue to seek innovative ways to manage and/or mitigate for biodiversity and encourage and reward a conservation ethos in its staff. The Council will continue to develop partnerships to deliver Northern Ireland's targets for biodiversity and will look to the future allocation of resources to support implementation of action for biodiversity.

It is intended that the Biodiversity Action Plan is a dynamic document which is subject to constant review. Progress towards the targets will be assessed annually and it is anticipated the LBAP will be reviewed after 5 years by the Partnership. Reporting on progress will be undertaken by the Council on behalf of the LBAP partnership. In particular, the actions undertaken will increase as more stakeholders join the process and agree work which can be implemented on the ground.

10.0 What You Can Do to Help Biodiversity

At a time when our biodiversity is under immense pressure, there is something everyone can do to help our local wildlife. The success of the Local Biodiversity Action Plan depends not just on the work of Ards and North Down Borough Council and the partner organisations, but also the work that individuals and communities can carry out to enhance our environment for biodiversity.

Regardless of our age, job, or experience, we can all take positive action for local biodiversity. This may take the form of volunteering with an environmental organisation, taking part in a beach clean or simply putting on your walking shoes, getting into the fresh air and taking notice of the wildlife that surrounds you.

What can One Person Do?

- Your own garden can be a haven for wildlife, no matter how large or small; bird feeders and tables help to feed many birds during times of unfavourable weather.
- Install bird boxes and inspect and maintain annually
- Creating a garden pond provides drinking and bathing water for birds and mammals such as hedgehogs, as well as possibly also attracting other wetland inhabitants like frogs and dragonflies/damselflies
- Create log and branch piles providing valuable habitats for many insects as well as frogs, newts, and hedgehogs
- Create your own garden compost heap for use in the garden
- Leave areas of your garden to 'go wild' will encourage native plants to flower and attract a wide range of insects and birds
- Plant your own wildlife garden by selecting flowering plants which attract pollinators.
- Recording the species, you find in your garden and anywhere else you visit will allow us to keep an eye on how well or poorly each species is faring over time. Records can be submitted to the Council Biodiversity Officer or to the Centre for Environmental Data and Recording
- Encourage friends and family to engage with nature, especially children - they will have to solve many environmental problems that we have helped to create.
- Keep an eye on local wildlife and report anything which might be a wildlife crime. Water pollution, disturbance of protected species and habitats, littering and dumping of rubbish are things which will have a negative impact the whole community as well as local wildlife.

- Within the North Down and Ards area, there are many organisations actively looking for extra hands to help in local conservation projects why not join them?
- Attend biodiversity events to meet like-minded people and show your support for our local biodiversity.
- Do you enjoy being out and about spotting wildlife? If so, please take a notebook and pencil with you the next time and become a wildlife recorder. We need wildlife records in the North Down and Ards area, whether rare or common. This will help us to monitor how well our local wildlife is doing. You can submit your records to the Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR).
- Explore Your Natural Environment as this LBAP has highlighted, the North Down and Ards area is rich in biodiversity. The best way to see wildlife is to put on your walking shoes and go exploring. You don't need professional equipment to spot wildlife – just keep your eyes and ears open. For further information on walking routes in the district visit www.walkni.com.

What Can Farmers Do?

Most of the land in the Council area is privately owned and the majority of this is farmland.

Fortunately, farmers and other landowners are often keen to incorporate management for wildlife on their land and grants through agri-environment schemes has provided a useful impetus to improve nature conservation on farmland.

We must continue to build on this by providing an incentive for farmers to make it worthwhile to manage their land in sympathy with nature and for them to do so profitably. Equally important is practical guidance on best practice and habitat management and how to integrate this into their farming system while maintaining income levels.

- Manage your land in a way that benefits local wildlife, particularly farmland birds.
- Install bird boxes and inspect and maintain annually.
- Cut hedges outside of the growing season to ensure that nesting birds are not disturbed, and that fruit and seeds are available as a winter food source for wildlife.
- Retain hedgerows as important wildlife corridors rather than replacing with wire fencing.
- Apply herbicides and pesticides in a way that does not affect field margin and hedgerow habitats or even better go organic!
- Leave a strip of uncut grass around the field margin as a refuge for native plants and animals. Cut field margins outside the growing season to allow native plants to set seed and insects to complete the summer part of their lifecycle.
- Find out if you are eligible to take part in an agri-environment scheme such as the Environmental Farming Scheme.
- Plant an area of woodland – forestry grant schemes are available (see <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/daera-forestry-grants>)
- Install a constructed wetland to treat farmyard dirty water.

What Can a School or Community Group Do?

The Eco-Schools programme was developed in 1994 on the basis of the need for involving young people in finding solutions to environmental and sustainable development challenges at the local level.

Most young people care deeply about environmental issues and wish to make a positive change in the environment around them. The Eco-Schools programme provides an ideal way for fostering environmental awareness in the entire school in a way that links to many curriculum subjects. The primary aim of the Eco-Schools programme is to educate and empower young people to make positive decisions and become change makers for an environmentally sustainable world.

It aims to make environmental awareness and action an intrinsic part of the life and ethos of a school. This should include the students, teachers, non-teaching staff and parents, as well as the local authority, the media and local businesses. Eco-Schools endeavours to extend learning beyond the classroom and develop responsible attitudes and commitment, both at home and in the wider community.

- Install bird boxes and inspect and maintain annually.
- Create an area for wildlife within the school grounds or within a community garden. These areas are not just important for wildlife, they are often also great places to relax.
- Visit local woodlands, meadows, wetlands, and urban green spaces – they are the perfect outdoor classroom.
- Establish a tree and wildflower nursery.
- Engage with local environmental organisations – many can help you to plant native trees, sow a wildflower meadow, create a garden pond, and survey what plants and animals live in your area.
- Start a school or community project that will help us to complete actions listed in the Biodiversity Action Plan. Contact the Council's Biodiversity Officer or one of the local environmental organisations to find out how you can make a difference.

What Can a Business Do?

Although there has been much achieved for biodiversity conservation and awareness in the transportation (Translink), and quarrying (Minerals Products Association) sectors, there has been very limited engagement by and with industry to date to the levels required. There are many ways in which businesses can contribute, including ensuring that they understand and manage their impact on biodiversity through developing biodiversity policies, getting involved in wider initiatives such as conservation projects with the Council's biodiversity officer or conservation NGOs, communicating the biodiversity message to employees and customers and mitigating their overall impact on biodiversity through site action.

There are many opportunities to improve partnership with local business either through their sponsorship of projects or incorporating sustainability and biodiversity

enhancement measures into their future development and way of operating. Many firms are keen to improve their image and show off their "green" credentials and we must take the opportunity that this provides to fully engage with them and have them aboard the partnership.

- Install bird boxes and inspect and maintain annually.
- Create a wildlife area. Wildlife areas can also be great places to spend your lunchtime.
- Visit local green spaces during work breaks; this helps to lower blood pressure and reduce stress levels.
- Liaise with the Council's Biodiversity Officer or one of our local environmental organisations and use staff training days to help with tasks such as tree planting or helping to control invasive species.
- You could sponsor a local wildlife project such as creation of a wildflower meadow or pond, or the planting of a woodland or native species-rich hedgerow.
- Small and large businesses can sign up to a Prosperity Agreement. These are voluntary agreements through which NIEA, and an organisation can explore opportunities for reducing environmental impacts in ways that create prosperity and wellbeing.

Community Action

A major challenge is to raise awareness and help people to become involved. It is encouraging to see the number of local groups who want to engage at some level and particularly the number of young people who are active and involved in nature. We are fortunate in the Council area in having a diverse range of committed conservation NGOs. Links must be built on and schools encouraged and assisted to undertake projects in biodiversity. This practical introduction to biodiversity is the best way to educate the next generation in the problems that we face. It is very reassuring to know that biodiversity is included in the new school curriculum.

Some of the side benefits of this biodiversity work should be mentioned. It has already provided an opportunity to bring cross community groups together in joint projects which reflect both communities' natural and cultural heritage. There is still

considerable social need and exclusion in Northern Ireland and interacting with nature provides a stimulus to remove some of these barriers.

There is also an opportunity to bring together groups with a common interest. Most people want to see an enhancement of their local environment and where this involves nature conservation efforts will be made to form partnerships to achieve the biodiversity objectives.

11.0 Useful Contacts

- Northern Ireland Bat Group <https://www.bats-ni.org.uk/>. For advice on injured bats, bats on the ground or in a building, or bats discovered during building or tree works, contact Northern Ireland Bat Group. Interfering with protected species and/or damaging the habitats on which they depend, damaging protected habitats, poaching, badger baiting and infringements on the Animal Welfare Act are all types of Wildlife Crime. If you suspect a wildlife crime, contact your nearest Police station or call 101 from a landline; state they you believe a wildlife crime has occurred and be sure to ask for a Crime Reference Number.
- Action for Biodiversity www.actionforbiodiversity.eu
- Biodiversityni www.biodiversityni.com
- British Trust for Ornithology www.bto.org
- Butterfly Conservation www.butterfly-conservation.org
- Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR) www.nmni.com/cedar
- Copeland Island Bird Observatory www.copelandbirdobservatory.org.uk
- Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) www.dardni.gov.uk
- Exploris www.exploris.org.uk
- Forest Service www.dardni.gov.uk/forests-service
- National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI) www.habitas.org.uk
- National Trust www.nationaltrust.org.uk
- Northern Ireland Bat Group www.bats-ni.org.uk
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) www.doeni.gov.uk/niea
- Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime
<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/partnership-for-action-against-wildlife-crime>.
The Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime UK (PAW UK) helps statutory and

non-government organisations to work together to reduce wildlife crime (e.g. badger raptor and bat persecution, illegal trade in CITES species, illegal harvesting of freshwater pearl mussels, and poaching (deer, fish & hare coursing) through raising awareness of wildlife legislation and the impacts of wildlife crime, helping and advising on wildlife crime and regulatory issues and making sure wildlife crime is tackled effectively.

- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) www.rspb.org.uk
- Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership www.strangfordlough.org
- The Conservation Volunteers www.tcv.org.uk/northernireland
- Ulster Wildlife www.ulsterwildlife.org
- Walkni www.walkni.com
- Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust www.wwt.org.uk/visit/castle-espier/
- Woodland Trust www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Glossary

AONB – Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

ASSI - Area of Special Scientific Interest; a nature conservation designation which protects areas that are the best samples of our natural heritage and / or geological history

Biodiversity - The diversity of all living things on Earth including plants, animals, fungi and bacteria

Biodiversity Duty - The duty placed on public bodies such as councils under the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011 to further the conservation of biodiversity in ways that are consistent with carrying out their main functions

DAERA - The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Ecosystem – An area made up of plants, animals, micro-organisms, soil, rock, minerals, water sources and the local atmosphere interacting with one another

Ecosystem Services – Ecosystems supply us (humans) with a number of benefits e.g., pollination, drinking water and decomposition of waste, collectively these resources are referred to as Ecosystem Services

FNR – Forest Nature Reserve Habitat – This is an ecological or environmental area that is inhabited by a particular species of animal, plant or other type of organism

HAP - Habitat Action Plan; a plan to enhance a habitat for the benefit of biodiversity

INNS - Invasive Non-native Species; species which have been accidentally or deliberately introduced into our environment and result in damage to native habitats and/or species.

LBAP - Local Biodiversity Action Plan; a plan developed between partner organisations to develop and complete actions, and fulfil targets, which will promote and enhance biodiversity within the local area

LNR – Local Nature Reserve

MCZ – Marine Coastal Zone

MNR – Marine Nature Reserve

NNR – National Nature Reserve

NR – Nature Reserve

Priority Habitat - A habitat which requires conservation action because of its rarity, importance and/or decline in quality and/or spatial area

Priority Species - A species which requires conservation action because of its rarity, rapid population decline and/or international importance

RAMSAR - Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention.

SAC - Special Area of Conservation; an area designated under the EU Habitats Directive for the protection and conservation of seriously threatened habitats and species

SAP - Species Action Plan; a plan to benefit a particular species

SLNCI - A Site of Local Nature Conservation Importance; sites are designated according to their flora, fauna and/or earth science interest

SPA - Special Protection Area; an area designated under the EU Habitats Directive for the protection and conservation of sites which are important for our most vulnerable species of birds

Ramsar site - A Ramsar site is a wetland site designated for its international importance to nature conservation. Named after the 1971 Convention on Wetlands which was held in Ramsar, Iran

Acknowledgements

The North Down and Ards LBAP is a product of contributions from many individuals. We thank the many individuals and partner organisations in governmental departments, Ards and North Down Borough Council and the community and voluntary sector for their help, support and advice during the compilation of this Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP). We look forward to working alongside each of you to develop the actions laid out in this plan.

The Council would also like to thank all the local schools and community groups that we have had the pleasure of working with to help increase awareness of, and improve habitats for, biodiversity in their local areas.

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British Trust for Ornithology, Exploris, National Trust, Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Ulster Wildlife, Strangford Lough & Lecale Partnership, the Conservation Volunteers (NI) and the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.

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Records of flora and fauna mentioned in this publication are largely from Habitat Action Plans, Species Action Plans and ASSI citation documents that are available on the NIEA web site and from CEDaR.

Insert Credited Photos

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Appendix 1: Designated Sites in Ards and North Down Borough Council Area

Site Name	Designated Site Category	Designated Site Area (ha)
Aughnadarragh Lough	SAC	12.8
Strangford Lough	SAC	15398.54
Outer Ards	Ramsar Site/SPA	1154.16
Strangford Lough	Ramsar Site/SPA	15580.79
Copeland Islands	SPA	201.52
Ballymacormick Point	ASSI	39
Strangford Lough Part 1	ASSI	1549
Strangford Lough Part 2	ASSI	699
Strangford Lough Part 3	ASSI	1859.5
Whitespots	ASSI	5.05
Scrabo	ASSI	25.5
Blaeberry Island Bog	ASSI	24.58

Lough Cowey	ASSI	30.11
Aughnadarragh Lough	ASSI	12.8
Heron and Carrigullian Loughs	ASSI	80.42
Tievehilly	ASSI	3.42
Ballyquintin Point	ASSI	74.10
Copeland Islands	ASSI	201.52
Strangford Lough	MNR	16500.00
Granagh Bay	NR	24.00
Dorn	NR	790.00
Ballyquintin Point	NNR	16.00
North Strangford Lough	NNR	1015.00
Ballyrainey	SLNCI	1.97
Kiltonga	SLNCI	7.84

Cairngaver	SLNCI	5.08
Cunningburn	SLNCI	2.15
Ballyalloy Lough	SLNCI	38.98
Whitespots, Newtownards	SLNCI	40.59
Inishargy Bog	SLNCI	39.13
Tullynagee	SLNCI	17.15
Rosemount	SLNCI	5.97
Ballymacashen Bog	SLNCI	15.18
Castle Espie	SLNCI	2.42
Golden Glen	SLNCI	7.44
Ballyharry	SLNCI	1.38
Killynether Wood	SLNCI	13.72
Willy's Wood Island	SLNCI	78.34
Lough Cowey	SLNCI	30.21
Glen Lyon, Holywood	SLNCI	8.04
Blackhill, Seahill	SLNCI	2.44

Hollywood Reservoirs, North Down Countryside	SLNCI	14.94
Redburn, Hollywood	SLNCI	67.56
Strickland's Glen, Bangor	SLNCI	5.72
Edith of Lorne's Glen, North Down Countryside	SLNCI	17.10
Croft Burn, Hollywood	SLNCI	0.26
Creighton's Green Reservoir, North Down Countryside	SLNCI	28.46
Ballysallagh, North Down Countryside	SLNCI	18.25
Crawfordsburn	SLNCI	85.00
Ballymacormick Point, North Down Countryside	SLNCI	0.46

Ballygrainey Dismantled Railway, North Down Countryside	SLNCI	16.71
Rockport Coast and St Columbanus, Seahill	SLNCI	13.91
Clandeboyne Avenue, North Down Countryside	SLNCI	14.49
Rathgael, Bangor	SLNCI	6.30
Ballymenoch Park, Holywood	SLNCI	10.97
Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and Cultra Glen, Holywood	SLNCI	48.15
Balloo Wetland/ Woodland	Ulster Wildlife/Ards and North Down Borough Council.	6.00
Light House Island	National Trust	9.71
Orlock Point	National Trust	10.00

Ballymacormick Point	National Trust	14
Mount Stewart	National Trust	167.14
Strangford Lough	National Trust	
Kearney	National Trust	143.4
Glastry Ponds	National Trust	16.46
Killynether Wood	National Trust	22.44
Kilcooley Wood	Woodland Trust	
Corrog Wood, Portaferry	Woodland Trust	5.49
Ballysallagh Wood	Forest Service Northern Ireland	18.25
Clandeboyne Forest	Forest Service Northern Ireland	102
Inishargy Bog	Ulster Wildlife	8
Kiltonga nature Reserve	ANDBC	9.5

Appendix 2: List of NI Priority Species in Council Area

Common Name	Scientific Name
Goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>
Grey dagger	<i>Acronicta psi</i>
Knotgrass	<i>Acronicta rumicis</i>
Beaded chestnut	<i>Agrochola lychnidis</i>
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
Green-brindled crescent	<i>Allophyes oxyacanthae</i>
Allis shad	<i>Alosa alosa</i>
Mouse moth	<i>Amphipyra tragopoginis</i>
Chaffweed	<i>Anagallis minima</i>
Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>
Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>
Garganey	<i>Anas querquedula</i>
a solitary bee	<i>Andrena coitana</i>
a solitary bee	<i>Andrena denticulata</i>
a solitary bee	<i>Andrena praecox</i>
Bog-rosemary	<i>Andromeda polifolia</i>
Whirlpool ramshorn	<i>Anisus vortex</i>

Greenland white-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons flavirostris</i>
Tree pipit	<i>Anthus trivialis</i>
Dusky brocade	<i>Apamea remissa</i>
Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>
Garden tiger	<i>Arctia caja</i>
Short-eared owl	<i>Asio flammeus</i>
Centre-barred sallow	<i>Atethmia centrargo</i>
Pochard	<i>Aythya ferina</i>
Tufted duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>
Scaup	<i>Aythya marila</i>
a door snail	<i>Balea perversa</i>
a moss	<i>Brachydontium trichodes</i>
Pale-bellied brent goose	<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>
Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>
Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>
Mottled rustic	<i>Caradrina Morpheus</i>

Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>
Twite	<i>Carduelis flavirostris</i>
Haworth's minor	<i>Celaena haworthii</i>
Crescent	<i>Celaena leucostigma</i>
Broom moth	<i>Ceramica pisi</i>
Hen harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>
a chantarelle	<i>Clavaria zollingeri</i>
a common scurvygrass	<i>Cochlearia officinalis ssp. scotica</i>
Frog orchid	<i>Coeloglossum viride</i>
Small heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>
Sea-kale	<i>Crambe maritima</i>
Corncrake	<i>Crex</i>
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
Bewick's swan	<i>Cygnus columbianus</i>
Whooper swan	<i>Cygnus</i>
Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet	<i>Xanthorhoe ferrugata</i>
Small square-spot	<i>Diarsia rubi</i>

Small phoenix	<i>Ecliptopera silaceata</i>
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>
Reed bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>
August thorn	<i>Ennomos quercinaria</i>
Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>
Small eggar	<i>Eriogaster lanestris</i>
Marsh fritillary	<i>Eurodryas aurinia</i>
Garden dart	<i>Euxoa nigricans</i>
Alder buckthorn	<i>Frangula alnus</i>
Black-throated Diver	<i>Gavia arctica</i>
Field gentian	<i>Gentianella campestris</i>
Meadow crane's-bill	<i>Geranium pratense</i>
Wood crane's-bill	<i>Geranium sylvaticum</i>
Heath cudweed	<i>Gnaphalium sylvaticum</i>
Double dart	<i>Graphiphora augur</i>

Smooth ramshorn	<i>Gyraulus (Torquis) laevis</i>
Narrow-bordered bee Hawk	<i>Hemaris tityus</i>
Ghost moth	<i>Hepialus humuli</i>
Grayling	<i>Hipparchia Semele</i>
Rustic	<i>Hoplodrina blanda</i>
Rosy rustic	<i>Hydraecia micacea</i>
Herring gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>
Neat mining Bee	<i>Lasioglossum nitidiusculum</i>
Wall	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>
a moss snail	<i>Leiostyla anglica</i>
Wood white	<i>Leptidea reali</i>
Irish hare	<i>Lepus timidus hibernicus</i>
Scottish lovage	<i>Ligusticum scoticum</i>
Ash-grey slug	<i>Limax cameronite</i>
Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>

Grasshopper warbler	<i>Locustella naevia</i>
Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>
Pine marten	<i>Martes martes</i>
Common scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>
Oysterplant	<i>Mertensia maritima</i>
Rosy minor	<i>Mesoligia literosa</i>
Yellow wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
Spotted flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
Shoulder-striped wainscot	<i>Mythimna comma</i>
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>
Oblique carpet	<i>Orthonama vittata</i>
Powdered quaker	<i>Orthosia gracilis</i>
House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Tree sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>
Dark spinach	<i>Pelurga comitata</i>
Common seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>

Common (Harbour) porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>
Wood warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>
55 kHz pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>
Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus species</i>
a pea mussel	<i>Pisidium pulchellum</i>
Lesser butterfly-orchid	<i>Platanthera bifolia</i>
Brown long-eared Bat	<i>Plecotus auratus</i>
Golden plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>
Small-white Orchid	<i>Pseudorchis albida</i>
Balearic shearwater	<i>Puffinus mauretanicus</i>
Intermediate wintergreen	<i>Pyrola media</i>
Chough	<i>Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax</i>
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula</i>

Spiral tasselweed	<i>Ruppia cirrhosa</i>
Sea trout	<i>Salmo trutta</i>
Prickly saltwort	<i>Salsola kali ssp. kali</i>
Red squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>
Annual knawel	<i>Scleranthus annuus</i>
Mullein wave	<i>Scopula marginepunctata</i>
Shaded broad-bar	<i>Scotopteryx chenopodiata</i>
Latticed heath	<i>Semiothisa clathrate</i>
a whitebeam	<i>Sorbus Hibernica</i>
a whitebeam	<i>Sorbus rupicola</i>
White ermine	<i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i>
Buff ermine	<i>Spilosoma luteum</i>
Arctic skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>
Little tern	<i>Sterna albifrons</i>
Turtle dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
a moss	<i>Tortella inclinata</i>

Redshank	<i>Tringa tetanus</i>
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>
Song thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>
Bottle-nosed Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>
Cinnabar	<i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>
Barn owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
a whorl snail	<i>Vertigo antivertigo</i>
Spring vetch	<i>Vicia lathyroides</i>
Sallow	<i>Xanthia icteritia</i>

Appendix 3: List of Locally Important Species Relevant to the Council Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	Significance
Great burnet	<i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>	NI Rare & Scarce Plants, Wildlife (NI) Order Sch 8
Bats	Chiroptera	Wildlife (NI) Order
Irish hare	<i>Lepus timidus hibernicus</i>	Wildlife (NI) Order
Harbour Porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>	Wildlife (NI) Order
Common Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	Wildlife (NI) Order
Grey Seal	<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>	Wildlife (NI) Order

Red squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	Wildlife (NI) Order
Pine marten	<i>Martes martes</i>	Wildlife (NI) Order
Smooth newt	<i>Lissotriton vulgaris</i>	Wildlife (NI) Order
Black-headed gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Breeding populations on amber list of birds of conservation concern in Ireland
European herring gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Breeding populations on amber list of birds of conservation concern in Ireland
Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Breeding populations on amber list of birds of conservation concern in Ireland

Black guillemot	<i>Cephus grylle</i>	Amber listed bird of conservation concern
Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>	Amber listed bird of conservation concern
Pale bellied brent goose	<i>Branta bernicla hrota</i>	Wintering population on amber list of birds of conservation concern in Ireland.
Barn owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	Red listed bird of conservation concern in Ireland
Greenland white-fronted geese	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	Wintering population on amber list of birds of conservation concern in Ireland.
Farmland seed-eating birds	Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i> , tree sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i> , reed bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i> , linnet <i>Linaria cannabina</i>	Northern Ireland priority species. Yellowhammer is a red listed bird of conservation concern. Tree sparrow, and linnet are amber listed birds of conservation concern.

Twite	<i>Acanthis flavirostris</i>	Breeding population listed on red list of conservation concern in Ireland.
Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	Badgers are protected, under Schedule 5, 6 and 7 of the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 (as amended).

<p>Hedgehog</p>	<p><i>Erinaceus europaeus</i></p>	<p>In Ireland the hedgehog is classed as Least Concern on the IUCN red list, but this is due to the fact that the species is data deficient, they are now classed as Vulnerable to Extinction in Britain. There have been huge declines in Britain and Europe, and it is estimated that there is a similar situation in Ireland.</p>
<p>Common or viviparous lizard</p>	<p><i>Zootoca vivipara</i></p>	<p>Listed in Schedule 5, 6 and 7 of the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985</p> <p>Listed in Annex III of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention)</p>

	Action	Partners
Theme 1. Education & Awareness		
1	Encourage participation in citizen science wildlife projects and engage the public in biodiversity recording and awareness.	ANDBC, CEDaR, Museums NI, DAERA, conservation and wildlife NGO's, Flora and Fauna groups
2	Encourage the public to get involved in practical activities and habitat restoration projects to increase the numbers of our priority species	ANDBC, conservation and wildlife NGO's, Flora and Fauna groups
3	Support participation in national and international biodiversity awareness campaigns	ANDBC, CEDaR, conservation and wildlife NGOs, Flora and Fauna groups
4	Raise the profile of bats by running a programme of related activities and developing an information page on the council website.	ANDBC, NI Bat Group, Bat Conservation Ireland
5	Encourage participation in SeaSearch via diving clubs https://www.seasearch.org.uk/	DAERA, Divers
6	Work in partnership to organise training in whale and dolphin identification and monitoring	ANDBC, Irish Whale and Dolphin Group
7	Carry out an audit and mapping exercise of coastal interpretative panels on council owned land. Identify panels in need replacing, opportunities to combine panel information and potential new panel locations to promote marine biodiversity.	DAERA, ANDBC, SLLP, Exploris
8	Inform the public where land is being managed for biodiversity.	ANDBC
9	Raise awareness on the biodiversity of our rivers and produce interpretation material on the biodiversity value of wetlands and associated species at key sites	ANDBC, SLLP, DAERA (WMU), Rivers Agency

10	Promote local biodiversity by creating new biodiversity trails (including interpretative signage) in selected woodland locations.	ANDBC
11	Promote 'Gardening for Wildlife'	ANDBC
12	Support the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025	ANDBC, DAERA, Ulster Wildlife, Buglife, Butterfly conservation, Bumblebee conservation society, conservation NGO's, local schools and businesses community groups
13	Raise awareness of red squirrel conservation and encourage local recording of the red squirrel and pine marten.	DAERA, ANDBC, North Down Red Squirrel and Pine Marten Group, Ulster Wildlife
14	Monitor the progress of this action plan through the setting up of a BAP implementation group made up partner organisations meeting on an Annual basis.	ANDBC
15	Publicize the BAP within the Council and beyond through existing information centres and museums (e.g. Bangor Library)	ANDBC
16	Ensure Council land managers are familiar with the latest biodiversity guidance, policy and legislation through appropriate training.	ANDBC
17	Provide invasive species identification, control and management training to Council staff and produce an Invasive Species Swatch to assist with identification in the field.	DAERA, ANDBC, conservation NGOs
18	Target and promote agri-environment scheme uptake around lanes, ponds and rivers - including buffer zones and ungrazed grass margins to reduce the impact of eutrophication and sedimentation. Highlight the importance of these features as wildlife corridors.	DAERA, ANDBC, Farming Community

19	Promote the importance of cereal field margins for biodiversity	DAERA, ANDBC, BTO, RSPB, Ulster Wildlife
20	Raise awareness of the importance of our hedgerows for local biodiversity and its role as a vital ecological network and promote best practice management.	DAERA, ANDBC, private landowners, community groups, Ulster Wildlife
21	Establish a 'Birds of the Borough' (e.g. swift, barn owl, kingfisher) project group, to develop project ideas to promote the understanding and conservation of the Borough's iconic birds through education and outreach.	ANDBC, BTO, RSPB
22	Raise awareness of Swift nesting habitat in our urban environment with the wider public and in all relevant sections of the Council. Provide training in Swift identification and adequate habitat requirements	ANDBC, BTO, RSPB, NI Swift Group
23	Distribute guidance on habitat management that will benefit each of our priority bird species	ANDBC, BTO, RSPB, Ulster Wildlife
24	Promote semi-natural grassland biodiversity through local events, and Council publicity, hold lowland meadow identification and management training courses.	DAERA, ANDBC, Ulster Wildlife
25	Implement the STAND4TREES initiative by engaging local groups and communities	ANDBC, Woodland Trust, Ulster Wildlife
Theme 2. Research & Monitoring		
26	Investigate the status of newt and lizard populations at key selected Council owned sites and explore the possibility of species translocation.	ANDBC, DAERA, UWT
27	Log 'Actions for Pollinators (www.pollinators.ie) to aid the tracking of resources in the landscape.	ANDBC, UWT, Buglife
28	Commission an invasive species audit of Council owned land and produce a Council Invasive Species Management Strategy; to include a 'traffic light' system to prioritise control of certain species	ANDBC

29	Commission a survey of the distribution, extent and condition of Council hedgerow networks. Review council hedgerow management practices for the benefits of biodiversity. Identify areas for hedgerow enhancement and establishment particularly where habitats can be connected.	DAERA, ANDBC
30	Commission a desktop and field-based survey of woodland and parkland on key Council-owned sites including invertebrates and lower plants (lichens, bryophytes).	ANDBC
31	Commission a biodiversity audit, to include a bryophyte and lichen survey, of all Council owned graveyards and cemeteries to guide conservation management	ANDBC, DAERA, BBS, BLS
32	Support the Ulster Wildlife Trust (UWT) NI Barn Owl Project, to include the surveying of Barn Owl hotspots on council owned land.	ANDBC, Ulster Wildlife
Theme 3. Land Management		
33	Identify and declare Local Nature Reserves at appropriate sites in the Borough and manage accordingly.	ANDBC
34	Commission conservation management plans for key Council owned sites detailing prescriptions to ensure the relevant features remain in good condition.	ANDBC
35	Encourage the concept of green walls/roofs where appropriate on new Council buildings.	ANDBC
36	Secure funding to commission a feasibility study exploring the potential of a local nature recovery network demonstration project on the Comber River (and its tributaries to connect fragmented habitat)	ANDBC, DAERA, Conservation and wildlife NGO's, Community Groups
37	Secure funding to commission a feasibility study to explore the options for habitat restoration and management at Laurel Bank and Crawfordsburn Glen.	ANDBC, DAERA, Conservation and wildlife NGO's, Local Community & Community Groups

38	Control excessive gorse growth <i>Ulex</i> sp. on the rocky higher ground of Whitespots Country Park. Thin planted trees at the site to create a more open and biodiverse environment.	ANDBC, DAERA
39	Commission management plan for Cloughey sand dunes outlining conservation actions to effect favourable condition	ANDBC, DAERA, Local Community Groups
40	Create and install features in existing and newly created meadows, to benefit invertebrates including bug hotels and beetle and bee banks.	ANDBC, UWT, Buglife, DFI Roads
41	Avoid removing deadwood from woodlands unless there is over-riding health and safety reasons. Ensure this is incorporated into the management plans for all council managed woodlands.	ANDBC
42	Look at opportunities to create new ponds across the Borough at suitable locations	ANDBC, Local Community Groups
43	Restore the woodland and ponds habitats at Strickland Glen for the benefit of biodiversity	ANDBC, UWT, local community groups, schools
44	Erect and maintain existing and newly installed bat boxes within key Council-owned woodland and parkland sites where suitable trees and stone structures exist, and along river banks within close proximity to ponds, lakes and canals.	ANDBC, NI Bat Group
45	Restore or plant new native species-rich hedgerows for biodiversity with emphasis on connecting woodlands and other habitats. These hedgerows should act as demonstration sites for good practice hedgerow management.	ANDBC, UWT
46	Identify suitable sites to install swift boxes on Council buildings.	ANDBC, BTO, RSPB, NI Swift Group
47	Identify and erect barn owl nesting boxes key locations within the Borough	ANDBC, Ulster Wildlife
48	Continue to manage and monitor lowland meadows under the Council Rewilding Initiative and increase the extent of species-rich wildflower meadow habitat by creating new meadows and expanding the area of existing meadows, in both urban and rural locations	ANDBC
49	Reduce the frequency of amenity grassland cutting per year at selected Council amenity areas including around sports facilities.	ANDBC
50	Establish a network of native seed donor sites for habitat creation and restoration. Ensure that ENSCONET Seed Collecting Manual For Wild Species is utilised.	ANDBC, True Harvest Seeds, Ecosseeds
51	Encourage the use of local provenance seed by holding workshops on seed harvesting, collection and storage.	ANDBC, True Harvest Seeds, Ecosseeds

52	Reduce and ultimately cease the use of peat on Council-owned land.	ANDBC
53	Ensure all built structures and mature trees on Council owned sites are adequately scoped for the presence of bats prior to any works (even minor works such as limb / ivy removal) occur.	ANDBC
54	Explore the feasibility of grazing as a means of managing grasslands	ANDBC, UFU, NFFN, Local Farming Community
55	Explore the feasibility of providing wild bird cover for farmland birds	ANDBC, BTO, RSPB, Local Farming Community
56	Reduce, replace and where possible eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers on council land	ANDBC
57	Increase accessible woodland (% of population with access to a 2ha+ wood within 500m) towards UK average of 21.1% by 2032. Increase Woodland Creation (% population requiring new woodland to be able to access a 20ha+ wood within 4km) towards UK average of 12.1% by 2030	ANDBC, landowners, Woodland Trust
58	Ensure a collection of diverse tree colonies through the planting of native trees across the Borough.	ANDBC
59	Engage with all landowners in relation to the eutrophication issue at the ponds located in Whitespots Country Park	ANDBC, DAERA, Private Landowners
60	Provide funding to create community wildlife gardens with pollinator-friendly wildflower areas	ANDBC
61	Develop an ambitious planting plan starting with the planting of 160,000 native trees across the Borough with further increased planting to contribute to regional and national targets	ANDBC
62	Investigate the potential for incorporating buffer zones around ponds and rivers on council owned land.	ANDBC, DAERA, Community Groups
63	Commission a resurvey of SLNCIs in the Council area	ANDBC
Theme 4. Building Partnerships		
64	Promote biodiversity objectives in the management of golf courses and encourage all golf courses in the Borough to secure the GEO certified label.	ANDBC, Local Golf Clubs
65	Engage with local businesses to encourage involvement in local biodiversity projects.	ANDBC, private businesses

66	Engage with local operators of business parks and supermarkets to encourage biodiversity enhancements.	ANDBC, business owners
67	Engage with local quarries in conservation actions for key habitats and species in conjunction with conservation NGOs.	ANDBC, MPA NI
68	Engage with local residents, businesses and schools to establish Swift nest boxes on their buildings / premises.	ANDBC, BTO, RSPB, NI Swift Group, Local residents, schools and businesses
69	Work in Partnership promoting good practice in local provenance native woodland management.	ANDBC
70	Work in partnership to produce a Rivers and Streams biodiversity education pack	ANDBC, DAERA (WMU), Rivers Agency
71	Support a local biodiversity partnership collaboration between Camphill Community, Royal Belfast Golfclub and local schools	ANDBC, Camphill Community, Royal Belfast Golfclub, local schools.
72	Work in Partnership to highlight Irish hare identification and habitat requirements.	ANDBC, Ulster Wildlife
73	Engage with and support local biodiversity partnerships between Council and other land owners to increase the extent of land managed for biodiversity.	ANDBC, private landowners
74	Work in partnership with relevant statutory bodies, NGO's and local groups to support the conservation of the red squirrel and pine marten and identify road mortality black spots where warning signs can be erected.	ANDBC, DAERA, North Down Red Squirrel and Pine Marten Group, Ulster Wildlife
75	Work in Partnership with DfI to manage key roadside verges for pollinators	ANDBC, DfI Roads Service
76	Improve the value of urban green spaces for biodiversity by setting up 'Friends of Groups at selected sites	ANDBC, Local Community Groups
77	Engage with local groups to help deliver community led biodiversity related projects.	ANDBC, Local Community Groups

Unclassified

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ITEM 9

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	09 November 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks & Cemeteries
Date of Report	25 October 2022
File Reference	PCA57
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	Cemetery Pricing
Attachments	Appendix Cemetery Pricing 2023-24

Ards and North Down Borough Council is responsible for the management and maintenance of twelve active cemeteries, two closed cemeteries and seven historical cemeteries.

Members may be aware that Council Cemetery pricing was last increased by 2% in April 2022 however there had been no increase in the 2021/22 financial year.

Currently the Cemetery department is operating at an annual net cost to the ratepayer of approximately £600,000 excluding utilities, capital costs and general maintenance.

The following report outlines the applicable charges relating to the Cemeteries Service across the Borough. In line with the budget setting process, it is proposed to apply a 10.00% increase to the cemetery charges for 2023/24, rounded to the nearest £1 for each charge. This is above the 5% already submitted by the service for the estimates process, a 5% is also submitted for information. Members are reminded that the current rate of inflation is 10.1%.

Unclassified

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Officers have bench marked the pricing across neighbouring Councils and in several of the pricing categories Ards and North Down are significantly lower in the cost of burial provision.

In addition, Officers would suggest that members consider an annual inflationary increase to be applied to the Scale of Charges using a percentage uplift based on the October 'Office of National Statistics Consumer Prices Index (CPI): All Items Index' s from 1st January each year.

The table in the Appendix sets out the current charges together with the proposed charges for 2022/23.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council adopt and approve the charges as outlined above and set out in the Appendix and also approve the annual percentage uplift for subsequent years to be in line with the October Consumer Price Index (CPI) applicable from the start of each year.

Unclassified

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	09 November 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Parks & Cemeteries
Date of Report	25 October 2022
File Reference	CW4
Legislation	N/A
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Groomsport Paddling Pool / Splash Pad Play Upgrade
Attachments	Appendix Amended Groomsport Play Upgrade Designs

Members will recall in September that an update was given on the play areas that will undergo refurbishment this financial year, including the proposed upgrade to the paddling pools at Groomsport to splash pads. A proposal was subsequently agreed at Council as follows:

"That a full report detailing the maintenance issues with Groomsport Paddling Pool and costs to repair these issues is brought to Committee and that an assurance is given that a paddling pool area is retained."

There have been issues with drainage and leakage at the paddling pool in Groomsport so given that there was additional budget available as a result of the Rural Development Funding, it was determined that the existing paddling pool could be converted into a splash pad area, similar to that at Pickie, providing a significant upgrade to the facility.

Unclassified

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The Council's Property and Assets Department have encountered leakages due to a faulty valve, as well as several instances of surface cracking. Full resurfacing has been carried out in the pool in the last four years, as well as ongoing localised surface repairs and resurfacing.

Currently there is a leak, believed to be related to the old drainage pipe work below the pool. This could potentially require excavating through the pool surface to repair or replace the old pipework. There are also additional further localised surface repairs to undertake. On top of the ongoing repairs there is regular reactive and planned power washing, and cleaning.

Parks and Cemeteries also clean the pools and change the water on a weekly basis with power washing occurring generally at the start of the season prior to the first filling of the pool for the summer season. Below is breakdown of the costs associated with the pool over the last 3 years.

Groomspout Paddling Pool								
PARKS								
	Hours	Staff	Rate	Occ	Per Week	Season		
Filling	4	2	£ 21.78	2	£ 348.48	26	£ 9,060.48	per year
Checking	0.4	1	£ 21.78	7	£ 60.98	26	£ 1,585.58	per year
							<u>£ 10,646.06</u>	per year
PROPERTY & ASSETS							<u>£ 31,938.19</u>	over 3 years
Repairs							£ 2,000.00	over 3 years
Remedial drainage works							£ 3,000.00	over 3 years
Resurfacing							£ 5,000.00	in last 3 years
Cleaning							£ 1,100.00	over 3 years
Water Bills							<u>£ 660.00</u>	over 3 years
							<u>£ 44,698.19</u>	over 3 years

Following the discussion at the September Committee and Council meeting, the contracted playground designer, Garden Escapes, was asked to revise the designs to retain a pool area and remodel the splash pad design previously submitted to work within the allocated budget - attached is the revised design. The splash pad area is fully accessible to those with mobility issues and an area of pool is retained. The contractors will, as part of the works, resolve the valve/pipework issue and resurface the pool. The design attached may be subject to change in relation to the Splash Pad elements (jets etc) depending on confirmation of technical suitability, following exploration works.

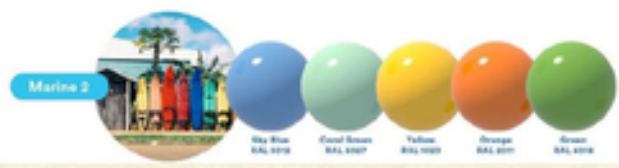
RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the attached amended designs, and that Officers can progress implementation.

SPLASHPAD COMPONENTS

#	ITEM	QTY	FLOW GPM	FLOW LPM
1	VOR 7389 Aquilon Flower No 3	1	n/a	7.6
2	VOR 7512 Jet Stream No 1	1	n/a	9.5
3	VOR 7773 Silhouette No 2	1	n/a	19
TOTAL AVERAGE WATER FLOW		3	n/a	36.1

3. Vortex 7389 Aquilon Flower No 3
 2. Vortex 7512 Jet Stream No 1
 3. Vortex 7773 Silhouette
 Activator ballard with position activation and timeout when not used is also included.
 Equipment is to be provided with a Marine 2 colour palette as shown.
 As the splashpad is located adjacent to the seafront, the play items will be manufactured in 316-grade stainless steel. For additional protection, the above ground features are also finished with a coloured thermosetting polyester powdercoat finish as standard.
 PLEASE NOTE that our design and quotation assumes that a mains water supply and electrical supply is available immediately adjacent to the site, it is the client's responsibility to provide these supplies.



Splash Pad Area:
 The splash pad area is contained within two oval spaces, divided by a small existing bridge between the two, total area of the two splash zones is approximately 64 square metres.

The existing splashpad area will remain, the levels in the large section will be raised to allow for the installation of equipment anchors and the finished rubber surfacing of the new splash pad will finish roughly flush with the existing concrete surround.

The small section will remain as a sunken paddling pool with a small jet and balance drain to allow temporary ponding of water and a rubber surface like the large area.

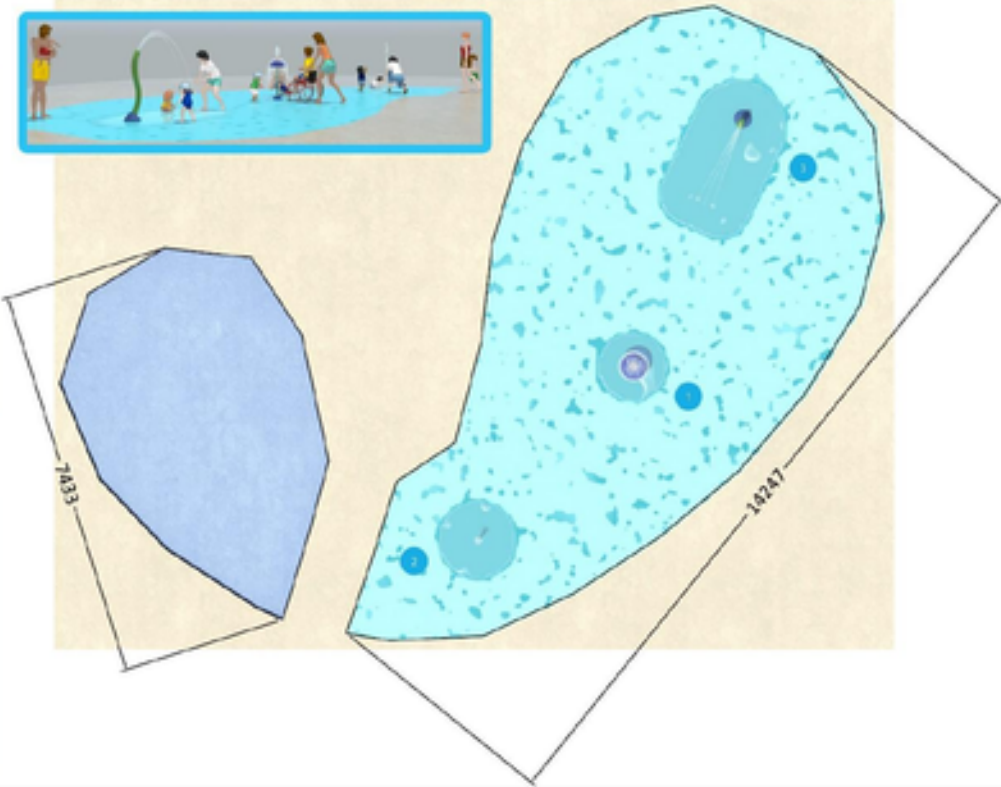
Safety Surfacing:
 Conica Coriply AP rubber safety surfacing, full colour (PDM), is to be installed to both splash pad areas as shown.

Surfacing thickness will vary to meet the five fall heights requirements of each piece of play equipment, as per current EN1176 & 1177 safety standards.

The colour scheme(s) and/or theme(s) shown on the drawings are for illustration purposes only and can be amended to reflect any desirable colour scheme or theme as required.

Remaining Surfacing:
 All remaining areas will remain in their current condition, with any disturbed areas being reinstated on completion.

Fencing:
 Fencing and gates, if required, are to be installed by others.



Unclassified

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	09 November 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Environmental Health Protection and Development.
Date of Report	21 October 2022
File Reference	CW45
Legislation	Various
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Environmental Health Protection & Development Annual Activity Report 2021-2022
Attachments	None

Under the Councils scheme of delegation and in order to allow for timely service delivery, the application of legislation relating to Environmental Health matters has been delegated to officers to implement. A condition of this delegated authority is that related activity is reported to Council from time to time. The following is the report for the 2021-2022 year and includes such delegated activity.

1. Summary of Environmental Health Protection and Development Service Activity 2021-22

The role of the Environmental Health Protection and Development Department is to contribute to ensuring a better quality of life for all. From the Health Protection perspective, the service monitors, advises and enforces compliance with Food, Public Health, Pollution, Health and Safety at Work, Consumer Safety and Housing legislation and standards to protect the public from physical, chemical and biological agents, and conditions that may cause ill health or harm.

During the 2021-22 year the service faced significant challenges including redeployment of staff into Covid enforcement, a significant increase in noise

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complaints, increased number of new food business, catching up on works not progressed during 2020-21 and significant staff recruitment and retention issues. Regardless, the performance of the team remained positive with the majority of KPI's, and targets being reached.

1.1 Functions within the department

The range of statutory and non-statutory functions delivered on behalf of the Council are as follows:

1. Food Control (including food manufacturing and fisheries).
 2. Consumer Protection. (Safety of consumer goods)
 3. Health and Safety at Work
 - Caravan Site Licensing
 - A wide range of commercial premises
 - Petroleum Licensing
 - Sunbeds
 - Fireworks
 4. Pollution Control
 - Noise
 - Air quality
1. Public Health (nuisance)
 - Pest Control
 - Private rented Housing
 2. Health and Wellbeing / Health initiatives
 - Affordable Warmth.
 - Tobacco Control
 - Home Safety
 - Community Planning lead for Age Friendly, Community Resuscitation,
 - Health Development

1.2 Service Provision

Service provision includes

- service requests,
- planned inspections & proactive visits to commercial premises and
- wellbeing intervention activities.

1.2.1 Service Requests

Service requests relate to individuals' requests for assistance for example in relation to pest control, or when the activities of one party cause an adverse effect on another for example in relation to nuisance and pollution.

The number of service requests by category 2021-22.

Department Function	Number of Requests
Pest Control	720

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General Environmental Health	712
Food Hygiene and Standards	661
Pollution Control	936
Private Tenancies Complaints	169
Health and Safety	439
Consumer Protection	25
Tobacco Control	2
Caravan/Petroleum Licensing	4
Total	3668

In addition to the above, 89 property inspections were carried out under the Private Tenancies Order to have homes assessed against the fitness standard.

A total of 93 statutory notices were issued under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011, to secure environmental improvements and abatement of nuisances.

Officers responded to 323 consultations from the Councils planning department on planning matters that could potentially affect public or environmental health.

The performance indicator target for a response to service requests is to 94% within two working days. For the year 2021/22 the target was achieved.

The number of service requests received was 14% lower than for 2020/21, but still markedly higher (30%) than pre-Covid levels.

1.3 Planned Inspection and Proactive visits to commercial premises

There are currently 4420 operating commercial premises on the Environmental Health database. During the year 1253 (28%) of these premises were visited to assess compliance with legislation, to educate business operators on new legislation and requirements and to obtain samples. In order to reduce the burden on business many of these visits were carried out concurrently with officers assessing a range of legislative compliance - for example food hygiene, food standards and tobacco control addressed by an officer during one visit. Businesses and premises are risk assessed to ensure that those which might present the greatest potential risk to public health are visited most frequently.

2. Area specific performance

2.1 Food Control

The Food Control Service continued to meet the requirements of the FSA's Recovery Plan in 21/22. The Recovery Plan was devised to ensure that resources are targeted where they add the greatest value, such as identifying risks with new businesses and ensuring more routine operation of the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

In addition to the routine inspection of food premises and the reactive work in dealing with complaints and notification of food poisoning incidents, a food sampling programme was undertaken. Food sampling is an essential and effective tool in

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ensuring that consumers are provided with safe food and the information to enable them to make informed choices about food purchases.

2.1.1 Food Hygiene

- Inspected all category A premises
- Investigated 35 food poisoning identifications on behalf of the Public Health Agency
- Reacted to and actioned 91 complaints regarding premises hygiene.
- Collected 623 food samples for microbiological analysis.
- 69.4% of new businesses received an onsite inspection.
- Served 5 Hygiene Improvement Notices.
- Served 1 Remedial Action Notice.
- 2 Food businesses voluntary closed.

2.1.2 Food Standards

- 16 A rated premises inspected for food standards.
- Collected 345 food samples for chemical analysis.
- Investigated 139 complaints regarding allergens, composition, and labelling irregularities.
- Conducted a fish speciation survey to identify if substitution was being carried out.
- Mailshot sent out to 679 premises outlining the legal requirements for labelling foods that are prepacked for direct sale.
- 183 Businesses contacted either via email or mailshot regarding reformulation of cheesecake workshop hosted by the Food Standards Agency.

2.2 Consumer Protection

The consumer protection team provides a support and advisory service to local manufacturers, suppliers, and distributors of non-food consumer products in respect of their safety. The activities that have been undertaken include:

- Populated a database with details of all known local manufacturers, importers, and first-time distributors (and most retail and other outlets).
- Planned a targeted programme of work on a quarterly basis
- Participated in the work of the Northern Ireland Consumer Protection Group (NICPG) and provided a delegate to their subgroup working on links with Economic Development and the production of a training resource and on-line information pack for businesses.
- Disseminated information and advice provided through NICPG various areas such as product recall, e-cigarettes, hired goods, second-hand goods.
- Investigated complaints.
- Provided advice following requests from local manufacturers of toys, golf buggies, upholstered furniture, and cosmetics.

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2.3 Health and Safety, Caravan Site and Petroleum Licensing

The responsibility for both advice in relation to and enforcement of the Coronavirus restriction regulations fell largely to the H&S and Licensing officers with the knock-on effect being that focus was shifted from planned inspections of premises based on risk ratings allocated on the Tascomi data management system to dealing with complaints. Queries and requests for advice in relation to this novel legislation. The focus in 2021-22 was on assisting open businesses to comply with social distancing requirements; monitoring and advising closed businesses; and issuing advice on operating safely.

While there were no lockdowns in this period, restriction regulations were regularly changing. This led to a high demand from the service in relation to explaining the Covid rules to both businesses and members of the public. Officers from the department helped develop advice and guidance for businesses at a local, regional, and national level to assist them, in mitigating the Covid pandemic.

2.3.1 Health and Safety

A total number of 2654 premises were registered for health and safety on 31 March 2022, and 380 visits were completed during the year. The breakdown of these visits is as follows.

196	Visits in relation to Covid-19 requirements
35	H&S Inspections and Revisits
10	Visits to investigate accidents
6	Visits in response to requests for advice
10	Visits in response to complaints about premises or work activities
13	Sunbed Premises Inspections
36	Caravan Site Inspections and Revisits
71	Petroleum Site Licensing inspections and revisits
3	Firework and MSER site visits

Visits to assess compliance with general Health and Safety legislation were impacted by response to service requests in relation to Covid-19, with restrictions being relaxed from February 2022, and replaced with ongoing guidance.

While 7 Improvement Notices were served in relation to serious contraventions or continuing non-compliance, no Prohibition Notices were issued, and no prosecutions instituted in respect of issues presenting a serious risk to health or safety.

2.3.2 Caravan Site Licensing

This involves an annual assessment visit to each of the 26 Caravan Sites located throughout the Borough, and revisits as necessary. Officers also complete a Health and Safety inspection of sites where this is due. In 2021-22, 26 inspections and 10 revisits were undertaken.

2.3.3 Petroleum Licensing

During this period 49 inspections and 22 revisits were completed of filling stations located within the borough in order to ensure that licences were issued in a timely manner. Health and Safety Inspections of the premises have been completed in a

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single combined visit where appropriate.

2.3.4 Sunbed Test Purchase Exercises

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic test purchase exercises were not carried out however 14 Sunbed premises were visited in relation to compliance with the requirements of both the Sunbeds Act (NI) 2011 and Covid-19 restrictions.

2.3.5 Firework Licence Applications

Officers are warranted by the Department of Justice Firearms and Explosives Branch (FEB) and provide comments and where necessary additional conditions to the FEB, who in turn issue Licences for fireworks display if officers are content that it is safe to do so.

Nine Firework Licence applications were assessed by officers for displays held within the Borough. This is significantly less than the number assessed in previous years, most likely due to restriction on gatherings during the pandemic. Officers also inspected one premises where Fireworks or flares were stored and which was registered under the Manufacture and Storage of Explosives Regulations.

2.4 Pollution Control

2.4.1 Noise

765 complaints about noise were received in 2021/22. This was a further rise over the significant increase in complaints recorded between 2019/20 and 2020/21. While part of the increase can be attributed to the fact that, prior to 2020 complaints relating to dog barking were received by the Neighbourhood and Environment team in the first instance, this alone does not account for the sustained level of complaints. It is possible that this may be due in part to impacts of the pandemic, including working from home arrangements, or particularly in relation to dog barking and the subsequent return to the workplace.

100% of the complaints that are made receive a response. Of the 765 complaints received approximately 39% wanted to proceed after their initial contact. Complaints may not progress past initial information and advice for a number of reasons including; where a disturbance is reported as a side issue to a wider neighbour dispute or a reciprocal complaint; where complainants are unwilling to provide their details or engage in the necessary procedures; where complainants are reluctant to proceed fearing a negative reaction from noise sources or on social media, or where complainants are open to approaching the source directly. At the stage of a formal investigation, complainants may again choose not to proceed if they are not prepared to collect the evidence required or appear as a witness in court.

Noise Abatement Notices

Of the 113 complaints formally investigated, nine abatement notices were served with other continuing investigations leading to further notices outside of the reporting period. An abatement notice is served in all cases where a statutory nuisance is established, and legal proceedings consequently instituted, if continued disturbance is reported and breach of notice is established.

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Of the abatement notices served seven related to dogs barking excessively, one related to music and amplified noise from a Public House and one to loud music, singing and shouting from a domestic property.

No legal proceedings were instituted during the period in relation to noise nuisance in breach of a Noise Abatement Notice.

2.4.2 Air Quality

This is a shared service with Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council. Local air quality is monitored at 16 sites in the borough, with annual reports being submitted to DAERA as required by legislation. A successful grant application was made to DAERA for staff resource and equipment maintenance. Additional funds were also received in relation to the 'Engine Off, Prevent the Cough' campaign which aims to reduce vehicle emissions outside local primary schools.

Monitoring is also undertaken in relation to radiation levels in the borough, via sampling of foodstuffs and a permanent monitoring station in Portavogie. There were no incidents of concern during the year.

2.5 Public Health

Service Requests

Much of the work of the Public Health and Housing service unit relates to service requests from residents. For the year 2021/22, Officers responded to 1601 service requests relating to pest control, housing/drainage issues and neighbourhood nuisance (excluding noise).

The most common types of service request relate to pest control, with rodent and flying insect complaints being received in the greatest numbers. The service provides investigation and advice, which ensures that the root cause of pest problems can be properly identified, and effective solutions can be made. Support is also provided to Officers carrying out the food hygiene function when assistance is required in relation to pest control matters.

Other types of service requests received included neighbourhood complaints in relation to housing defects, malodour, smoke, and problems with drainage/flooding.

2.6 Private Rented Housing

Regulation of the private rented housing sector is carried out, primarily through the enforcement of the Private Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 and ancillary regulations. Officers inspect rented properties to ensure they are fit for habitation, free from disrepair and that they are not in a condition that is prejudicial to health. During 2021/22, the service unit issued 78 Certificates of Fitness, while 11 properties were found to be unfit, and Notices of Refusal were served on the landlords. Housing officers also worked to ensure that landlords comply with tenancy deposit and landlord registration requirements. The legislation was reviewed during the year with the aim of correcting current weaknesses in its wording; this will aid regulation but will likely increase demand for the services. Housing officers also proactively search for properties which may require a Certificate of Fitness to ensure that residents in the private rented sector are living in acceptable housing. At any given

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time, Officers will be investigating 75-100 properties to determine if there are any breaches of housing legislation.

Notices Issued and Prosecutions

84 notices were served using the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (NI) 2011, following service requests or housing standards inspections.

There were 3 successful prosecutions during this financial year:

One landlord was prosecuted for failing to apply for a certificate of fitness for a property. Incurring a £100 fine, and the Council was awarded £250 costs.

One landlord was prosecuted for failing to comply with a Notice of Unfitness. Incurring a £200 fine, and the Council was awarded £250 costs.

One landlord was fined £200 for failing to register with the NI Landlord Registration Scheme, with the Council awarded £150 costs.

2.7 Health Development and Wellbeing

The department supports the Take Five Steps to Wellbeing principles which develop public health and wellbeing both within the organisation and externally. This includes initiatives to enhance the lives of the fuel poor, the safety of young and old in the home, mental health, and other issues.

During the 2021-22-year partnership work with Community Planning progressed, including supporting the Community Recovery process from the pandemic and rebuilding services and operations to as close to pre-pandemic levels as possible.

2.7.1 Affordable Warmth

The Affordable Warmth Scheme has been designed to target support at those households which need to spend 25% or more of their income on heating and lighting their home. It is open to both owner occupiers and tenants from the private rented sector with a household income of less than £23,000. Full grant is available to owner occupiers and landlords make a 50% contribution towards the cost of the energy efficiency improvement work.

Working from targeted lists, the number of referrals that could be made each month was set at 30 for 2021/22 but this was not always easy to achieve. There was a reluctance from some householders to have visits; and although covid safe measures were introduced, with enhanced technical support, many still refused to have contractors attend to complete the measures once approved.

In 2021/22 the NIHE statistics for the Ards and North Down area were as follows: -

Referrals to NIHE by Council	342
Properties Visited by NIHE	306
Approved Works	231
Value of Approved Works	£861,913.35
Measures Installed	392
Homes Improved	241

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Grant Expenditure 21/22	£843,213
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The management of this Scheme remains challenging due to decreasing annual budgets and changing targets. The concerns of Members and Officers are regularly raised both at meetings and in writing with the Department of Communities (DfC).

2.7.2 Tobacco Control

The Tobacco Control function is currently operated as a shared service between Ards and North Down Lisburn and Castlereagh and Newry, Mourne and Down. During the Covid-19 pandemic the approach to inspections was risk based with an education focus and written warnings were issued rather than fixed penalty notices. There was a marked fall in compliance rates compared to previous years. In Ards and North Down, 713 inspections were carried out with 304 written warnings subsequently issued for non-compliance. The TCO also signposted 154 ANDBC premises to smoking cessation services and worked with 711 businesses to promote smoking policies.

107 Tobacco Retailers were visited in ANDBC to promote compliance with age of sale legislation and ensure compliance with all tobacco related legislation. Five written warnings were issued for offences under this legislation. Advice was provided to over 115 premises on the new e-cigarettes age restricted sales legislation.

A new initiative working with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) commenced in Quarter 3. Under Community Planning a Community Resuscitation Group was established to promote the chain of survival across the Borough.

Officers promoting the NIAS Regional Registration programme for Defibrillators by assisting with citing location of these devices for use across Northern Ireland and provide signposting information to relevant premises regarding how to register their device. To date 109 premises have been contacted.

2.7.3 Home Safety

The Home Safety Scheme is operated as a shared service by Ards and North Down Borough Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh and the Down portion of Newry, Mourne and Down. Target visits to priority groups (older people, children under 5, those with disabilities/vulnerabilities) are agreed with Public Health Agency (PHA) who co-fund the service. A total of 794 home safety checks were carried out with 338 in Ards and North Down, (212 Older Persons & 126 under 5s) exceeding the PHA target of 270. Home Safety Officers provided over 1498 pieces of equipment to older people in ANDBC and 1201 to households with children under the age of 5 during these Home Safety Checks.

Home Safety Officers made a total of 221 onward referrals (133 of which were from Ards and North Down) to other organisations and departments.

PHA and PCSP funding facilitated the regional production of a range of videos and accompanying teacher packs covering BeeSafe topics such as internet safety, water

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safety, transport & road safety, farm safety. 17 schools availed of the virtual sessions offers with positive feedback on the approach. Social media campaigns were used to highlight regional safety messages including burns and scalds and button battery dangers.

2.7.4 Age Friendly

Having committed to achieving World Health Organisation's Age Friendly status in October 2017, work was undertaken to develop a Strategy and Action Plan 2019 - 2022 for the council area through the establishment of an Age Friendly Alliance (AFA). Much of the work was still at an early stage when the Covid-19 pandemic arrived and many of the partner organisations, including the Council, had changes in priorities and personnel over the next 12 months as resources were diverted to address the pandemic. In 2021/22 the PHA agreed to provide funding for an Age Friendly Coordinator AFC in every council area with the AFC in Ards and North Down starting 1 February 2022.

The AFC spent time connecting with partner organisations and other AFCs throughout the UK and Ireland. Key priorities over the next 5 years were agreed with PHA and short-, medium- and long-term targets were set to achieve these.

2.7.5 Health Development

Mind Body and Business

Working closely with Economic Development, the Mind, Body Business (MBB) project supports local businesses to put the health and wellbeing of their staff higher up on the business agenda. 28 business signed up to MBB in 2021-22, exceeding the target of 10. They were provided with an employee/lead officer health & wellbeing box containing information, games and ideas including a step challenge. The MBB website was kept updated and promoted, with e-zines and emails to connect with businesses and promote activities and health messages. MBB business cards were produced and distributed to promote programme, website, activities and fitness videos.

A survey was undertaken to assess the needs of businesses and employees, to inform the MBB programme. Further promotion of the exercise videos produced by MBB in 2020/21 took place to encourage those working from home/sitting at desks to be more active. Free health checks were also offered to businesses alongside a selection of online health webinars with an interest/focus for the Business Community. Accredited Mental Health First Aider courses to support local businesses were also delivered, recognising the increased need to focus on mental health following the pandemic.

Employee Health and Wellbeing

Health and Wellbeing also lead on Employee Health and Wellbeing, delivering over 20 different events and activities to improve staff morale, encourage self-awareness of health issues and promote the Take 5 messages.

In 2021/22 there were 8 creative workshops covering cookery, ceramics, Christmas wreaths and wood carving with almost 100 staff taking part. Wear it Pink and

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Christmas Jumper days raised over £270 alongside donations to Woman's Aid, Foodbanks, Mission Christmas toy appeal and Silver Santa.

107 employees under 50 were vaccinated as part of the flu prevention programme and 70 staff undertook Action Cancer Health Checks with a further 30 attending sessions with qualified Leisure and Fitness Instructors in Ards Blair Maine.

Men's Health Week was well supported with the usual activities of football, craft, lunches and newspapers. Two employees did Grow a Mo in Movember to raise awareness of Men's health and 17 more undertook the Move for Movember Challenge. Over 30 joined in the Step Challenge and all staff received winter road safety information, world mental health day communications and competitions and lots of articles in News AND Info.

The launch of the new Employee Health and Wellbeing website STAY Well took place, with all staff given a pen with the website details and a Kit Kat to take a break and go online to access it. The site, in association with the Local Government Staff Commission, is an excellent source of reputable health and wellbeing information. It highlights all the key health campaigns throughout the year and also provides space to advertise in house events and an online booking system to sign up.

3. Summary

During the 2021-22 year the service faced significant challenges including redeployment of staff into Covid enforcement, a significant increase in noise complaints, increased number of new food business, catching up on works not progressed during 2020-21 and significant staff recruitment and retention issues. Regardless, the performance of the team met the majority of KPI's and targets and had a significant positive impact on the community planning outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes the above report.

ITEM 12

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ARDS AND NORTH DOWN PEACE PLUS PARTNERSHIP**PEACEPLUS PARTNERSHIP****Thursday 8 September 2022**

A meeting of the Ards and North Down Borough Council PEACEPLUS Partnership was held in Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex, Newtownards on the above date at 5:30pm.

Present:

In the Chair: Councillor Robert Adair

Elected Members:

Alderman Robert Gibson
Alderman Stephen McIlveen
Councillor Joe Boyle
Councillor Richard Smart

Statutory Agencies:

Jim Dunbar – Education Authority
Fiona Heffron – Police Service NI
Lynda Vladeanu – SE Health & Social Care Trust

Social Partners

Cathy Polley – Ards Community Network
Sandra Henderson – County Down Rural Network
Marianne Kennerley – Business Sector
Verity Peet – Voluntary Sector
Stephen Hollywood – BME
Alison Blayney – Women's Sector
John Caldwell - Climate Action Organisation
Katy Radford – Good Relations Organisation
Dorothy Beattie – Older People

Officers in Attendance

Jan Nixey (Head of Community and Culture)
Nikki Dorrian (Externally funded Programmes Manager)
Joanne Brown (PEACE Officer)
Linda Bradshaw (PEACE Finance Officer)
Rebekah Murdoch (PEACE Assistant Officer)

Apologies

Graeme Bannister - Director of Community and Wellbeing
Councillor Philip Smith
Councillor Barry McKee
Councillor Karen Douglas (The Mayor)
Councillor Lorna McAlpine
Alderman Deborah Girvan

Councillor Eddie Thompson
Owen Brady – NI Housing Executive
Esther Millar – Education Authority Youth Service
Joshua McCreedy - Youth Voice
Victoria Morris - Youth Voice
Stuart Buchanan - North Down YMCA

Tea/Coffee and refreshments were offered to the members present in advance of the meeting commencing.

Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

Report on the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair was tabled (copy previously circulated).

Article 5 of the Partnership Agreement, requires that a Chair and Vice Chair be appointed for a 12-month term and rotated amongst the political parties, commencing with the largest party.

As stated in the Agreement, a Chair shall be an elected member appointed from all the Partnership Members. The Vice Chair shall be a social partner, also nominated by any member of Partnership.

If more than one nomination is received for either position, then a vote, based on a show of hands, will take place.

It was recommended that nominations were sought for the appointment of a Chair and Vice Chair of the PEACEPLUS Partnership.

The elected members present nominated Councillor Robert Adair to be the Chairperson.

Alderman Robert Gibson proposed, seconded by Alderman Stephen McIlveen that Councillor Robert Adair be nominated for the position.

There being no further nominations Councillor Adair took the position of Chair.

It was agreed on the proposal of Alderman Stephen McIlveen, seconded by Katy Radford that Cathy Polley be nominated for the position of Vice Chair.

There being no further nominations Cathy Polley was appointed Vice Chair of the PEACEPLUS Partnership nominated for the appointment of Vice Chairperson.

Councillor Robert Adair expressed his deepest sympathy to Councillor Phillip Smith and his family on the passing of his mother.

Introductions to the PEACEPLUS Members and Secretariat

Councillor Robert Adair introduced the PEACEPLUS secretariat in attendance to the members introduced Therese Hogg from Blu Zebra who was appointed in partnership

with Venture International and Locus by SEUPB to the PEACEPLUS Consortium as the leading consultants to assist Councils in the development of PEACEPLUS.

Minutes of PEACEPLUS Partnership meeting held on Thursday 28th July 2022

Minutes of PEACEPLUS Partnership meeting held on 28th July 2022 were tabled (copy previously circulated).

It was **agreed** on the proposal of Councillor Joe Boyle, seconded by Katy Radford that the minutes be adopted.

Agreed

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Update on filling of PEACEPLUS Vacancies

Report on the filling of PEACEPLUS Partnership vacancies was tabled (copy previously circulated).

As previously advised, eleven places are allocated to Elected Members on the basis of d'Hondt, plus one - to be an Independent Member or Single Member Party (to be agreed amongst the Independents and Single Member Parties). These appointments will be reviewed following the Council Elections in 2023 to ensure the appointments reflect the make-up of the new Council. It was agreed that a panel of Elected Members would recruit the Social Partners following an open, transparent and robust application process.

Eleven places are also allocated to Social Partners representing the sectors across the two social partner pillars. Appointment had been made following a recruitment exercise in July 2022 facilitated by the PEACE team and Heads Together HR Consultants, with advice and support from the Blu Zebra Consortium. Criteria was applied to ensure the required Pillars were represented i.e., Geographic (DEA representation), PEACE PLUS Target Groups and Section 75/underrepresented and marginalised groups.

It was further agreed that where gaps still existed, a further recruitment/ nomination process may need to be considered, once again using an open and transparent process.

Nine places were allocated to those Public Sector Bodies. Each organisation was invited to nominate an appropriate representative. The sectors listed broadly align with the Councils Community Planning Partnership.

The second recruitment exercise for Social Partners opened on 5 August 2022 with a closing date of 19 August 2022. Applications were shortlisted and an interview panel, comprised of three Elected Members, was convened on 22 August 2022. Following the processes above the following appointments have been made:

Women's Sector – Alison Blayney (Kilcooley Women's Centre)
BME - Stephen Hollywood (Alternatives)

As previously advised, North Down Community Network (NDCN) indicated they did not want to nominate a representative to the PEACEPLUS Partnership, as it is not a "fit" for their organisation. As agreed by the Partnership, an offer was made to North Down YMCA as a second voluntary organisation, which services the North Down Area. Stuart Buchanan, CEO of YMCA North Down was therefore appointed for this position.

There are still a number of statutory partners who still have to make a nomination, namely the South Eastern Regional College, Invest NI, the Public Health Agency and Tourism NI and officers will remind these agencies to make their nominations.

The PEACEPLUS Officer informed members that just prior to the meeting notification had been received that Martin Graham will represent Tourism NI and Roger Duncan will represent Southern Eastern Regional College. Invitations had been sent again to Invest NI and Public Health Agency to provide nominations to the PEACEPLUS Partnership.

It is **recommended** that the PEACE PLUS Partnership notes the report.

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Joe Boyle, seconded by Alderman Stephen McIlveen that the report be **noted**.

Closure event video and report on PEACE IV Projects

Report on PEACE IV Projects was tabled (copy previously circulated).

The Council secured £3.3 million from SEUPB under PEACE IV and had over the past 7 years delivered 19 projects under the 3 following strategic priorities –

1. Children and Young People
2. Shared Spaces and Services
3. Building Positive Relations

The combined efforts of the PEACE IV Partnership, the Delivery Agents and the wider community had helped deliver an extensive programme of activities and a greater understanding and respect for different cultures and traditions while building relationships within our local communities to enable people to live, learn and socialise together free from prejudice, hate and intolerance.

The PEACE IV Partnership began working on the plan in 2015 when they began consulting with the local community. They held public meetings, met with groups and sought out the views of the community on peace building. Colleagues including Community Planning and Statutory Agencies were also consulted. As a result, a number of key issues were identified and by working with large numbers of groups, best practice was utilised and ultimately a total of 19 different programmes were developed.

CYP (Children and Young People)

With regard to the Children and Young People priority, 5 programmes were delivered with over 1,200 young people participating in various projects:

	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	LOO - £	Appointed Tender Value
CYP 1	Capacity Building & Youth Leadership, delivered by the NI Youth Forum working with young people aged 12 – 24.	£158,000.00	£157,986.52
CYP 2	Youth Shelters, the installation of 3 Youth Shelters across the Borough in Portavogie, Comber and Ards to provide a safe space for young people to meet. Also, a summer scheme using both the Youth Shelters and Skateparks.	£ 92,000.00	
CYP 4	Primary Schools (Out of School Hours) Active Diversity & Good Relations, delivered by Todd's Leap working with primary school children outside of school hours to bring young people together through sport.	£103,700.00	£93,715.00
CYP 5	Community Based Sports & Good Relations, delivered by Todd's Leap aimed at those aged 11-18 and again bringing people together through sport but in addition including and creating sports coaches to ensure the continuation of the good work.	£119,217.00	£104,195.00
CYP 6	Children & Young People Div. (World Faiths), delivered by Todd's Leap working with uniformed youth organisations across the Borough.	£131,917.00	£125,160.00

SSS (Shared Spaces and Services)

The Shared Spaces and Services priority focused on 4 towns and villages across the Borough namely Comber, Holywood, Portaferry and Portavogie.

	SHARED SPACES AND SERVICES	LOO - £	Appointed Tender Value
SSS 1	Comber Muckers Field works included a new skate park with fencing and lighting, a concrete base foundation to enable a teen youth shelter to be installed, and an upgrade and widening of the existing path	£448,358.00	

	surrounding the entire field to connect to the Comber/Newtownards Greenway.		
SSS 2	Hollywood was a natural and sympathetic scheme which included works such as new entrance signage and gate, new paving and improvements to existing paths, tree planting and wildflower meadow seeding.	£209,500.00	
SSS 3	In Portaferry, improvements to Nugent's wood have been made to the existing walking trail path, seating, the installation of wooden sculptures and the installation of new entrance signage. Repairs have also been made to the existing stone wall along the path and new fencing installed along the boundaries. In addition, an official walking trail gravel path was installed at the Ropewalk with new entrance signage also being installed.	£175,000.00	
SSS 4	In Portavogie a new skate park with fencing and lighting was installed together with a concrete base foundation to enable a teen youth shelter to be installed. In addition, outdoor gym equipment was installed at the Anchor Car Park of the village.	£194,300.00	

BPR (Building Positive Relations)

In terms of Building Positive Relations, 10 peace building projects were delivered which have benefited local communities by promoting positive relations characterised by respect, and where cultural diversity is celebrated and people can live, learn and socialise together, free from prejudice, hate and intolerance. The projects which were delivered were wide ranging and included the following:

	BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONS	LOO - £	Appointed Tender Value
BPR 1	Personal Development & Training, delivered by Kilcooley Women's Centre which provided a menu of accredited and non-accredited community-based training programmes designed to support personal development and further education primarily to areas which are educationally disadvantaged.	£156,000.00	£155,982.37
BPR 2	Open Dialogue, delivered by NI Alternatives who engaged with 'hard to reach' groups in the Borough, providing independent facilitation, mediation and training to address sensitive post conflict issues and enabled dialogue around sensitive issues	£257,225.00	£257,225.00

	including flags and murals. The project aimed to build the capacity of groups and representatives and explore cultural expression through building on existing agreements and protocols developed over the last few years with local communities		
BPR 3	Connecting Communities, delivered by Copius which brought people together from a number of villages and communities in the peninsula through maritime history.	£144,500.00	£136,510.00
BPR 4a	Cross Community Intercultural Theatre, delivered by Terra Nova brought together a group of people of disparate backgrounds, and engaged them in an 18-month theatre project of 'A Midsummer Night Dream' with PEACE themes at its core. All the activities associated with the delivery of the successful theatre project were engineered to bring about greater awareness of racial and sectarian issues and equip participants with the skills to deal with cultural and value differences.	£135,000.00	£134,999.50
BPR 4b	Cross Border Intercultural Puppetry, delivered by Blu Zebra was a cross-community and cross-border Puppetry programme between young people of different backgrounds. This project explored history, heritage and diverse cultures of the Ards and North Down area and its cross-border partners in Dundalk and Co. Louth, through art and puppetry creations.	£53,120.00	£53,090.00
BPR 4c	Genealogy & Storytelling, delivered by Kilcooley Women's Centre offered participants research into their family history and provided participants with a sense of identity and belonging. Individual stories were captured through genealogy study programmes, a series of workshops and conversations in safe spaces resulting in 4 drama productions.	£120,000.00	£119,800.00
BPR 4d	Musical Traditions, delivered by Blu Zebra saw various bands, musicians and dancers from different traditions come together to produce a unique piece of music and dance.	£120,000.00	£119,550.00
BPR 4e	Celebration of Minority Communities, delivered by The Nerve Centre built on the rich history we have in the borough with the Chinese, Korean and Japanese	£120,000.00	£119,700.00

	communities which resulted in a festival held at the North Down Museum.		
BPR 4f	Community Based Arts, delivered by The Institute for Conflict Research who worked with key villages from across the Borough to create beautiful pieces of public art. These pieces of art in the form of stone seats were created by the residents based on local history events and placed in 6 villages, namely Donaghadee, Millisle, Ballyhalbert, Portaferry, Kircubbin and Greyabbey.	£140,000.00	£137,995.00
BPR 5	Celebrating Cultural Div. (World Faiths), delivered by The Rural Centre examined different faiths and issues around local culture, identity and diversity to enable participating groups to explore how racist and sectarian attitudes can be reduced across ANDBC.	£16,002.00	£16,000.00

The below table gives members an overview of programme statistics and targets for the CYP and BPR priorities.

ANDBC has an overall target to of 1336 (85%1136) participants to meet within the CYP priority with 1304 participants who have finished the programme and achieved 21+ cross community contact hours to date.

All BPR programmes have achieved their targets. There is no overall participant target to be achieved within the BPR priority.

PEACE IV Programme Statistics for CYP and BPR Priorities

CYP Programme	Section 75 Participants Registered								TARGETS		
	Total Number of Participants	SEX		Religion			Ethnic Origin		Target per LoO	Minimum 85% Target	Target achieved
		Male	Female	Protestant	Roman Catholic	Neither	White	Other			
CYP1	142	59	83	76	34	32	131	11	96	82	85
CYP2	82	61	21	65	17	0	80	2	80	68	82
CYP4	631	281	350	334	229	68	604	27	390	332	333
CYP5	366	285	81	225	77	64	355	11	330	281	308
CYP6	560	348	212	265	127	168	522	38	440	340	496
Sub Total	1781	1034	747	965	484	332	1692	89	1336	1103	1304
TOTAL	1781	1781		1781			1781				

BPR Programme	Section 75 Participants Registered								TARGETS		
	Total Number of Participants	SEX		Religion			Ethnic Origin		Target per LoO	Minimum 85% Target	Target achieved
		Male	Female	Protestant	Roman Catholic	Neither	White	Other			
BPR1	609	136	473	397	87	125	565	44	624	531	537
BPR2	96	54	42	62	31	3	95	1	88	75	77
BPR3	217	142	75	148	32	37	195	22	140	119	126
BPR4a	683	254	429	285	126	272	438	245	150	127	127
BPR4b	85	36	49	38	26	21	68	17	100	85	85
BPR4c	266	18	248	181	57	28	234	32	120	102	107
BPR4d	89	38	51	64	19	6	76	13	60	51	71
BPR4e	49	14	35	18	7	24	35	14	30	26	35
BPR4f	68	12	56	45	19	4	51	17	24	21	45
BPR5	48	25	23	22	6	20	39	9	40	34	41
Sub Total	2210	729	1481	1260	410	540	1796	414	1376	1171	1251
TOTAL	2210	2210		2210			2210				

Key:

CYP 1 - Capacity Building & Youth Leadership

CYP 2 - Youth Shelters

CYP 4 - Primary Schools (Out of School Hours) Active Diversity & Good Relations

CYP 5 - Community Based Sports & Good Relations

CYP 6 - Children & Young People Diversity (World Faiths)

BPR 1 - Personal Development & Training

BPR 2 - Open Dialogue

BPR 3 - Connecting Communities

BPR 4a - Cross Community Intercultural Theatre

BPR 4b - Cross Border Intercultural Puppetry

BPR 4c - Genealogy & Storytelling

BPR 4d - Musical Traditions

BPR 4e - Celebration of Minority Communities

BPR 4f - Community Based Arts

BPR 5 - Celebrating Cultural Diversity (World Faiths)

The PEACE IV mapping is not currently available but will be brought to a future meeting.

It is **recommended** that the PEACEPLUS Partnership notes the report.

Jan Nixey, Head of Community and Culture informed the members that the delivery of the PEACE IV programme was coming to a close on 30 September 2022. The projects had all been well received and Councillor Robert Adair passed on his thanks and gratitude to the PEACE team.

Joanne Brown presented the closure event video on various PEACE IV projects to the members.

Sandra Henderson advised members that the BPR4f programme covered the Ballyhalbert and Ballywalter area and that this should be amended in the report/video.

It was **agreed** on the proposal of Councillor Joe Boyle, seconded by Sandra Henderson that the report be **noted**.

Co-designing the PEACEPLUS Action Plan

Therese Hogg (Blu Zebra) gave a presentation and brief overview of the new PEACEPLUS programme and what was meant by Co Design and how things should move forward. She advised the members that the total Local Authority indicative budget for the PEACEPLUS 1.1 investment area was €110 million, and this had just been circulated to all Councils. Ards and North Down Borough Council indicative budget was detailed at €5,681,833 (£4.8 million approximately). John Caldwell previously raised the question on how the allocation had been determined. Therese advised that population, deprivation of the borough and length of the border were determining factors. She further advised that the budget allocation would be allocated and centred around the 3 core themes as follows:

Specific Objective	% Allocation	Budget	€ Indicative
Local community regeneration and transformation	30 – 40% maximum		€1,704,550 - €2,272,733
Thriving and peaceful communities	30 – 40% maximum		€1,704,550 - €2,272,733
Building respect for all cultural identities	20% minimum		€1,136,367 min

This will result in the development of PEACEPLUS Action Plans which will:

- Create sustainable, inclusive and cross community partnerships
- Community ownership of the PP Action Plans and ongoing engagement
- Management of significant and sustained cross community collaboration locally
- Inclusion of all local areas, including those who have not previously participated

Therese further advised that projects supported by the PEACEPLUS Action Plans should:

- Result in increased levels of social inclusion and cross community integration; and
- Incorporate sustained contact between those from different community, cultural and political backgrounds, to achieve significant attitudinal and behavioural change.

Each local authority in the programme area would be apportioned a minimum target number of 'persons' to be achieved based on their financial allocation. In addition, the 26 cross community contact hours over a period of 6 months engagement would still be required by each participant engaging in the programme.

The Partnership were advised that one public meeting per annum would be required to be held to advise the community on the work the Partnership had done over the year.

The PEACE Finance Officer advised members that although the Ards and North Down Borough Council indicative budget was detailed at €5,681,833 (£4.8 million approximately) that included in this figure was staff and overhead & administration costs. However, this overall indicative budget was a substantial increase (approx. 44%) to that received for PEACE IV.

Therese highlighted to the members co-designed actions/projects which could be supported under each theme and what would be classified as ineligible actions. She then discussed the Partnership makeup and the role of the PEACEPLUS Partnership and what the Action Plan should entail.

Therese outlined 'Co-Design' and stated that the process would commence in late autumn with a plan ready for submission to SEUPB in February 2023. This plan would then be assessed by SEUPB in anticipation of a Letter of Offer being issued to Council in September/October 2023 with programme delivery commencing February 2024.

Therese thought it beneficial for members to receive a report on the various PEACE IV projects, their budgets and a heat map of where the projects had been delivered and potential cold spots. Some case studies for members would also be helpful. She also suggested the Partnership may consider visiting another Council on a day trip to see some interesting projects.

Katy Radford asked would it be the case that if the participant took place in one project did this mean they could not take part in another. This was a big issue and clarity on what a 'Participant' was required. Therese Hogg advised that this was an issue and that she was waiting on answers from SEUPB. Therese also advised that SEUPB needs to go back to the EU Commission to speak to them. To date the PEACEPLUS programme had been approved by the EU but had not yet been approved by Westminster. This was likely to be delayed until October / November time. Therese informed members that the original timeframe for Action Plan to be completed was February, however it would be a moving target and advised people to make a start on planning their ideas.

Councillor Richard Smart asked Therese if SEUPB would consult the Partnership around this. Therese advised that SEUPB would provide examples of what they were looking for at a meeting on the 22nd of September. Therese has advised that the aim was for the Codesign Partnership to be clear. She further advised that there would be seven meetings (one in each DEA area) and that they would be collaborative.

Councillor Joe O'Boyle asked what would happen if the time scales needed to be extended past the cut-off date. Therese advised that the time scales given were indicative and would likely be into the first half of next year. She advised to start early with planning but that the programme call document would not be available to possibly next month.

Katy Radford asked if there had been any learning from the previous PEACE IV projects given the cross-border work. A brainstorm exercise was suggested regarding this about what previously worked / what didn't work / what would you change.

Alison Blayney informed members that she had received some negative feedback. This was mainly due to age groups being restrictive, for example 16–24-year-olds. Alison advised that people outside of this group had shown interest and asked to take part but had to be told they could not. Alison felt that this has a negative impact and had disadvantaged other members of community.

Alderman Robert Gibson stated that the Partnership should be identifying need. John Caldwell also enquired about figures regarding the number of participants and targets and enquired how much it was for each participant against each project. The PEACE Officer advised that this information was included in the papers sent prior to meeting.

In response to a question from Verity Peet Therese stated that it was important to build on the past and what worked well.

Cathy Polley stated that more information was needed on the number of participants outlined for the new programme.

At 6.34pm Councillor Robert Adair informed the meeting he had been made aware it had been publicly announced that Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II had died.

It was agreed on the proposal of Councillor Adair, seconded by Sandra Henderson that a minute's silence was held in respect of this news and the meeting adjourned.

A minute's silence was observed and the meeting adjourned – 6.40pm.

Unclassified

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	09 November 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	24 October 2022
File Reference	PEACV-1
Legislation	Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	PEACEPLUS Vacancy
Attachments	Appendix PEACEPLUS Partnership Members

Council agreed that the PEACEPLUS Partnership should be comprised of a total of 31 representatives under 4 designated pillars:

- 11 Elected Members (10 Selected by D'Hondt +1)
- 9 Public Sector Bodies
- 5 Social Partners – Geographical Community Representatives/Civic Society
- 6 Social Partners – PEACEPLUS Target Groups; S75/under-represented groups

A breakdown of the membership is attached at Annex 1 along with the nominations from each partner agency/sector.

The only remaining vacancy is the place allocated to Invest NI. However, Invest NI has recently advised that they do not wish to take up a position on the Partnership as it is not a "fit" for their organisation.

As ANDBC agreed the composition of the PEACEPLUS Partnership, it will now be necessary for the Council to nominate an alternative Public Sector partner.

Unclassified

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The matter has been discussed by the PEACEPLUS Partnership and some of the suggestions for Council consideration, based on engagement in previous peace programmes, is to offer this vacancy to one of the following sectors/agencies:

- Sport NI
- The Chambers
- Trade Unions

In terms of a nomination from the Chambers, it should be noted that the Business Sector is already represented on the PEACEPLUS Partnership, through the "Social Partners – Geographical Community Representatives/Civic Society" appointment.

Whilst Trade Unions have been represented on previous PEACE Partnerships, a significant proportion of previously delivered projects have been sports based programmes, which is a tool to engage people and young people in peace building activities. Therefore, it should be noted that a partnership with the Sports Council NI could be very beneficial for the ANDBC PEACEPLUS Programme and assist the Partnership in the achievement of its targets.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council agrees to invite and if agreeable appoint an alternative sector/agency to the PEACEPLUS Partnership, based on the information detailed within this report.

PEACEPLUS Partnership Members (31)

11 Elected Members (10 selected by D'Hondt +1)

1	DUP (4)	Cllr Robert Adair
2		Cllr Eddie Thompson
3		Ald Robert Gibson
4		Ald Stephen McIlveen
5	Alliance (3)	Cllr Karen Douglas
6		Cllr Lorna McAlpine
7		Ald Deborah Girvan
8	UUP (2)	Cllr Richard Smart
9		Cllr Philip Smith
10	Green (1)	Cllr Barry McKee
11	Single Member Party/Independent (1)	Cllr Joe Boyle

Public Sector Bodies - 9

12	Education Authority	Jim Dunbar
13	NI Housing Executive	Owen Brady
14	Police Service of Northern Ireland	Fiona Heffron
15	South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust	Lynda Vladeanu
16	South Eastern Regional College	Roger Duncan
17	Education Authority Youth Service	Esther Millar
18	Invest NI	TBA
19	Public Health Agency	Janelle Clegg
20	Tourism NI	Martin Graham

Social Partners - Geographical Community Representatives / Civic Society - 5

21	Ards Community Network	Cathy Polley
22	County Down Rural Network	Sandra Henderson
23	North Down YMCA	Stuart Bucannon
24	Business Sector	Marianne Kennerley
25	Voluntary Sector	Verity Peet

Social Partners - PEACE PLUS Target Groups; S75 / under-represented groups - 6

26	Older People	Dorothy Beattie
27	Youth Voice	Joshua McCready and Victoria Morris
28	BME	Stephen Hollywood
29	Women's Sector	Alison Blayney
30	Climate Action Organisation	John Caldwell
31	Good Relations Organisation	Katy Radford

Unclassified

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	09 November 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	24 October 2022
File Reference	ANDBC/PCSP 85
Legislation	Justice Act NI 2011
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	PCSP Annual Report 2020-21
Attachments	Appendix PCSP Annual Report 2021-22

Members will be aware that the AND PCSP is required under the Local Government Justice Act (2011) to submit an Annual report to the Joint Committee of the NI Policing Board and Department of Justice.

Please find attached a copy of the 2021/22 report for information.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes the report.



**Ards and North Down Policing and
Community Safety Partnership
(AND PCSP)**

Annual Report 2021 / 2022

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Introduction to Ards and North Down PCSP

1.1 Ards and North Down PCSP

On 15th June 2020 Ards and North Down PCSP was reconstituted.

The PCSP is made up of local Councillors, members of the community who were appointed by the Policing Board and representatives from statutory organisations who play a role in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, namely.

- The PSNI
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive
- The Probation Board for Northern Ireland
- The Health and Social Care Trust
- The Education Authority
- The Youth Justice Agency
- Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service

The PCSP is funded and monitored through the Joint Committee made up of the NI Policing Board and the Department of Justice with a legislative aim to work with their local community to help address crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour issues.

The 2021 - 2022 year has been an extraordinary year for Ards and North Down PCSP. Whilst Covid disruption has affected some of the planned projects the majority of the planned programmes and projects proved resilient and adaptable to adjust to the restrictions resulting from the Covid pandemic.

The PCSP was equally resilient and identified underspends early and made adjustments through change control requests to the Joint Committee so that the allocated funding was utilised to maximum effect. This involved hard work and constant communication with our Projects and the very helpful Joint Committee staff.

There have been many examples of good practice highlighted to Joint Committee by PCSPs throughout the year which showcase the good work being carried out on the ground. PCSP utilised an OBA approach in reporting back to the Joint Committee using indicator and performance measure information arising from the Action Plan 2021 – 2022.

Project card templates were used for each initiative and thematic report cards submitted to Joint Committee every quarter showing a good governance perspective. The NI Audit Office has also recognised the good work that PCSPs are doing with regard to using OBA.



Ms Lauren Kendal
Chair of Ards and North Down PCSP



Mrs Sandra Henderson
Vice Chair of Ards and North Down PCSP

1. Details of PCSP Membership

Ards and North Down Policing and Community Safety Partnership is comprised of ten Elected Members, nine independent members and representatives from seven designated bodies. All members act as a conduit for the flow of information from members of the public to the PCSP regarding all matters relating to policing and community safety.

2.1 The Policing Committee

The Policing Committee forms an important element of the PCSP. The Committee which is made up of the 19 political and independent members is charged specifically with enhancing public confidence in policing by monitoring police performance and ensuring that policing services deliver for local communities.

Membership of Ards and North Down PCSP

Aldermen	Irvine Smith
Councillors	Chambers Cummings Douglas Edmund Egan Kennedy Mathison (replaced by Cllr martin McRandal) Kendall (Chair)
Independent Members	Johnny Curry Sandra Henderson Louise Little Jude McNeill Janette McNulty Jo Scott Gavin Sinclair Albert Spratt Pete Wray
Statutory Agencies	Education Authority – Esther Millar Health and Social Care Trust – Joanne Burns Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service – Jonathan Gamble Northern Ireland Housing Executive – Owen Brady Probation Board for Northern Ireland – Kathryn Bailie/Mark Nicholson PSNI – Superintendent Brian Kee now replaced by Superintendent Johnston McDowell Chief Inspector Trevor Atkinson Youth Justice Agency – Kelvin Doherty

For further information please see: -

<https://www.ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk/resident/community/pcsp>

<https://www.nipolicingboard.org.uk/>

2. Borough Profile

Ards and North Down (AND) has a population of 157,000 (8.6% of the Northern Ireland total) and comprises a unique mix of urban and rural communities. The largest towns, in order of size, are Bangor (60,260), Newtownards (28,437), Holywood (12,131), Comber (8,933) and Donaghadee (6,856) and each is in the north of the borough.

The remainder of the population lives mainly in 19 smaller villages – Balloo, Ballygowan, Ballyhalbert, Ballywalter, Carrowdore, Conlig, Sloughy, Crawfordsburn, Greyabbey, Groomsport, Helens Bay, Killinchy, Kircubbin, Lisbane, Millisle, Portaferry, Portages, Seahill and Whiterock. 80% of residents live in the northern 25% of our borough. Rural isolation is experienced by some communities.

The area has long been recognised as a very desirable place to live, with many and superb amenities – schools, leisure and sports facilities, good transport links, quality infrastructure. It is one of the least deprived areas in Northern Ireland, ranking 10 out of the 11 new Council areas. However, there are five Wards ranked between 150th and 168th most deprived in Northern Ireland; these are in Newtownards and the Ards Peninsula.

One of the primary challenges facing us from a social perspective comes from our aging population and how we can support health and wellbeing. Since 2001, there has been a 6.6% decrease in the number of people under the age of 16, while there has been marked increase of 40% in the number of people aged over 65 years. The borough has a higher percentage of residents over the age of 40 than the Northern Ireland average, yet a lower percentage under the age of 40 years.

3. Community Planning and the PCSP

The PCSP continues to engage with the Ards and North Down Community Planning process which has resulted in the development of the Ards and North Down Big Plan. The Plan calls for citizens to “feel safe in their homes, in the community and out in public.” To achieve this, outcome three of the plan wants all citizens to be able to; “Live in communities where they are respected, safe and secure” The Community Plan highlights the PCSP as the delivery agent for community safety issues.

In keeping with this, the PCSP has participated in discussions regarding the Active Ageing element of the plan. The SOLACE group have given assurance that the PCSP will be key delivery mechanism for community safety actions in the community plan.

4. Funding Breakdown under SP2 for 2021/2022

Sixteen large and small projects were supported during the year and a further 13 projects were delivered directly by the PCSP working alongside other partner agencies including local schools, health agencies, the PSNI, the Education Authority and Council Departments.

Table 2 – Funding Breakdown 2021/2022

	NAME OF ORGANISATION	FUNDING AWARDED
Large Grants	PSTNI / Keyhole Surgery Locksmiths	£33,500
	Ards and North Down Street Pastors	£36,000.00
	North Down Women's Aid: Project funding reduced from original £14,000 as events cancelled by covid)	£10,000.00
	Addressing ASB through Sports and leisure – AND BC Leisure Services	£11,000.00
	Drug Intervention Programme with ASCERT– Tier 1 and 2 SERC	£4,000.00
	Drug intervention programme with Dunlewey– Tier 2 Adult Programme - Dunlewey	£15,975.00
	Drug intervention Programme with Lisburn YMCA – Tier 2 Young people	£7,980.00
Small Grants	Men's Advisory Project – DV original budget £6000 but only operational in qr4	£1,500.00
	Healthy relationships project	£4,350.00
	Portavogie Rangers Midnight Soccer	£4,064.00
	Youth for Christ – Ards Peninsula – It's your move project	£4,536.00
	North Down Cricket Club – Sport for change Project	£4,664.00
	Hollywood Family Trust – Detached Youth Work Project.	£4,663.85
	North Down YMCA Greater Aurora Youth Engagement Project	£4,444.00
	Comber YFC – Links Project	£4,664.00
	Kilcooley PS Sow, Grow, Chill and Spill Project	£2964.00
Partner Delivery	EA: Detached Youth Work	£14,000.00
	ABM / Aurora leisure Centre ASB Project	£6,000.00
	Youth Voice EA project	£4,000.00
	PSNI: Brighter Beechfield Project	£2,556.81
	PSNI: Hollywood Myth Buster project.	£1,306.81
	PSNI: Hollywood and Peninsula gaming Experience Project.	£2,206.61
	PSNI: Get to know your Key Workers Project	£956.81
	PSNI: Kilcooley Men's Health Group Project.	£2,596.81
	PSNI: Jon the Pedaller – Cycling Project	£3,116.81
	PSNI: Glen Ward Community Association Project.	£1,288.81
	PSNI: West Winds PS Young Peoples Project.	£1,456.81
	PSNI: Bowtown Community Group Project.	£1,756.71
	PSNI Comber Community Garden Project.	£1,756.81
		£2,000.00
	North Down & Ards Road Safety Committee	
Greyabbey CPLC (Meetings cancelled by Covid)	£0.00	
Ballygowan PACT (Meetings cancelled by Covid)	£0.00	

Projects delivered by the PCSP	Bee safe: Environmental health	£4,000.00
	Road Safety PSNI local delivery	£ 3,000.00
	AND PCSP Fixed SID Programme	£9,000.00
	Rural Crime / Trailer Marking / Farm watch	£200.00
	RAPID drugs bin	£500.00
	Hate Crime Project:	£2,000.00
	Safe Place / DV Project	£ 1,000.00
	North Down YMCA Youth Engagement Scheme (originally due to be delivered by CST)	£10,000.00
	SEDVP- reduced from original £3000	£500.00
	ACE Programme (Cancelled by Covid)	£0.00

5. Strategic Priority 1 - To Successfully Deliver the Functions of Ards and North Down PCSP

PCSP members undertook a very comprehensive engagement with the local community in the development of the new strategy whilst at the same time implementing the 2021-2022 Action Plan.

Development of the 2022 – 2025 PCSP Strategy and 2021 – 2022 Action Plan

The PCSP appointed a consultant and worked with them from November 2021 to February 2022 to develop the 2022 - 2025 Strategy and Action plan. This was a very intensive consultation and involved.

- 20 consultation opportunities across the borough involving all DEAs, all S75 groups, all 41 councillors, all existing PCSP projects and all stakeholders.
- 220 people / organisations engaged in consultation
- 2022-2025 Strategy and 1 year Action plan developed, refined, and submitted

The consultation was well received with.

- 90% people satisfied with consultation process although some would have liked to see face to face meetings.
- The 2022-2025 Strategy and 1 year Action plan was developed and submitted and approved. By JC
- 26 & 100% of members improved their awareness through the gathering of evidence leading to the prioritising of the issues needing to be addressed in the 2022 – 2025 strategy and 1 year Action plan

6.1 Administrative Activities

In carrying out this work PCSP members: -

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held eight private PCSP meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended four community safety sub-group meetings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended one training sessions on assessing small grants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of promotional strategy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Through the media, 11 press releases published. ○ 4 Borough wide advertising campaigns promoting awareness of RAPID Bins, Sports leadership Programme, Road Safety and PCSP Strategy

<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 198 Facebook updates utilising local, PSNI, DoJ, Policing Board and Crimestopper posts including the Money laundering Programme.○ Web based information.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Public Events<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Due to Covid 19 all public events were cancelled

6.2 Overview of Performance

In summary 76.5% of members attended PCSP private meetings
Due to Covid no public PCSP meetings or consultation events were held.

When surveyed an average of 85% of PCSP members attending private meetings felt supported in their role.



Photo – ASB, Sports Leadership Programme launch

7. Strategic Priority 2: To Improve Community Safety by Tackling Crime and Antisocial Behaviour.

7.1 Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) – Sub Theme

Projects Supported

Programme Name	Details	Delivery Organisation
Sport leadership Programme –	Provision of an online sports leadership programme with targeted diversionary and detached youth sessions.	AND BC Leisure Services. / Community Sports Network
Voluntary Street Wardens Programme	To reduce and prevent violent and alcohol related crime, fear of crime and ASB within hotspot areas through reassurance/engagement	Ards and North Down Street Pastors
ASB -Youth Engagement Scheme	To reduce ASB in central Bangor within the borough by providing engagement, education, and diversionary activities.	North Down YMCA .
EA Detached Youth Project	To address levels of ASB by running a detached youth project in the borough.	Education Authority
ACE Programme	Seminars to develop understanding regards adverse childhood experiences.	SEHSCT - Unable to Proceed due to Covid regulations.

7.1.1 ASB Sports leadership Programme

To reduce anti-social behaviour by involving sport the PCSP working with Council leisure services, Sports development commissioned Community sports Network to deliver a Sports leadership programme. They delivered 18 sessions of diversionary and detached youth work to 54 participants and 100% of participants were satisfied with the programme and 80% recorded increased awareness of the consequences of ASB.

7.1.2 Voluntary Street Warden Scheme

2021 - 2022 was the 3rd year of the 3-year contract for the voluntary street warden programme to support engagement through the whole Borough during weekend nights and at special one-off events and during spells of hot weather during the summer. From Qr1 to Qr4 the Ards and North Down Street Pastors delivered of a total of 147 patrols in the Borough engaging with a total of 11,003 people with an average over the 4 quarters of 91% satisfaction.

Initially the street pastors had to ensure they followed Covid rules until the guidelines were relaxed. The key to the success of the programme has been the regular meetings between Street Pastors, the Councils Community Safety Team, and the Police. The Street Pastors have shown a willingness to be there for the public at special concerts, bank holidays and on rainy November nights.



7.1.3 ASB: Youth Engagement Scheme – North Down YMCA

This Youth Engagement Scheme run by ND YMCA commenced late in the financial year. It delivered 12 detached youth work sessions involving 45 young people who were diverted to the youth hub and other youth facilities. It was reported that 100% of those engaged had increased knowledge of the effects of ASB and 84% had a changed attitude.

7.1.4 Ards Blair Mayne Programme to Address ASB

The interagency response to address levels of ASB Ards Blair Mayne Leisure Centre in Newtownards continued with ASB in the play parks that surrounded it and inside the building during 2021 – 2022. It seemed to be having an effect as ASB has now reduced.

7.1.5 Aurora Leisure Centre Programme

In a similar situation the Aurora leisure centre in Bangor experienced high levels of ASB during the 2021 - 2022 saw levels of ASB drop.

The lead agency North Down YMCA working with EA, Police, Council Community safety staff and the Street pastors sought to address this issue and through planning meetings established teams of detached youth workers working from a youth hub.

7.1.6 EA Youth Diversion

The EA ran 2 youth projects: The Detached Youth Project and Youth Voice. The detached youth project ran 161 sessions with 705 participants of which 75% were satisfied with the programme and 80% reported changed attitudes to ASB. Youth Voice held 4 sessions with 16 participants, and they were 100% satisfied and 100% informed.

7.1.7 ASB Small Grants

In the year's action plan, we included a publicly advertised small grants programme seeking applications from local groups supporting projects which addressed ASB in hotspots within the Borough. A total of 15 applications were scored by a panel of PCSP members and Council Officers under Covid regulations with 7 projects reaching the agreed threshold score to receive funding. The purpose of these projects was to develop community safety awareness amongst young people to tackle ASB in local neighbourhoods.

£29,999.85 was allocated to the following 7 projects.

Project name	Delivery Organisation	Details
Midnight Soccer Youth Development Programme	Portavogie Rangers	An ASB diversionary programme delivering 12 sessions to 57 participants with 4 parents helping and achieving a 59% programme satisfaction and a 100% in increasing awareness of the effects of ASB.
It's Your Move	Peninsula Youth for Christ	ASB diversionary programme including engagement, signposting, and training 13 sessions completed with 171 young people. 100% of participants satisfied. And 52% showing changing behaviours.
Sport for Change	North Down Cricket Club	ASB project delivering 16 sessions to 300 young people who reported 100% increased awareness of ASB.
Hollywood Family Trust – Outreach Project	Hollywood Family Trust	A detached youth work project delivering 64 outreach sessions/ Instagram posts, to 130 young 100% of participants satisfied and 100% reporting increased awareness of ASB.
Greater Aurora YEP	ND YMCA	Detached youth programme delivering 51 sessions with 57 participants. 97% reporting satisfaction and 91% increasing awareness of the effects of ASB.
Links	Comber YfC	Diversionary project delivering 73 sessions with 191 participants. 50% satisfied and 100% reporting increased awareness of ASB.
Sow, Grow, Stay and Chill	Kilcooley Primary School	Early intervention gardening project for primary pupils involving 151 children. 95% of participants

		reported and increased awareness of the consequences of ASB
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The 7 approved projects that managed to run despite Covid restrictions supported a total of 251 sessions delivered to over 1057 young people from the Borough. Through all the programmes delivered there was an average of 84% increase in knowledge and change in the attitudes of the young people involved in ASB.

7.1.8 ASB- ACE Programme

The Action Plan included the delivery of an Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) awareness raising and training project. However, the events could not be held and have been postponed until 2022-2023.

7.2 Drugs and Alcohol ASB – Sub Theme

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



<p>RAPID Drug Bins: AND PCSP now operate 6 RAPID bins. Publicity has continued and the contents lifted from these bins are reported to the members. Due to many of the centres where the bins are located being closed or having limited footfall the amounts of drugs / medications lifted from some bins has been lower than usual.</p>	
<p>Lisburn YMCA- The YMCA ran a tier 2 drugs intervention programme for young people and delivered 4 sessions to 67 participants. It was recorded that 98.5% were satisfied with the programme content and 88% had an increased knowledge of mental health, alcohol, and drug use.</p>	
<p>Dunlewey Addiction Services- A tier 2 support (counselling support) programme for adults with addiction problems. The funding supported additional sessions and the opportunity for counselling to be based in more accessible locations. A total of 369 sessions were delivered engaging with a total of 60 individuals. It was reported that 100% of participants reported changed behaviours after completing the programme. The programme also recorded 100% of participants had increased knowledge of the risks and harm caused by excessive drink and drugs.</p>	

Ascertainment services working with SERC ran a programme of tier 1 and tier 2 services targeted at SERC students. Over 12 sessions 80 students received 2-hour sessions and a further 329 students received a 1-hour session on substance misuse awareness. All the sessions were delivered online, and it was recorded that 80% of participants had an increased knowledge of the risks and harm caused by excessive drinking and drugs.

7.3 Domestic and Sexual Violence – Sub Theme

The PCSP continues to support victims and raise awareness of domestic violence and sexual assault through online events. It has commenced working with Traci Kimber the new coordinator from the South Eastern Sexual and Domestic Violence Partnership and supported the translation of the “where is the Line” DV video into 3 other languages.

The SEDSVP has been rebuilding its membership, strategy, and action plans after covid and the fact that it took a year to get a new coordinator in post.



North Down & Ards Women’s Aid were supported to deliver a programme of advice and support and training to female victims of sexual and domestic abuse. They delivered 25 sessions to 27 women who reported feeling safer and having a 100% increase in their knowledge of DV and the support services available.

Men’s Advisory Service were appointed in qr4 to provide support for male victims. They ran 43 sessions with 30 men who reported feeling safer and having increased awareness of DV and the support services available.

Safe Place – Three Safe Place online awareness raising session was held attended by 19 members of the public. All those who completed the training were provided with a Safe Place starter pack and 100% reported an increased awareness of the Safe Place initiative.

<p>SEDSVP were unable to organise and hold a conference due their reorganisation under their new coordinator and instead had the "Where is the Line" DV video translated into 3 minority languages for distribution.</p>
<p>Healthy Relationship Programme -. Lisburn YMCA ran an online programme involving a number of sessions with 14 schools and 396 pupils resulting in a 100% increased knowledge of DV and who to contact for help.</p>
<p>Domestic and Sexual Awareness Promotional Campaign. Throughout the Covid pandemic the PCSP has highlighted and promoted awareness of sexual and domestic violence issues effecting Female, Male and young victims through our FB pages.</p>

7.4 Hate Crime - Sub Theme

The PCSP team partnered with the council good relations section and supported the Terra Nova play "The Trumpeter and the King". Three sessions were held with 47 participants resulting in a 100% increase in knowledge of hate crime.



7.5 Rural Crime and the Support Hub- Sub Theme

Three Trailer sessions took place in in 2021 - 2022 with 45 members of the public assisted and given security advice. (Including a special Jet Ski Trailer marking session) The PCSP supported the further roll out of Farm Watch through the distribution of leaflets and posters and this promotion has now resulted in new farm watch schemes in the 2021-2022 year.



Photo of trailer marking



The Support Hub has a focus on supporting those most vulnerable in the Ards and North Down Area. The Hub brought together a range of statutory agencies which included the Probation Board, Education Authority, Youth Justice Agency,

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, Health Trust, PSNI, Ambulance Service, NIHE and Council. A total of 11 meetings were held online during 2021/2022 with 8 vulnerable people supported and sign posted to the most appropriate services.

7.6 Burglary and Fear of Crime - Sub Theme

To tackle burglary and fear of crime the PCSP supported:

Neighbourhood Watch - There were 24 Neighbourhood Watch schemes in the AND area however due to Covid no Neighbourhood Watch meeting or events were held. NHW was promoted through FB and 1 new Co-ordinator appointed. Meetings are scheduled for the 2022 - 2023 year.

4 Tier Home Security- Ards and North Down PCSP continued to support the 4-tier secure scheme that secures residential homes through providing/fitting target hardening security equipment. The scheme is aimed at vulnerable people who have been victims of crime, domestic abuse and ASB and works in partnership with the PSNI crime prevention officer. During 2021-22 the scheme fitted security measures in 136 homes and gave advice to 195 people with 100% of people feeling safer in their own homes.

7.7 Road Safety – Sub Theme

The PCSP sub theme of Road Safety saw the mobile Speed Indicator Device (SID) deployed on 47 occasions (more than the contracted number)

Due to Covid regulations access to schools was impossible however the SID Project was active online, on radio and in local press promoting road safety. It was reported that stakeholders were 100% satisfied with the results arising from the SID deployment.



Photo – The SID Device being operated by the Ards and North Down Road Safety Committee.

The PSNI Road Safe Road Show was also cancelled due to Covid, and the funding was redeployed to the PSNI local road safety sessions in individual schools. Twelve sessions were held involving 700 pupils.

The successful Bikesafe programme continued in 2021 - 2022 and involved 8 riders and 5 PSNI experts.

The P7 Bee-Safe programme normally delivered by PCSP in partnership with other Council Environmental Health Department utilised the 7 videos produced in the 2021 - 2022 year alongside workbooks in 40 schools reaching 1806 pupils.



Photo – BikeSafe Event

8. Strategic Priority 3 – To Support Community Confidence in Policing

The PCSP Policing Committee sought to increase community confidence in policing through monitoring policing performance, facilitating community engagement with police, supporting the anti-social behaviour forum, and advocating for a culture of lawfulness.

The PCSP committee held three quarterly monitoring sub-group meetings to help PCSP members monitor police performance. The PCSP also held three quarterly policing committee meetings examining the performance of the PSNI against the Local Policing Plan.

The PCSP advocated a culture of lawfulness through the involvement of the PSNI in a number of active groups. Due to the covid regulations these meetings occurred online. They included: -

- The ASB Forum: Twelve online meetings were held involving the NIHE, Housing Associations, Council Environmental Health, Police, PCSP and other statutory agencies to address ASB concerns in the Borough.
- The District Support Hub: Launched in November 2019 the Support Hub brings together statutory agencies including the Fire and Rescue Service, Probation Board Youth Justice Agency, Education Authority, Ambulance Service and South Eastern Health Trust to strategically support cases individuals within the community. Eleven Support Hub meetings took place online and supported 8 vulnerable people. The Agencies involved reported 100% satisfaction.
- Regular meetings occurred between Police, the Councils Community Safety Team, and the Voluntary Street Wardens to discuss ASB and deployment priorities.

8.1 PSNI Projects

The PCSP approved within the action plan a budget of £19,000.00 to support 10 different projects planned by the PSNI aimed at increasing confidence in Policing and the Law. 1 project was unable to complete due to ongoing restrictions.

<p>Advocate for policing Brighter Beechfield</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 sessions held <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% satisfaction <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 /100% of participants with a changed attitude in the rule of law • 12 /100% of participants more likely to engage with PSNI and NHT • 12/100% who have more confidence in PSNI
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<p>Hollywood Myth Busters</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 sessions held. in qr4 <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% satisfaction with programme to date <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% / 30 of participants with a changed attitude in the rule of law • 100%/ 30 of participants more likely to engage with PSNI • 100%/ 30 who have more confidence in PSNI
<p>Hollywood and peninsula gaming experience</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 sessions held in qr4 <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% satisfaction with programme to date <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% / 30 of participants with a changed attitude in the rule of law • 100%/ 30 of participants more likely to engage with PSNI • 100%/ 30 who have more confidence in PSNI
<p>Get to know your key workers</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 sessions held in qr4 <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% satisfaction with programme to date <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% / 80 of participants with a changed attitude in the rule of law • 100%/ 80 of participants more likely to engage with PSNI • 100%/ 80 who have more confidence in PSNI
<p>Kilcooley men's health project</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 sessions held. <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% satisfaction with programme to date <p>Is anyone better off?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% / 20 of participants with a changed attitude in the rule of law • 100%/ 20 of participants more likely to engage with PSNI • 100%/ 20 who have more confidence in PSNI
<p>Jon the Pedlar</p>	<p>How much did we do?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 sessions held. <p>How well did we do it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% satisfaction with programme to date

8.2 Policing Committee activities during 2021 - 2022.

A variety of meetings were held: -

- Three Policing Committee meetings were held and three monitoring subgroup meetings
- 12 ASB forums supported.
- Community Policing Forums including Greyabbey CPLC and Comber and Ballygowan PACT were cancelled due to Covid.
- One planned Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) meeting was cancelled due to Covid.

9.0 Overview of Performance

Three Policing Committee meetings occurred. It was noted that at the 3 meetings and average of 70% attended and overall, 90% felt supported in their role and reported that their knowledge about local policing had increased. A couple of members did feel that the reporting templates required updating.



10. AND PCSP Contact Details

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ARDS & NORTH DOWN PCSP FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

Budget Category	Budget agreed Apr 21 - Mar	Change to budget less than 20% then 20%	Revised budget Apr 21 - Mar	Actual expenditure 2021/22	Expenditure accrued	Total expenditure to date	Q1 Payment Apr - Jun	Q2 Payment Jul -	Q3 Payment Oct - Dec	Q4 Payment Jan - Mar	Total Payments to date
Salaries	57,766.00	0.00	57,766.00	57,764.00	0.00	57,764.00	22,610.94	22,621.01	10,410.25	0.00	57,764.00
Raising Curbs											
Parking	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Staff Pilgrims (inc. associated allowances)	2,100.00	0.00	2,100.00	1,229.00	0.00	1,229.00	209.75	209.75	209.75	209.75	1,229.00
Training Course	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Overline	1,100.00	0.00	1,100.00	174.04	121.40	301.24	0.00	0.00	16.25	244.19	301.24
Equipment	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sub-total raising curbs	5,000.00	-	5,000.00	1,403.04	121.40	1,500.24	209.75	209.75	166.00	554.64	1,500.24
Total Administration	63,566.00	-	63,566.00	59,179.04	121.40	59,306.24	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000	554.64	59,306.24
OPERATIONAL											
Strategic Objective 1: Form & Deliver Function of PCSP											
PCSP Support for Private Meeting	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
PCSP Awareness raising communication strategy	15,027.00	125.00	15,152.00	1,219.05	1,402.10	15,151.21	210.60	1,501.55	3,210.00	10,009.06	15,151.21
Development of Action Plan 2021-22	6,000.00	0.00	6,000.00	4,200.00	1,000.00	6,000.00	0.00	0.00	1,200.00	4,000.00	6,000.00
PCSP risk group meeting	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Strategic Objective 2: Improve Community											
Drug Intervention Programme at Turf 10 2 with young adults	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00	4,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,000.00	4,000.00
Rapid Bin Initiative	500.00	0.00	500.00	150.00	150.00	500.00	150.00	0.00	0.00	150.00	500.00
Solihull Area Awareness Project	24,000.00	0.00	24,000.00	10,711.57	12,201.10	23,115.70	0.00	0.00	4,572.37	10,246.10	23,115.70
Addressing ASB through partnership programme	11,000.00	0.00	11,000.00	11,000.00	0.00	11,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	11,000.00	11,000.00
Start term Youth Intervention Programme	6,000.00	-1,200.00	4,800.00	1,610.75	0.00	1,610.75	610.25	0.00	1,000.50	0.00	1,610.75
Awareness of Abuse Childhood Experiences (ACE)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Small Grants Programme with a focus on diversion and prevention	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00	21,711.75	8,201.10	29,912.85	0.00	0.00	10,404.00	10,507.65	29,912.85
Voluntary Safety Wardens	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00	14,104.00	3,900.00	18,000.00	1,900.00	5,240.00	10,760.00	4,050.00	18,000.00
Youth Engagement Scheme - in partnership with the Council	10,000.00	-1,725.00	8,275.00	7,975.00	0.00	7,975.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	7,975.00	7,975.00
Enhance Delivery of Youth Programme (EA)	14,000.00	2,000.00	16,000.00	10,216.62	1,015.51	11,232.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	10,000.00	11,232.13
Domestic Violence Conference & SEDS/STP	500.00	0.00	500.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	0.00	0.00	500.00	0.00	500.00
Safe Place Training	1,000.00	50.00	1,050.00	0.00	1,050.00	1,050.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,050.00	1,050.00
Health Promotion/Sign Awareness	5,000.00	-50.00	4,950.00	4,949.12	0.00	4,949.12	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,949.12	4,949.12
Diffusers/Victim Support Programme	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00	4,341.99	2,371.01	9,220.97	0.00	0.00	1,999.67	7,210.40	9,220.97
Diffusers/Victim Support Programme	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00	0.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
Rise Crime Initiative	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
4 Turf Home Security Project	13,500.00	0.00	13,500.00	10,500.00	0.00	13,500.00	7,094.05	7,210.65	10,945.60	1,145.60	13,500.00
Road Security Marking	200.00	0.00	200.00	25.00	144.00	179.00	25.00	0.00	0.00	144.00	179.00
PSNI Road Safety Roadshow	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Local PSNI Road Safety Programme	3,000.00	0.00	3,000.00	500.00	1,500.00	2,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
The PTB's Safe Programme	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4,000.00	4,000.00
Support Hub	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
ASB Forum	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Speed Indicator Device	9,000.00	0.00	9,000.00	0.00	9,000.00	9,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9,000.00	9,000.00
Strategic Objective 3: Improve Community Confidence in policing											
Police/Private Meeting	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Police consultation - Improve Confidence in Local Policing	240.00	0.00	240.00	157.21	0.00	157.21	0.00	157.21	0.00	0.00	157.21
Police/Public Meeting	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Youth Engagement Programme	4,000.00	0.00	4,000.00	0.00	3,999.52	3,999.52	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,999.52	3,999.52
Ar & as North Down Road Safety Committee	2,000.00	0.00	2,000.00	1,999.21	0.00	1,999.21	0.00	1,600.00	0.00	209.21	1,999.21
Local Policing Initiative	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Advocater Policing	19,000.00	0.00	19,000.00	11,771.71	0.00	11,771.71	0.00	0.00	0.00	11,771.71	11,771.71
Total Operational	254,247.00	-	254,247.00	104,579.77	65,709.61	170,289.38	17,544.00	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000	170,289.38
TOTAL ADMINISTRATION & OPERATIONAL	317,833.00	-	317,833.00	243,719.57	65,436.73	309,156.30	41,543.49	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000	309,156.30
Meeting Expenses	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	4,000.00	420.00	7,260.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	2,100.00	2,500.00	7,260.00
OVERALL TOTAL	327,833.00	-	327,833.00	247,719.57	65,856.73	316,416.30	42,743.49	0.000000	0.000000	0.000000	316,416.30

Certificate of Chief Executive Officer

I am satisfied that the expenditure shown has been wholly, exclusively and necessarily incurred by the Council on the local Policing and Community Safety Partnership and that the grant receivable from the Joint Committee is in accordance with the regulations and conditions applicable.



Chief Executive Officer

Date

Unclassified

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	09 November 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	11 October 2022
File Reference	HER/08-2/10 22
Legislation	Recreation and Youth Services Order (NI) 1986
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	400 th Anniversary of Kirkistown Castle
Attachments	Appendix Budget

The following Notice of Motion was agreed by Council in April 2022:

"To mark the 400th anniversary of the building of Kirkistown Castle, Council tasks officers to work with the Department of Communities (Historic Monuments Division), local community groups and schools, to deliver a community programme of events to mark this important milestone in the history of the village of Cloughey."

On Saturday 8 October an event took place between 12pm-4pm to celebrate the 400th Anniversary of Kirkistown Castle.

The event was postponed from 10 September due to the death of HRH Queen Elizabeth II and although some momentum was lost in marketing and on social media the event was very well supported with a steady stream of 1,150 visitors throughout the day.

A traffic management plan was put in place due to the limited access to the site and a Park and Ride operated from the car park adjacent to Cloughey Pavilion. This was greatly appreciated by local residents and visitors.

Unclassified

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The event was delivered by the Councils Arts team in conjunction with the Community Development team, working in partnership with the Department of Communities Heritage Environment Division (HED) who provided significant funding to help animate the site with music, storytelling and re-enactments. £1,000 funding was also gratefully received from Trinity Presbyterian Church. The shortfall was met by the Arts and Community Services budgets. A full budget breakdown can be found at Appendix 1

The following is a summary of the activities that visitors enjoyed on the day:

Musical Interludes

Atmospheric music was played throughout the day from trio Seefin and traditional music from a trio of Ards Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann. A highlight of the day was a performance by Kirkistown Castle Pipe Band with lots of visitors using the deck chairs provided to enjoy the performances.

Storytelling

Inside the Castle visitors were given historical information by HED Officers and enjoyed family friendly tales of myths and legends by Janice Witherspoon and Willie Drennan.

Medieval Combat Group

MCG is an Historic European Martial Arts (HEMA) group based in Belfast. Visitors enjoyed the swords clashing as they demonstrated medieval martial arts using techniques from surviving 14th to 15th century manuscripts.

Valhalla Street Theatre

Valhalla Street Theatre brought history to life with a specially commissioned story featuring characters and tales from 400yrs ago. Visitors enjoyed taking photographs with the characters.

Craft

Traditional Rope Making skills were demonstrated by Paul Whitla and traditional Pole Lathe Woodcraft demonstrated by Craig Sands. Visitors enjoyed being able to try their hand at these traditional skills.

The stone house played host to children's craft activities and a Treasure Hunt.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this update report.

Appendix Kirkistown Castle 400 Budget

	ANDBC	HED	TOTAL
Publicity	£ 300		
Music/Storytelling		£1,100	
Re-enactments/Craft Demos		£1,670	
Traffic Management/ Park & Ride	£ 876		
Infrastructure/Tech support	£ 953		
Staffing	£1,200		
TOTAL	£3,329	£2,770	£6,099

In Total the event cost **£6,099** with £1,000 gratefully received from Trinity Presbyterian Church

The cost to Council is **£2,329**

Unclassified

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ITEM 16**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	09 November 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	24 October 2022
File Reference	HER 16/ 11 22
Legislation	Local Government Act (NI) 2014
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Subject	Percy French Collection
Attachments	Appendix Letter from Percy French Society

Background

On 17 November 1997, North Down Borough Council entered into a 25-year agreement with the Percy French Society. In this document, the Trustees of the society agreed to deliver their collection of Percy French materials into the care of the Council and in return the Council would look after, store, display and loan out artefacts as required.

As the term of this agreement is to finish in November 2022, the Percy French Society has decided to gift the collection to Ards and North Down Borough Council. See letter attached (Annex 1).

North Down Museum holds this collection in its own secure storeroom under museum standard conditions including archival materials and environmental and pest monitoring. Over the past 10 years at least one exhibition per year has gone on display either in the museum or online.

The collection has been externally audited in the past and will be audited before any formal handover. A copy of which will be given to the society.

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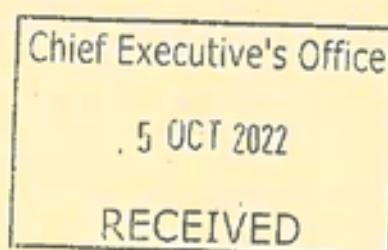
The offer also states that upon agreement the Council will not break up or sell any part of the collection. This fits in with the museum's Collections Development Policy that there is a strong presumption that collections are not sold.

The offer also asks for a biannual audit to take place. This would need to be discussed with the society as the museum does not fully audit its collections every two years. The Councils process involves carrying out an annual spot check of the assets audit and the Percy French Collection would fall under this programme.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council accepts the offer of the Percy French Collection subject to reaching agreement on the auditing arrangements for the collection, with the Percy French Society.

John E Stannard
 (Secretary)
 Flat 7F
 Stranmillis Court
 BELFAST
 BT9 5EU
 Tel. 9068 1017



The Percy French Society
 Founded 1988

PATRON: Alan Tongue
 PRESIDENT: Berrie O'Neill

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

Dear Mr Reid

On 15th September a meeting of the Society was held to discuss the future of our Percy French Collection, which as you may know has been looked after by the North Down Museum for the last 25 years. We are all very grateful indeed for the excellent way in which this has been done by the Council and by the Museum staff.

However, the current agreement with the Council is due to expire early in November, and the Society is of the view that, given our increasing age profile, the interests of the Collection would best be served by offering it to the Council, subject to the appropriate safeguards.

A motion was therefore passed to the following effect:

"That it be resolved that the Percy French collection currently held in the North Down Museum be delivered over to Ards and North Down Borough Council to be kept and maintained by the Council in perpetuity as it has been since the collection was first delivered to the Council for safe keeping. The collection is not under any circumstances to be broken up or sold, and the Council shall continue to conduct an audit of the collections at intervals of no more than two years'.

In the light of this, we would be grateful if a meeting could now be arranged between representatives of the Council and the Trustees of the Collection to discuss the way forward.

Do please let us know if you have any questions in the meantime.

Yours sincerely

5 October 2022

Mr J E Stannard
Secretary
The Percy French Society
Flat 7F
Stranmillis Court
BELFAST
BT9 5EU

Dear Mr Stannard

Percy French Collection

Thank you for your letter regarding the above collection and the Society's current agreement with Council.

This has been passed to the Council's Director of Community and Wellbeing for attention and response.

Yours sincerely



STEPHEN REID
Chief Executive

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	09 November 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	05 October 2022
File Reference	HER 12/ 10 22
Legislation	Local Government Act NI 2021
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable <input type="checkbox"/>
Subject	North Down Museum Collections Development Policy 2023-2027
Attachments	Appendix North Down Museum Collections Development Policy 2023-2027

The revised Collections Development Policy 2023-2027 for North Down Museum (Annex 1) is an updated version of the Councils previous Collections Development Policy 2017-2022.

The only amendments include:

- The addition of the new museum Digital Image Database in conjunction with eight local Historical Societies. This database will become the central repository for digital images across the Borough.
- The themes for future collecting have been updated to reflect the limited storage space for future collecting and focus future acquisitions so that they fit in the space currently provided.

This policy has been developed in line with UK Museum Accreditation guidelines and standards.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the revised Collections Development Policy 2023-2028 for North Down Museum.



North Down Museum Collections Development Policy 2023-2027

Name of museum: North Down Museum

Name of governing body: Ards and North Down Borough Council

Date approved by governing body: November 2022

Policy review procedure:

The collections development policy will be published and reviewed at least once every five years.

Date for review: November 2027

The *Northern Ireland Museums Council* will be notified of any changes to the collections development policy, and the implications of any such changes for the future of collections.

1. Relationship to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation:

1.1. *The museum's statement of purpose is:*

The mission of North Down Museum is to preserve the borough's unique history and heritage for future generations and to record, interpret and promote the 'story' of Ards and North Down through our collections for the benefit of local people and tourists alike.

1.2. The governing body will ensure that both acquisition and disposal are carried out openly and with transparency.

1.3. By definition, the museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its stated objectives. The governing body therefore accepts the principle that sound curatorial reasons must be established before consideration is given to any acquisition to the collection, or the disposal of any items in the museum's collection.

- 1.4. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy will only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.5. The museum recognises its responsibility, when acquiring additions to its collections, to ensure that care of collections, documentation arrangements and use of collections will meet the requirements of the Museum Accreditation Standard. This includes using SPECTRUM primary procedures for collections management. It will take into account limitations on collecting imposed by such factors as staffing, storage and care of collection arrangements.
- 1.6. The museum will undertake due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the governing body or responsible officer is satisfied that the museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.
- 1.7. The museum will not undertake disposal motivated principally by financial reasons.

2. History of the collections

The collection originated, in 1941, with a selection of paintings and objects bequeathed by Lady Clanmorris (the last person to live in Bangor Castle and descendant of the Ward family who erected the building). These included Edwin Long's copies of Velasquez and Titian paintings from the Prado Museum and the complete 17th century Plantation folio known as the 'Raven Maps', which were produced for her ancestor Sir James Hamilton.

When the Council acquired the building a public appeal was made for works of art and furniture to dress the Castle. The quality of the collection owes much to Town Clerk Terence B Graham (1952-1963). He opened a small municipal museum within the Castle. The Haverty Trust generously donated important pieces of Irish art including works by Charles Lamb, Cecil Galbally and Maurice MacGonigal. Gifts and bequests from local artists such as Rosamund Praeger and Georgina Moutray-Kyle, as well as collectors and families also followed his enquiries. At this early stage, ethnographic pieces from Australia, Africa, South America and Asia were accepted; while the majority of the archaeological collection came from County Antrim.

During this time, local artist RJ Woods (1871-1955) gifted 16 works of art from 1935 - 1954. He hoped these would form the beginnings of a collection for an art gallery in Bangor. This never happened, but his landscapes show the North Down area before modern development. In addition, the museum acquired several hundred early 20th Century photographs belonging to (and often taken by) James Savage, a local building merchant.

There were two important collections bequeathed to Council in the 1950s. The first was the Jordan Collection, named after the late 19th Century diplomat to China, Sir John Newell Jordan. The first donation came from his son, Robert Cromie Jordan, in 1953 but other family members have also contributed over the

years. The collection includes a vast array of items includes decorative porcelain, lacquer ware furniture, objects d'art and beautiful scrolls from across China, as well as Korea and Japan where he also served.

The second was the James Humbert-Craig (1878 -1944) painting collection. Thirteen paintings in all were bequeathed by his widow in her will.

Like many local government facilities, the collection has a number of portraits featuring dignitaries, Members of Parliament and Justices of the Peace, now displayed in the Council Chamber. These were originally commissioned by the Council and often gifted back by the sitter.

The Council has also commissioned other pieces of art over the years from the travel posters of the 1940s – 1960s or more recently a sugar-cube sculpture of Bangor Castle by renowned artist Brendan Jamison.

Since the 1970s the Council has also acquired archaeological materials from Bangor Abbey excavations, including the 9th Century Bangor Bell. Items from other local areas such as the Ballycroghan Swords dating to the Bronze Age were also collected.

The last major purchase of an artefact was in 1984 when the Council bought the Victoria Cross medal of local hero Rear Admiral, The Honourable Edward Barry Stewart Bingham at auction.

3. An overview of current collections

The current collection covers the history of North Down from the pre-historic to present day. The subjects and themes include-

Archaeology-

The Archaeological collection consists of hundreds of flint and stone tools and weapons dating from the Stone Age to Bronze Age. Much of the collection was discovered at two key archaeological sites in the area. There are also good examples of the metal implements created during the Bronze Age such as axes and spearheads, as well as more decorative items like brooches and shawl fasteners. One of the real treasures of the collection is the Bronze Age Ballycroghan swords.

Christian Heritage

The ancient Abbey of Bangor, founded in 558AD by Comgall, was one of the most important monasteries in early Europe. The Museum has a number of artefacts from Bangor Abbey including slate trial pieces and a 17th Century sundial by the renowned Scottish craftsman John Bonar. The 9th Century Bangor Bell, one of the Museum's key artefacts, is part of this collection.

Raven Maps

In the early 1600's, James Hamilton was responsible for the development of the landscape and several 'towns' in County Down, including Bangor. The vast area covered by his estate can be seen in the Raven Maps, drawn up in 1625 - 26 and

named after the cartographer, Thomas Raven. They are the only complete Folio of Plantation-era maps remaining in Ireland. The maps, on display in the museum, are also digitised, enabling visitors to fully explore the detail in the Folio.

Ward Family

When Bangor Borough Council bought the Castle, a collection of paintings and objects belonging to the Ward family were part of the Council's purchase. These formed the beginnings of the Museum collection relating to the Ward and Bingham families, which have been added to by pieces such as the 17th Century rent rolls belonging to Henry Lord Viscount Claneboy and 2nd Earl of Clanbrassil and the Victoria Cross awarded to Commander the Hon Barry Bingham.

Jordan Collection

The Jordan Collection, named after Sir John Newell Jordan, one of Britain's most eminent diplomats, who was born at Balloo on the outskirts of Bangor in 1852. This collection covers a wide variety of ornate oriental pieces from carvings, textiles and teapots to a hand drawn map of the Forbidden City.

Paintings

Like many local government museums, the painting collection has a number of portraits of Members of Council, Parliament, Justices of the Peace and dignitaries, which are now displayed in the Council Chamber. However, there is also a great variety of work including still life's, landscapes, portraits and gallery copies (for example Edwin Long's reproductions of paintings in the Prado Museum).

Gifts and bequests from local artists, collectors and families have enhanced the collection over the years, such as the James Humbert Craig collection. The Haverty Trust has also generously donated important pieces of Irish art including works by Charles Lamb, Cecil Galbally and Maurice MacGonigal.

North Down Museum cares for a vast selection of Percy French memorabilia relating to this Irish entertainer, poet, songwriter and watercolourist, in joint management with the Percy French Society. This includes diaries, countless letters, around 100 paintings, and even a door from the family's home.

Photographic Archive

The photographic archive records the ever-changing landscape of the local area from the 19th Century to the present. It consists of various photographs, postcards, negatives, glass plates and slides with a North Down connection.

In 2022, the museum installed a new photographic database in conjunction with eight historical societies. This database will be the central repository for each society and the museum will hold digital copies of each individual society archive.

Posters

During the 1950s and 1960s Bangor Borough Council worked in conjunction with rail companies to encourage visitors to travel to Ulster. The Council often commissioned artists to recreate colourful scenes of the local area, which were used on advertising posters and souvenir brochures. The Museum houses a selection of the original poster art by artists like Claude Buckle, Derrick Hass, AJ Wilson and Bryan De Grineau. The collection also includes a selection of old cinema posters relating to local venues such as The Tonic and The Palace.

4. Themes and priorities for future collecting

The museum seeks fill any current gaps in the themes listed above if and when artefacts become available. The museum also seeks to collect under the following themes-

- Photographs and images of the Ards and North Down Area in conjunction with local historical societies. The museum will be the central repository for digitised materials
- Contemporary collecting of the local area- in particular items from the 1930s to 1990s
- Local Artists- Those to a level of RHA or RUA or incorporating a traditional skill not already represented in the collection or an excellent representation of a local area not already represented in the collection
- Costume Collection- the museum is lacking any items of clothing to represent time periods. In particular- Victorian up to present day.

All artefacts must have a local, Ards and North Down connection.

5. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

- 5.1 The museum does not intend to dispose of collections during the period covered by this policy.

Due to the current size and condition of the collection, it is not a priority for the museum to rationalise the collection or dispose of any objects. Disposals will only be undertaken for legal, safety or care and conservation reasons. If an item is subsequently disposed of, the procedures in this policy will be followed.

6 Legal and ethical framework for acquisition and disposal of items

- 6.1 The museum recognises its responsibility to work within the parameters of the Museum Association Code of Ethics when considering acquisition and disposal.

7 Collecting policies of other museums

- 7.1 The museum will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related areas or subject fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

7.2 *Specific reference is made to the following museums:*

- National Museums Northern Ireland
- Somme Heritage Centre
- Down County Museum

8 Archival holdings

As the museum holds/intends to acquire archives, including photographs and printed ephemera, its governing body will be guided by the Archive Service Accreditation Scheme. The rationale behind collecting this type of material is to better understand, interpret, and share the history of the local area and how it has changed over the years. Information and images will be used by staff and shared with researchers and the public where possible.

9 Acquisition

9.1 The policy for agreeing acquisitions is:

The Museum Manager will be given discretion to accept artefacts and archival material donated to the museum that comply with this policy. For items offered or bought for sale, the Museum Manager will be given discretion to purchase the item if the cost is below the museum budget threshold. Any item for sale that exceeds this threshold, will be brought to committee for approval.

9.2 The museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph 'country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).

9.3 In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 2005.

10 Human remains

10.1 The museum does not hold or intend to acquire any human remains.

11 Biological and geological material

11.1 The museum will not acquire any biological or geological material.

12 Archaeological material

12.1 The museum will not acquire archaeological material (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the governing body or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures.

12.2 In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the procedures include reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure (i.e the Coroner for Treasure) as set out in the Treasure Act 1996 (as amended by the Coroners & Justice Act 2009).

13 Exceptions

13.1 Any exceptions to the above clauses will only be because the museum is:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin

In these cases, the museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority. The museum will document when these exceptions occur.

14 Spoliation

14.1 The museum will use the statement of principles 'Spoliation of Works of Art during the Nazi, Holocaust and World War II period', issued for non-national museums in 1999 by the Museums and Galleries Commission.

15 Disposal procedures

15.1 All disposals will be undertaken with reference to the SPECTRUM Primary Procedures on disposal.

15.2 The governing body will confirm that it is legally free to dispose of an item. Agreements on disposal made with donors will also be taken into account.

15.3 When disposal of a museum object is being considered, the museum will establish if it was acquired with the aid of an external funding organisation. In such cases, any conditions attached to the original grant will be followed. This may include repayment of the original grant and a proportion of the proceeds if the item is disposed of by sale.

15.4 When disposal is motivated by curatorial reasons the procedures outlined below will be followed and the method of disposal may be by gift, sale, exchange or as a last resort - destruction.

- 15.5 The decision to dispose of material from the collections will be taken by the governing body only after full consideration of the reasons for disposal. Other factors including public benefit, the implications for the museum's collections and collections held by museums and other organisations collecting the same material or in related fields will be considered. Expert advice will be obtained and the views of stakeholders such as donors, researchers, local and source communities and others served by the museum will also be sought.
- 15.6 A decision to dispose of a specimen or object, whether by gift, exchange, sale or destruction (in the case of an item too badly damaged or deteriorated to be of any use for the purposes of the collections or for reasons of health and safety), will be the responsibility of the governing body of the museum acting on the advice of professional curatorial staff, if any, and not of the curator or manager of the collection acting alone.
- 15.7 Once a decision to dispose of material in the collection has been taken, priority will be given to retaining it within the public domain. It will therefore be offered in the first instance, by gift or sale, directly to other Accredited Museums likely to be interested in its acquisition.
- 15.8 If the material is not acquired by any Accredited Museum to which it was offered as a gift or for sale, then the museum community at large will be advised of the intention to dispose of the material normally through a notice on the MA's Find an Object web listing service, an announcement in the Museums Association's Museums Journal or in other specialist publications and websites (if appropriate).
- 15.9 The announcement relating to gift or sale will indicate the number and nature of specimens or objects involved, and the basis on which the material will be transferred to another institution. Preference will be given to expressions of interest from other Accredited Museums. A period of at least two months will be allowed for an interest in acquiring the material to be expressed. At the end of this period, if no expressions of interest have been received, the museum may consider disposing of the material to other interested individuals and organisations giving priority to organisations in the public domain.
- 15.10 Any monies received by the museum governing body from the disposal of items will be applied solely and directly for the benefit of the collections. This normally means the purchase of further acquisitions. In exceptional cases, improvements relating to the care of collections in order to meet or exceed Accreditation requirements relating to the risk of damage to and deterioration of the collections may be justifiable. Any monies received in compensation for the damage, loss or destruction of items will be applied in the same way. Advice on those cases where the monies are intended to be used for the care of collections will be sought from the Northern Ireland Museums Council.
- 15.11 The proceeds of a sale will be allocated so it can be demonstrated that they are spent in a manner compatible with the requirements of the Accreditation standard. Money must be restricted to the long-term sustainability, use and development of the collection.

- 15.12 Full records will be kept of all decisions on disposals and the items involved and proper arrangements made for the preservation and/or transfer, as appropriate, of the documentation relating to the items concerned, including photographic records where practicable in accordance with SPECTRUM Procedure on deaccession and disposal.

Disposal by exchange

- 15.13 The museum will not dispose of items by exchange.

Disposal by destruction

- 16.14 If it is not possible to dispose of an object through transfer or sale, the governing body may decide to destroy it.
- 16.15 It is acceptable to destroy material of low intrinsic significance (duplicate mass-produced articles or common specimens which lack significant provenance) where no alternative method of disposal can be found.
- 16.16 Destruction is also an acceptable method of disposal in cases where an object is in extremely poor condition, has high associated health and safety risks or is part of an approved destructive testing request identified in an organisation's research policy.
- 16.17 Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought to establish the appropriate method of destruction. Health and safety risk assessments will be carried out by trained staff where required.
- 16.18 The destruction of objects should be witnessed by an appropriate member of the museum workforce. In circumstances where this is not possible, eg the destruction of controlled substances, a police certificate should be obtained and kept in the relevant object history file.

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	09 November 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	25 October 2022
File Reference	CDV28
Legislation	The Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 1972
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Community Development Grants Assessment 2023-2024
Attachments	None

The Community Development (CD) Fund is managed by the Council's Community Development Service. The total budget for the fund is £93,000, of which in 2022-23 £41,083.18 was funded by the Department of Communities (DfC) and £51,916.82 was match funded by Council.

The CD fund is split into two categories:

1. Running costs up to £2000, for administration and overhead costs. The majority of the applications received are from community houses/bases to assist with their heating and electric costs.
2. Project costs up to £1000, for community-based projects.

Feedback from communities, through the Councils Community Support Group and the Poverty Forum, demonstrates that our community groups are relying on this fund to continue to operate, particularly during the current cost of living crisis. At present many groups are creating plans to open their doors more frequently to allow

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members of their community to attend these warm spaces to ease the pressure of the rising energy prices. It is crucial to these groups that they have increased funding to ensure they can provide these spaces.

In 22/23 £16,915.54 was awarded from the fund for community-based project costs and £76,914.15 was awarded to running costs. It is proposed that in order to assist groups during the cost-of-living crisis that project costs are removed from the fund and 100% of the fund is allocated to running costs. Furthermore, it is recommended that the budget for individual applications is increased from £2000 to £2500. This will enable Council to provide groups with more support towards their energy bills and provides an opportunity for more groups to apply for the fund.

At this crucial time, it is important that community groups are supported by Council with their increasing running costs. In 2022 successful applicants received only 80% of their costs applied for. By increasing the eligible amount to £2500, it will give more groups the opportunity to apply and allow the percentage of successful costs applied for to increase.

For those groups who require funding for project costs, CD officers have access to Grant Finder, an online resource which searches for external funding streams.

The expected outcomes for the CD Fund are:

- To strengthen local communities
- To increase community participation
- To promote social inclusion through the stimulation and support of community groups
- To encourage and promote community activity
- To increase the amount available to apply for to £2500 in recognition that the rising cost of living is putting extra strain on community groups
- To focus on funding small community groups working a grassroot level
- To build community capacity and enable groups to continue to run and support their areas
- By removing project fund focus can put in ensuring more essential costs can be funded such as insurance, utilities, and rent/venue hire
- To increase the percentage awarded (80% of costs applied for was awarded in 2022) to each group by increasing the amount of running costs available to apply for

There are no viable alternatives to providing this support. As the Community Development Fund is part funded from Department for Communities the Council is obligated to match fund the stream to maximise support for community groups as stated in the Letter of Offer and Memorandum of Understanding from DFC.

Over the years there has been an increase of groups whose primary focus is not community development, this includes groups who deliver community development outcomes however have a different core focus. i.e., sports, arts, religious, heritage

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and culture. Council and DfC have alternative funding streams for these sectors, therefore it is recommended that these groups/sectors are omitted within the criteria and guidance so local grassroots community and voluntary groups only can apply to the fund.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Council approve that:

1. Project costs are removed from the CD fund and 100% of the fund is allocated to running costs.
2. The maximum available for individual applications is increased from £2000 to £2500.
3. The criteria and guidance for the grant is amended so only grassroots community and voluntary groups can avail of the fund.

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ITEM 19

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	09 November 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community and Culture
Date of Report	25 October 2022
File Reference	CDV34B
Legislation	Recreation and Youth Services (NI) Order 1986
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Summer Scheme Evaluation 2022
Attachments	Appendix 1 2021 Summer Scheme Provision Appendix 2 2022 Summer Scheme Provision

In 2022 the Council led summer schemes were delivered by the Community Development Team in the following Community Centres/locations:

- Alderman George Green Community Centre
- Ballygowan Village Hall
- Bowtown Community Hall
- Carrowdore Community Centre
- Portavogie Primary School
- Redburn Community Centre
- Westwinds Community Centre

Five Community Led Summer Schemes were to be delivered in the following areas:

- Breezemount, Green Road Community Centre – Breezemount Community Association
- Bangor, Kilcooley Community Centre – Kilcooley Women's Centre
- Killinchy, Killinchy Community Hall - Killinchy and District Community Development Association

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- Millisle, Millisle Community Hub - Millisle Youth Forum
- Portaferry, Steel Dickson Avenue - Ballyphilip Youth Club

Two Community Partners withdrew from receiving assistance from the Council to deliver their schemes. Breezemount Community Association withdrew as they received funding from another source to deliver their scheme, while Killinchy withdrew as they raised concerns around the tight time frame in which they could build their capacity enough to deliver their scheme. This meant of the five agreed partners only three would be able to deliver Community Led Summer Schemes funded by the Council, whilst one other was delivered using an alternative funding source.

Across both schemes there was a total of 476 child places (336 Council places, 140 Community partner places) available each week across the period 18/07/2022 to 05/08/2022). This equates to an increase of 112 places per week compared with 2021 figures. Table 1 refers.

Table 1

Council Led locations x 2 weeks	Number of children 2021	Number of children 2022	Community Partner location	Number of children 2021	Number of children 2022
Ards-Bowtown	N/A	48	Breezemount x 3 weeks	32	N/A
Ards-Westwinds	12	48	Kilcooley x 2 (x3) weeks	50	60
Ballygowan	38	48	Millisle x 2 weeks	60	30
Bangor	64	48	Portaferry x 1 week	32	50
Carrowdore	N/A	48			
Hollywood	38	48			
Portavogie	38	48			
Total Per Week	190	336	Total Per Week	174	140

The heat maps at Appendix 1 and 2 demonstrates the increase in the Councils Summer Scheme provision from 2021 to 2022 and shows an equitable spread of provision across the Borough.

The Process

This year the Community Development Team provided an online registration process. Not only did this significantly reduce the costs that are usually associated with registration such as venue hire and staff wages, but also increased the availability of summer scheme places to residents of the Borough as they could register from home and work etc.

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Within the first 30 minutes of the online registration process for summer scheme going live, 340 children had been registered onto the scheme.

Face-to-face verification of forms (birth certificates, utility bills etc.), was provided at Ards Blair Mayne and Well Being Centre (ABMWBLC), where summer scheme fees could be collected. Again, this was well received as it was the first year that electronic card payments could be received from parents. Where parents struggled with producing the necessary paperwork or making payment officers provided individual support.

Further provision was supported for those parents who were unable to attend ABMWBLC. They could bring their documents for ratification and their cash payment along to the centre in which their child was registered on the first day of the summer scheme.

Staffing

The Council Led Schemes employed 56 agency staff, supplied by The Recruitment Co. The approach of bringing Summer Scheme Coordinators into planning meetings was not employed due to the time constraints laid upon the Community Development Team to deliver the Summer Schemes.

Summer Scheme Promotion

Registration for both Council and Community Partner schemes was advertised through Council's website and Face Book pages. Flyers were delivered around the areas where summer schemes were being delivered.

In terms of marketing the schemes, a photographer was engaged to take photos for dissemination across social media and Council website.

Program delivery

This year programme delivery relied heavily upon the agency staff that had been recruited. These staff used initiative and understanding to help them deliver education and physical sessions to the young people.

Facilitators costs were reduced dramatically as activities were able to be offered outdoors, due to the good weather and activity-based trips were once again able to take place, due to COVID restrictions being eased.

Parent Surveys

89.53% of parents that responded to the summer scheme survey showed they found the online registration process easy, with 8.57% of parents finding the process moderate and 1.9% of those surveyed found the online process difficult. 84.76% of parents showed they thought the programme content was excellent, with 10.48% describing it as very good and the remaining 4.76% describing it as good.

100% of parents that responded to the survey said they would travel to other locations to access summer scheme provision and thought the schemes were value for money. They also rated the summer scheme staff as good or above (84.76% excellent, 12.38% very good, 2.86% good).

Unclassified

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Children feedback

Feedback from the children was very positive, with children stating they enjoyed a positive experience, with particular reference made to the interactive experiences delivered throughout the summer scheme. Children displaying negative behaviours were at an all-time low, this demonstrates our program to be full, enriched, challenging, educational, exciting, and attractive to children attending. Parents endorsed this view saying their children were happy and exhausted each day, with the scheme being excellent value for money.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

Unclassified

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ITEM 20

Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	09 November 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure Services
Date of Report	17 October 2022
File Reference	SD109
Legislation	Recreation and Youth services Order (1986)
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Ards and North Down Sports Forum Grants (WG October 2022)
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Successful Coaching Report for Approving Appendix 2 - Successful Goldcard Report Appendix 3 - Successful Individual Travel & Accommodation Report Appendix 4 - Unsuccessful Report

Members will be aware that on the 26 August 2015 Council delegated authority to the Ards and North Down Sports Forum, in order to allow it to administer sports grants funding on behalf of the Council. £40,000 had been allocated within the 2022/2023 revenue budget for this purpose.

The Council further authorised the Forum under delegated powers to award grants of up to £250. Grants above £250 still require Council approval. In addition, the Council requested that regular updates are reported to members.

Unclassified

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During September 2022, the Forum received a total of 29 grant applications: 1 Coaching, 5 Goldcard, 22 Individual Travel/Accommodation and 1 Club Travel/Accommodation. A summary of the 17 successful applications are detailed in the attached Successful Coaching, Goldcard and Individual Travel & Accommodation Appendices.

For information, the annual budget and spend to date on grant categories is as follows:

	Annual Budget	Funding Awarded September 2022	Remaining Budget
Anniversary	£1,000	£0	£250
Coaching	£3,000	*£495	£1,038.75
Equipment	£11,000	£0	*£3,406.84
Events	£6,000	£0	£1,700
Seeding	£500	£0	£250
Travel and Accommodation	£14,500	*£1,950	£1,484.09
Discretionary	£1,000	£0	£1,000
New category under development	£3,000	£0	£3,000
Goldcards proposed during the period September 2022 is 3.			

* The proposed remaining budget for Coaching of **£1,038.75** is based on a proposed award of **£495** for Approval. *The proposed remaining budget for Equipment of **£3,406.84** is based on reclaimed costs of £10.14. The proposed remaining budget for Travel and Accommodation of **£1,484.09** is based on a proposed award of **£1,950** – for Noting, and withdrawn costs of £24.14.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council approves the attached applications for financial assistance for sporting purposes valued at above £250, and that the applications approved by the Forum (valued at below £250) are noted.

Unclassified

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ITEM 21**Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Community and Wellbeing
Date of Meeting	09 November 2022
Responsible Director	Director of Community and Wellbeing
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Leisure Services
Date of Report	14 October 2022
File Reference	CW74
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	Ards Peninsula 3G Multi-Use Pitch
Attachments	None

Members will be aware that it was agreed at the Community and Wellbeing Committee in February 2022 to commission an Integrated Design Team (IDT) to progress this project to the design and planning stage and to commission a suitable consultant(s) to carry out the appropriate site investigations.

As a result of a delay due to other demands on the Councils Procurement and Capital Projects Units, this tender process commenced in September 2022 and a draft set of tender documents has been established. To that end, a timetable has now been agreed with Procurement and key dates are outlined in the table below.

ACTIVITY	DATES
Preparation of PQQ documents	Early October 2022
Publication of PQQ via eTendersNI	End of October 2022
Closing date for return of PQQ	21 November 2022

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Evaluation panel to meet	6 December 2022
Issue ITT Invitations via eTendersNI	Before end of December 2022
Closing Date for return of ITT Submissions	February 2023
Evaluation panel to meet	20 February 2023
Seek Committee & Council Approval (March)	March 2023
IDT appointed, and award letter issued	April 2023
Concept Design and Site Investigations	April – August 2023
Developed Design	August – October 2023
Planning (Major Application): Pre-Application Community Consultation	25 August 2023 – 2 December 2023
Planning Application Process	December 2023 – December 2024
Technical Design	December 2024 – March 2025
Contractor Procurement and Appointment	March 2025 – September 2025
Construction on site	September – June 2026
Facility available for opening	Summer 2026
Defects Period	One year from handover
Post Project Evaluation	August 2027

In parallel to above land ownership discussions will continue to be progressed with the relevant parties. Members should be aware that the above schedule is indicative at this stage and dependant on availability of funding and permissions being granted as planned.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council note the above draft programme and that following presentation of this to Council, Council Officers will engage further with key stakeholders.