

<b>Document Control Number:</b>	ALL-POL-001-02		
<b>Document Name:</b>	Sustainability and Climate Change Policy		
<b>Date 1<sup>st</sup> Issued:</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2015	<b>Latest Issue Date:</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> March 2022
<b>Issued By:</b>	E Adair	<b>Approved By:</b>	Corporate Services Committee

## Ards and North Down Borough Council

<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Sustainability and Climate Change Policy</b>
<b>Policy Reference</b>	ALL-POL-002
<b>Version</b>	02
<b>Policy Summary</b>	The Sustainability and Climate Change Policy gives a commitment that the Council will carry out its activities and functions a manner which minimizes any potentially negative climate change impacts and states that the principles of sustainable development will be integrated throughout all Ards and North Down Borough Council activities.
<b>Source/Author(s)</b>	Compliance Officer - Sustainability
<b>Date of Equality and Sustainability Screening Panel</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> April 2022
<b>Date of Council Approval</b>	25 May 2022
<b>Implementation Date</b>	25 May 2022
<b>Last Review Date</b>	06 May 2022
<b>Next Review Date</b>	30 April 2023
<b>Officer Responsible for Review</b>	Compliance Officer - Sustainability
<b>Any Other Information</b>	This policy can be provided in alternative formats if required in relation to language or disability.

### Revision History:

Date	Changes Made	Version
9 November 2021		

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## Sustainability and Climate Change Policy

### Policy Summary

This Sustainability and Climate Change Policy gives a commitment that the Council will endeavour to reduce its impact on the local and global environment by demonstrating clear leadership, providing high quality services, whilst preventing pollution, reducing waste and greenhouse gas emissions and saving energy and water.

The Council will strive towards compliance with all sustainability, environmental and climate change legislation, guidance and best practice principles to fulfil its statutory responsibilities.

As part of its commitment to acting sustainably and safeguarding the environment, Ards and North Down Borough Council will follow an informed approach in protecting the environment and our outstanding natural surroundings, including many internationally recognised designated sites, eg ASSIs, AONBs, SPAs and SACs. To mitigate and adapt to climate change we will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and improve our resilience to current and future climate impacts. We will conserve natural resources, enhance biodiversity and further improve the quality of life and the sense of well-being for all our residents.

We will do this by initially looking internally within the organisation to mitigate and adapt the Council's practices, in order to reduce our environmental footprint and promote sustainability, and then looking outward, working constructively with our external partners to further sustainable development by ensuring the integration and balancing of social, economic and environmental factors when plan-making and decision-taking, in order to support the long-term public interest.

### Requirement for Policy

Ards and North Down Borough Council has an ISO 14001 Environmental Management System which requires us to have an Environmental Policy.

The Council is also required to demonstrate compliance with the Duty for Sustainable Development, the Biodiversity Duty and any future Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill or sustainability and environmental legislation.

A Climate Emergency was also declared, by the Council, in February 2019.

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This Policy has been devised to address all sustainability, biodiversity and environmental requirements.

**Who does this policy apply to**

This policy applies to all Council employees, Elected Members, external contractors, visitors, service users and all persons and organisations using Council's facilities.

## Sustainable Development

**Our Commitment to Sustainable Development**

Our economy and society depend on a healthy environment. To achieve this, the Council is committed to integrating sustainability throughout our operations.

To deliver against this commitment the Council will:

- Empower the local community to live healthy, sustainable and fulfilling lives through our Community Plan, Community Development and community engagement work.
- The Local Development Plan will play a key role in looking after and improving our environment for future generations in a changing climate. It can do so by promoting sustainable development, promoting sustainable and active travel to assist with limiting emissions, promoting green infrastructure and avoiding development in areas with risk from flooding. The LDP shall deliver locally distinct planning policy including policies related to renewable energy.
- Supporting local prosperity, equal opportunity, social value and fair trade.
- Consider the sustainability and climate change impact of all new policies and activities including how we can reduce our impact on climate change (mitigate) and how we can prepare and adapt ourselves and our ratepayers to the expected effects of climate change
- Promote and support a Sustainable Food System by considering the influence we have in using our buying power and community relationships to encourage healthy and sustainable food production; and consumption and encouraging the use of seasonal, local produce, promoting ways to reduce food waste, providing land and support where possible for community growing

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- Sustainable design principles are integrated into all major construction and refurbishment projects at the design phase, incorporating it into both the business case and project specification.
- Monitor and manage our own use of natural resources as an organisation, as well as championing sustainability as a community leader.
- Require contractors and others operating on our behalf to uphold the same sustainability standards.
- Ensure that Council Officers and Elected Members are regularly briefed on sustainability and climate change issues; and
- Regularly report on progress in delivering our sustainability and climate change programs.

### **Assessing Sustainability**

Ards and North Down Borough Council is committed to screening our activities for their social, economic and environmental impacts. The assessment of sustainability will identify when significant adverse impacts may occur. If issues are identified during the screening process the activity may be reviewed, revised or have mitigation measures applied to it before it can proceed.

All new policies, plans, strategies should be screened for their sustainability impact:

- New strategies
- Events
- Capital building projects
- Activities affecting the public realm
- Community consultation exercises
- Community plan
- New projects and initiatives
- Choosing location for new infrastructure
- Changes to service delivery
- Management arrangements for the Council estate

The list above is not exclusive and other activities that do not fall within the above categories should also be considered and assessed for their sustainability impact.

The Local Development Plan shall be accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal incorporating strategic environmental assessment.

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## Integrating Sustainability

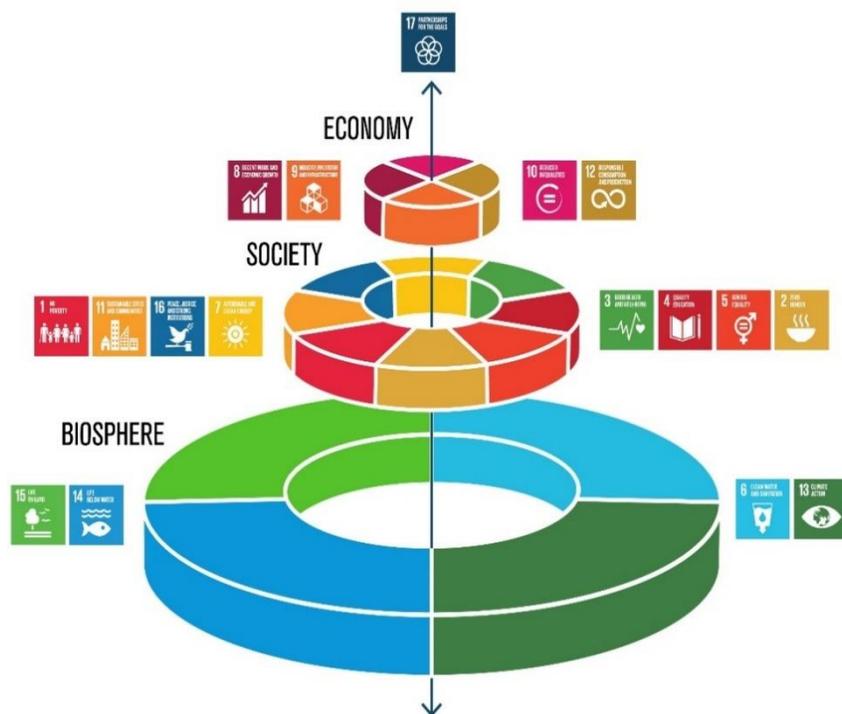
Ards and North Down Borough Council will strive towards compliance with all sustainability, environmental and climate change legislation, guidance and best practice principles to fulfil its statutory responsibilities.

It will demonstrate its commitment to sustainability by including sustainability principles within all corporate and service level documents.

The Roadmap to Sustainability is the central strategy to ensuring sustainability and climate change is 'main-stream' in all councils policies and plans.

## Sustainable Development Goals

The Council has formally agreed to support and promote the UN Goals in June 2018. This agreement has been further extended into the councils [Roadmap to Sustainability](#), agreed by council in March 2021.



We recognise that local development goals cannot be achieved without simultaneously looking after the planet and its ability to provide the natural

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resources and ecosystem services on which our economy and society depends.

Furthering sustainable development requires the integration and balancing of complex social, economic and environmental factors when plan-making and decision-taking. To achieve this, the Council is committed to integrating, where possible, sustainability throughout its operations.

The Council also recognises that urgent action is required to address the climate and nature emergency, and that the Council must play its part in the global effort to meet the aims of the UN Paris Agreement to combat climate change and accelerate and intensify the actions needed for a sustainable, low carbon future.

## Legal requirement (Sustainable Development)

### **Duty for Sustainable Development**

The principal legal requirement for this policy is the Duty for Sustainable Development contained within Section 25 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006. This places a statutory duty on district councils to promote the achievement of sustainable development.

The principles of sustainable development will be integrated throughout all Ards and North Down Borough Council activities.

### **Duty for Biodiversity**

The principal legal requirement for this policy is the Duty for Sustainable Development contained within Section 25 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006. This places a statutory duty on district councils to promote the achievement of sustainable development.

The principles of sustainable development will be integrated throughout all Ards and North Down Borough Council activities.

### **Proposed Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill**

As of 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022, Northern Ireland has its own Climate Change Bill - CC (n.2) Bill, also known as the Minister's Bill, passed the final stage of the Assembly legislative process. It will now go forward for Royal Assent.

The key targets include:

- *Overall Net Zero Target by 2050 (+target for 2030 & 2040)*
- *Sectoral Plans*
- *80% by 2030 Renewables target*

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- *10% Active Travel Budget requirement*
- *Just Transition Fund for Agriculture*
- *Soil Quality & Biodiversity Targets*
- *Sectoral carbon budgets*
- *Nature-Based Solutions support*
- *Just Transition Commission*
- *Climate Commissioner within two years*
- *Climate Action Plan within three years*
- *Methane Emissions - separate reduction target of 46% by 2050 (largely associated with the agricultural sector)*

Note: a bill proposed by a minister has the preference for final stage consideration. Therefore, the Minister's Bill had a quicker legislative process than the PMB, which did not proceed.

## Green Leases

**Green Leases** The built environment is responsible for 40 per cent of the UK's carbon emissions and government's carbon reduction targets and impending legislation's are driving the issue of 'green leases' from the periphery of the owner/ occupier discussions into the very middle of every conversation about environmental performance of the built environment. The built environment is a significant consumer of and contributor to the nation's energy and water consumption and waste generation. Owners and occupiers will inevitably have to make green-related decisions when choosing materials for fit-outs, alteration and refurbishments. Owners should seek to minimise their EPC ratings and achieve high levels of BREEAM and LEED accreditation when building new premises or refurbishing existing ones.

**What is a 'Green' Lease?** It is a standard lease that:

- Includes additional clauses relating to the management and improvement of the environmental performance of a building;
- Is enforceable for the entire term of the lease;
- Helps to provide realistic and measurable building efficiency targets;

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**Five Broad Categories**

The 'green' element of the lease will fall into 5 broad categories as follows:

- Energy – Building Management Systems (BMS); separate utilities metering systems; motion and daylight sensors lighting systems; appropriate service and maintenance strategy; renewable energy schemes
- Water – building strategy and individual metering; advanced metering technology; efficient plumbing; recycling of grey water and rainwater/ storm water harvesting
- Waste – waste audits and monitoring; reduction strategy; adequate space for recyclables storage; fit-out and refurbishment contractors to make provision for waste recycling and segregation
- Building works – avoid work compromising environmental performance; BREEAM; LED; EPC; sustainable replacement of plant and equipment; sustainability-based planned preventative maintenance; EV charging; green travel plans; on-site cycle storage and cyclist's facilities; SUDs
- Biophilic and Biodiversity Planning – use of plants and natural materials; biodiversity in and around the building; green roofs; living walls; building performance monitoring

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

Sometimes agreement between owners/ occupiers cannot be reached on 'green' leases but nevertheless they each have a strong commitment to all things green. In such cases the parties can agree to enter into a MOU outlining how they will both commit to working together on how they will improve and manage the building's environmental performance. MOU's are not legally binding documents and can be updated by either party without effecting the terms of the over-arching lease. They are a faster way to securing a green-related agreement.

**Benefits to owners/ occupiers of 'Green' leases**

Owners – good quality space is easier to rent; better leasing terms able to be negotiated; occupiers will be keen to renew leases  
 Occupiers – allays environmental and social impact concerns; reduces reputational risk; reduces operational costs; creates a 'green' culture

Ards and North Down Borough Council will consider the use of Green Leases where practicable.

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**Monitoring Sustainability Compliance**

Compliance with this policy will be monitored using the Roadmap to Sustainability. This live document will be regularly reviewed and reported to council and senior management.

**Related Information**

Compliance with the Duty for Sustainable Development will be assessed via the Council's:

- Sustainable Screening form
- Roadmap to Sustainability

**Other Council Policies and Procedures relevant to Environmental Aspects**

Roadmap to Sustainability  
 Local Biodiversity Action Plan  
 Tree & Woodland Strategy  
 Procurement Policy & Guidelines  
 Emergency Plan  
 Learning & Development Strategy  
 Pride in Performance Conversations  
 Land & Property Policy  
 Local Development Plan

## Environmental Management System

**Required ISO 14001 Environmental Performance**

Ards and North Down Borough Council is committed to continual improvement and prevention of pollution by reducing the environmental impacts that arise from our business activities and delivery of our services.

Through the implementation of our Environmental Management System the Council will:

1. Set realistic and measurable objectives and targets together with an Environmental Management Programme to ensure continual improvement in environmental performance; and
2. Regularly review this policy to ensure it continues to be effective and representative of our activities and services.

We endeavor to:

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1. Minimise the amount of waste generated internally and disposed of to landfill. Where reduction is not practical, seek to reuse or recycle waste and ensure the safe disposal of all waste;
2. Introduce measures to ensure good practice and the responsible use of natural resources such as water, fuel and energy;
3. Investigate and introduce, where possible, measures to minimise the release of pollutants which cause damage to land, air and water due to our activities,
4. Reduce the environmental impact of goods purchased at the same time encouraging suppliers and contracted services to improve their environmental performance

**Legal Requirements (Environmental)**

Ards and North Down Borough Council will comply fully, and where possible exceed, the requirements of applicable legislation and regulations and any other environmental requirements, through the application of good practice techniques.

*NOTE: An Environmental Legal Register is maintained within the accredited Environmental Management System*

**Monitoring Environmental Compliance**

Environmental compliance will be monitored using the Environmental Management System auditing procedure, via the collection of environmental data and via the recording of any incidents of non-compliance.

The system will be externally audited in line with the requirements of ISO 14001 verification by an appropriately qualified company.

**Related Environmental Information**

Within the environmental management system the following documents exist which help support the implementation of this policy:

- Environmental Legislation Register
- Environmental Aspects Register
- Environmental Audit Reports
- Environmental Corrective Action Database
- Environmental Monitoring Information

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## Management of Environmental Aspects

The most significant environmental aspects associated with Council operations and activities include (but are not exclusive to):

<b>Energy</b>	<p>Energy use has a major economic and environmental impact on both the Council and the wider Ards and North Down Borough area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotes the efficient use of energy;</li> <li>- Maximises economic savings through efficient use of energy and installing low energy technology; and</li> <li>- Prioritises the use of renewable energy across our entire Council estate.</li> </ul> <p>Fleet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Introduction of Lightfoot to aid the reduction of fuel usage.</li> <li>- Continually researching alternative fuels, eg electric and hydrogen.</li> <li>- Continuing to procure the latest emissions standards on new vehicles</li> </ul>
<b>Waste</b>	<p>The Council will lead by example to support ratepayers to reduce, reuse and recycle in line with the Waste Management Hierarchy. This will be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shifting the conversation to resource management rather than waste management</li> <li>- Promoting and communicating sustainable waste management to all our ratepayers and external contractors;</li> <li>- Leading by example through minimising the amount of waste generated as a result of Council activities and at all council sites; and promoting reuse and recycling where possible.</li> <li>- Continue to enforce the council ban on single use plastic products.</li> </ul>
<b>Pollution</b>	<p>Pollution of air, water and ground can cause significant environmental problems.</p> <p>The council will:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure all infrastructure is suitable to prevent pollution from occurring or dispersing to other areas;</li> <li>- Implement and communicate procedures to ensure the correct disposal, release or spill protection of substances that could cause pollution; and</li> <li>- Minimise the use of all substances that could cause pollution.</li> </ul> <p><b>Council will specify that any 3<sup>rd</sup> party contractors will operate to the highest standards and adhere to relevant codes of practice, Considerate Constructors Scheme.</b></p>
<b>Resources</b>	<p>Excessive use of resources can have a negative environmental impact which in turn can negatively affect people and economic performance.</p> <p>The council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monitor and reduce our energy and water consumption</li> <li>- Continue to eliminate single use plastics within council operations and through our supply chain</li> <li>- Closely monitor consumables purchased and ensure only those items that are necessary are ordered;</li> <li>- Consider the whole-life-cost of items purchased and reuse items rather than purchase new ones where possible; and</li> </ul> <p>Minimise the amount of Council documents to be printed and use electronic methods of dissemination where possible.</p>
<b>Biodiversity</b>	<p>Biodiversity defined as the variety of life on earth. Moreover, it is the variety of flora and fauna and the functions that exist between them.</p> <p>The council will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Focus on Nature Based Solutions</li> <li>- Biodiversity will be considered within the Local Development Plan and a biodiversity checklist completed for all new plans</li> <li>- Our new Local Biodiversity Action Plan will be published in 2022 and will move towards a Nature Recovery Approach.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commit to increased tree planting whilst protecting and correctly managing our existing woodlands (Tree &amp; Woodland Strategy)</li> <li>- Consider the impact of planting schemes on wildlife and where possible choose pollinator friendly plants;</li> <li>- Restore ecosystems through rewilding schemes</li> <li>- Reduce the use of artificial fertilizer and pesticides; and</li> <li>- Plan our activities to reduce disturbance to nesting birds and mammals.</li> </ul>
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## Communication of Sustainability and Climate Change Policy

### Communication and Awareness

This policy shall be communicated in an effective and accessible manner so as to be understood and practiced by all our employees. We shall raise awareness of sustainability, climate change and environmental management among all those working for or on behalf of the Council through appropriate training and relevant dissemination of information.

This Policy is actively promoted and is readily available to our employees, the public and other stakeholders.

The Council now has an internal Climate Action and Sustainability Champions Working Group which meets quarterly. The policy and its impacts will be regularly communicated through this group.

### Environmental Statement

An abridged version of this policy (see Appendix 1) will be on public display within all Council buildings. This version of the policy will help enforce our environmental and legal responsibilities, demonstrate our commitment to environmental improvement as well as enforcing our desire to publicly communicate with our stakeholders.

### Reporting Compliance

Compliance with legal requirements will be reported biennially in the form of the action plan reporting of the Roadmap to Sustainability.

Reports on our compliance with the Statutory Duty for Sustainable Development, the Biodiversity Duty, UK Climate Change Act and any future Northern Ireland Climate Change Bill will be submitted to the relevant government departments as requested.

### Consequences of Not Following this Policy

Failure to follow this policy may be considered misconduct and formal disciplinary steps, in line with the Council's Disciplinary Policy, may be taken against person or persons deemed to be in breach.

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## Appendix 1 Public Environmental Statement

### Public Environmental Statement

Below is a copy of the Environmental Statement on display in all Council owned and maintained buildings.

#### Environmental Statement

Ards and North Down Borough Council is committed to being an exemplar in sustainability.

The principles of environmental stewardship are demonstrated through our strong and effective leadership. We actively strive to promote a sustainable local economy with jobs and employment for everyone; a just and fair society that promotes social inclusion, sustainable communities and personal wellbeing; and a vibrant, effective and healthy local environment.



#### Environmental Performance

Ards and North Down Borough Council is committed to acting sustainably and safeguarding the environment, Ards and North Down Borough Council will follow an informed approach in protecting the environment and our outstanding natural surroundings. To mitigate and adapt to climate change we will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and improve our resilience to current and future climate impacts. We will conserve natural resources, enhance biodiversity and further improve the quality of life and the sense of well-being for all our residents.

#### Through the implementation of our Environmental Management System we will:

Set realistic and measurable objectives and targets together with an Environmental Management Programme to ensure continual improvement in environmental performance; and Regularly review our Sustainability and Environmental Policy to ensure it continues to be effective and representative of our activities and services.

#### We endeavour to:

Minimise the amount of waste generated internally and disposed of to landfill. Where reduction is not practical, seek to reuse or recycle waste and ensure the safe disposal of all waste;  
 Introduce measures to ensure best practice and the responsible use of natural resources such as water, fuel and energy;  
 Investigate and introduce, where possible, measures to minimise the release of pollutants which cause damage to land, air and water due to our activities; and  
 Reduce the environmental impact of goods purchased at the same time encouraging suppliers and contracted services to improve their environmental performance.

#### Legal Requirements

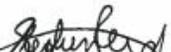
Ards and North Down Borough will comply fully, and where possible exceed, the requirements of applicable legislation and regulations and any other environmental requirements, through the application of best practice techniques.

#### Communication / Awareness

This statement shall be communicated in an effective and accessible manner so as to be understood and practiced by all our employees. We shall raise awareness of sustainability, climate change and environmental management among all those working for or on behalf of the Council through appropriate training and relevant dissemination of information.

This Environmental Statement is actively promoted and is readily available to our employees, the public, other stakeholders and has been ratified by Council. This Statement is a summary of the Council's Sustainability and Climate Change Policy (ALL-POL-002) which can be viewed in full on the Intranet or by requesting a hard copy from Ards and North Down Borough Council's Compliance Officer – Sustainability.

Signed:

  
 Stephen Reid—Chief Executive  
 On behalf of Ards and North Down Borough Council

Date:

28<sup>th</sup> July 2022