

Article 1 - The Constitution

1.1 Powers of the Council

Ards and North Down Borough Council will exercise all its powers and duties in accordance with the law and this constitution.

1.2 The constitution

This constitution (including all its appendices) is the constitution of Ards and North Down Borough Council.

1.3 Purpose of the constitution

The constitution of Ards and North Down Borough Council sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed. This is to ensure that the workings of the Council are effective, efficient and accountable to the rate payer of the Borough. The purpose of the constitution is to:

- (a) enable the Council to provide clear leadership to the community, in partnership with citizens, businesses and other organisations;
- (b) support the active involvement of citizens in the process of Council decision-making;
- (c) help councillors represent their constituents more effectively;
- (d) enable decisions to be taken efficiently and effectively;
- (e) create a powerful and effective means of holding decision-makers to public account;
- (f) ensure that no one will review or scrutinise a decision in which they were directly involved;
- (g) ensure that those responsible for decision-making are clearly identifiable to local people and that the decision-makers explain the reasons for decisions; and
- (h) provide a means of improving the delivery of services to the community and specifically our four strategic priorities:
 - **Prosperity**
 - Creating a strong and competitive business environment
 - Attracting more inward investment through the creation of 'best in class' infrastructure
 - Supporting business start-up, development and growth
 - Growing the social economy and increasing the opportunity for social enterprises
 - Increasing the value of tourism to the economy

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- Creating a thriving rural economy
- Increasing employment opportunities
- **Place**
 - Regenerating towns, villages and neighbourhoods to create vibrant and thriving places
 - Removing dereliction and decay from towns, villages and neighbourhoods
 - Investing in the quality of parks, open spaces, buildings and facilities to increase their value and use
 - Protecting, conserving and looking after the natural and built environment
 - Celebrating and protecting the area's rich cultural heritage
 - Creating a cleaner environment
 - Creating a place where people choose to reuse and recycle their waste
 - Creating a place where people feel and are safer
 - Creating a place of which people are proud.
- **People**
 - Creating more sustainable, self-reliant and stronger communities
 - Greater and more positive active citizenship
 - Greater community empowerment
 - Creating greater social cohesion, where there is greater tolerance and respect for diversity
 - Creating greater social integration
 - Encouraging and supporting healthier lifestyles
 - Reducing poverty, deprivation and disadvantage
 - Improving connectivity and access to services particularly in isolated communities
 - Creating greater civic pride amongst our people
 - Giving strong civic leadership to our people
- **Performance**
 - Delivering financial prudence through sustainable rate rises and value for money services.
 - Developing and investing in the organisation and the potential of all its employees
 - Directing our resources to our priorities, focussing on results and outcomes
 - Delivering high levels of service satisfaction
 - Delivering high quality customer focussed services that are 'best in class'
 - Creating a 'can do' high performance culture
 - Working effectively as one team – elected members and senior officers in partnership together
 - Develop innovative, agile, efficient, effective services and support systems, policies and processes, embracing new technology in this process
 - Establish and grow productive and effective partnerships with others.

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- Communicate well, listen and respond to our citizens.
- Deliver excellence in governance and accountability
- Learn from others to ensure we continually strive for improvement in performance

1.4 Interpretation and Review of the Constitution

Where the constitution permits the Council to choose between different courses of action, the Council will always choose that option which it thinks is closest to the statements of purpose in paragraph 1.3 above.

The Council will monitor and evaluate the operation of the constitution as set out in Article 14 Review and Revision of the constitution