

# **ARDS AND NORTH DOWN BOROUGH COUNCIL**

6 March 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

You are hereby invited to attend a meeting of the Corporate Services Committee of Ards and North Down Borough in the Council Chamber, 2 Church Street, Newtownards, on **Tuesday 12 March 2024 commencing at 7pm.**

Yours faithfully  
Chief Executive  
Ards and North Down Borough Council

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

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Deputation - Northern Ireland Water

### **Reports for Approval:**

4. ABF 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – Royal Irish Concert, Waterfront Hall 6 April 2024 (Report attached)
5. Civic Event Policy (Report attached)
6. Scheme of Allowances (Report attached)
7. Finance Policies (Report attached)

### **Reports for Noting:**

8. Revenue Raising Consultations (Report attached)
9. Quarterly Report on Equality and Good Relations (Report attached)
10. Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland continuing operations beyond 2024 (Report attached)
11. Charter Plus Award for Member Development (Report attached)
12. Residents Survey (Report attached)
13. Prudential Indicators & Treasury Management – 2023/24 Qtr 3 (Report attached)

14. Response to Notices of Motion:

- a) NOM 164 – Event Management (Report attached)

15. Notices of Motion:

- (a.) Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor W Irvine and Councillor S Irvine:  
That this Council in recognition of the 70 years of service rendered by the late her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II gives consideration to the erection of a permanent memorial of Queen Elizabeth II at the redeveloped marine gardens. A report to be brought back to Council to include options on the commissioning and costings of the memorial.

16. Any other notified business

ITEMS 17 – 19 \*\*\*IN CONFIDENCE\*\*\*

**Reports for Approval:**

- 17. Request from Panoramic Wheel Co. Ltd. to use Council Land at McKee Clock Arena, Bangor (Report attached)
- 18. Renewal of Lease - Millisle Lagoon and Beach Park (Report attached)
- 19. SPFG Minutes 26 February 2024 (copy attached)

Alderman Brooks	Councillor Kennedy
Alderman Graham	Councillor S Irvine
Alderman McAlpine	Councillor W Irvine
Alderman McIlveen	Councillor Irwin
Alderman Smith	Councillor MacArthur (Vice Chair)
Councillor Chambers	Councillor McCracken
Councillor Cochrane	Councillor McRandal
Councillor Gilmour	Councillor Moore (Chairman)

Unclassified

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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	.
Date of Report	01 February 2024
File Reference	'-
Legislation	'-
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	ABF 80 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary - Royal Irish Concert, Waterfront Hall, 6 April 2024
Attachments	* Letter from Army Benevolent Fund

A letter has been received from the Army Benevolent Fund (ABF) inviting a group of Councillors and staff to an Anniversary Concert scheduled for 6 April 2024 in the Waterfont Hall. The concert is intended to celebrate ABF's 80 Years as a service charity and is a salute to His Majesty the King in the second year of his reign. The concert will raise funds for soldiers, army veterans and their families in need. ABF have extended an invitation to a group of Councillors and staff at a cost of £66pp and have asked that the date of the concert is added to the Councils scheduled of events for 2024.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council considers the invitation and nominates Councillors to attend the Concert if desired.

**Army  
Benevolent  
Fund**

Army Benevolent Fund (Northern Ireland)  
Building 115  
Thiepval Barracks  
Lisburn, BT28 3NP  
Tel: 028 9267 8112  
ni@armybenevolentfund.org

President  
General Sir James Everard KCB CBE  
  
Chair of Trustees  
Simon Heale  
  
Chief Executive  
Major General Tim Hyams CB OBE

NI Councils List A.

2ch January 2024

**ABF 80<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY – ROYAL IRISH CONCERT WATERFRONT HALL, 6<sup>th</sup> APR 2024**

Dear Mr Reid,

On behalf of our Hon Regional President, The Viscount Brookeborough KG, I would like to inform you of our Anniversary Concert at the Waterfront Hall, Belfast, featuring the Band, Bugles, Pipes and Drums of the Royal Irish Regiment. It will take place on the evening of Saturday 6th April 2024, to celebrate of our 80 years as a Service Charity, and as a salute to His Majesty the King in the second year of his reign, through the medium of music. It will also serve to raise funds for soldiers, army veterans and their families in times of need.

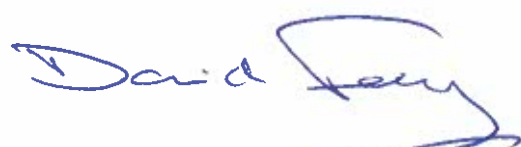
The Army Benevolent Fund has been in existence since 1944 and supports soldiers, veterans and army families who have fallen upon hard times, raising around £8 million annually to meet this need. Should you wish to know more about the work of the charity, you can visit our website at [www.armybenevolentfund.org](http://www.armybenevolentfund.org)

We would like to invite a group of your Councillors and staff to attend and I would be grateful if you could enter the date of the concert into your forecast of events for 2024 and support the charity by planning to attend what I know will be a tremendously entertaining evening. VIP tickets cost £66pp and allow the holders to relax in a VIP lounge with drinks and nibbles as part of the ticket price, both before the show and during the interval. VIP seating is also included for the performance.

If your policies do not allow funding for charitable support, I would be grateful if this could be circulated to councillors and staff who might share an interest in our aims.

If you have any enquiries, don't hesitate to contact me on [ni@armybenevolentfund.org](mailto:ni@armybenevolentfund.org) or by calling 02892 678112. Please note that we work from home on Mondays and Fridays.

Best wishes,

  
David Forsey  
Director (NI)



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

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administration
Date of Report	19 February 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Civic Event Policy
Attachments	Appendix 1 Draft Civic Event Policy 2024

The Council agreed a Civic Events Policy in October 2016. It was considered prudent to review the Policy given that a reasonable period of time has elapsed and in response to an increasing number of requests being received.

Officers have considered levels of recognition, given the differing requests that are received. In an effort to address the volume of requests, we have proposed a tiered approach of recognition, to better manage the limited budget. In the current financial year, the Civic Events budgets is £20,000. Civic receptions range in cost from £1,000 to £3,500 each.

Additions/changes to the attached draft policy are indicated in red text (Appendix 1).

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council adopt the draft Civic Event Policy.

## Draft Civic Events Policy

### Introduction

The Council wishes to give appropriate recognition to individuals, groups and organisations within the Borough to acknowledge outstanding achievements.

### Aim

The aim of the policy is to put a framework in place to assess the requests received and to determine the appropriate level of recognition which can be facilitated by the Council. A significant number of requests are received from Elected Members each year and therefore adherence to the policy is imperative to ensure that all groups have equal opportunity to be recognised.

### Levels of Recognition

There is a fixed budget for hosting such events and therefore it is important that recognition aligns with the level of achievement or milestone and the numbers to whom the recognition may have significance.

All requests will be considered in the following order:-

1. **Letter of Congratulations** – Council will acknowledge the achievement with a letter of congratulations from the Mayor.
2. **Mayoral Reception** – For anniversary events and achievements the Mayor will host the individual, group or organisation in the Mayor's Parlour (up to 8 people) or Craig Room or Chamber for larger numbers. The Mayor and a Senior Officer will attend. Attendee numbers will be agreed in conjunction with the recipient.
3. **Civic Reception** – A Civic Reception should be considered a significant honour for the recipient(s) and it is important that they were only hosted on a limited basis to maintain the prestigious nature of such events. For individuals, groups and organisations who have achieved significant achievement or milestone a Civic Reception will be held. The Lord Lieutenant of County Down, Sheriff, MPs, Aldermen, Councillors, MLAs and Corporate Leadership Team will be invited to attend. There is an expectation that elected members support events. The following process should be followed:
  - All requests for consideration of a Civic Reception must be submitted in writing to the Chief Executive, signed by at least three Elected Members. The members must fully detail the outstanding achievement and a clear rationale for why the Council should accede to the request.
  - On receipt of a written request an Officer's report will be placed on the agenda of the Corporate Services Committee.
  - The report will assess the request for a Civic Reception against set criteria (set out below) and would make a clear recommendation to Council to either agree to, or refuse, the request.

- The Officer's report will also indicate the amount of money left in the annual budget which will have a self-limiting effect on the number of Civic Receptions that can be held in any financial year.

All of the above requests will be funded from the civic events budget. The level of budget will determine the number of requests that can be accommodated in any year.

### **Assessment Criteria for a Civic Reception**

The criterion against which each request will be assessed are as follows:-

#### **1. Exceptional Service to the Borough/Local Community and a Significant Anniversary**

The exceptional service should be in the areas of Voluntary or Charitable work AND the anniversary should be a milestone of 25 year increment anniversaries.

OR

#### **2. A Very Significant or Unique Achievement**

An achievement which would be recognised throughout Northern Ireland and beyond and the recipient has a strong association with the Borough.

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**ITEM 6****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Finance
Date of Report	23 February 2024
File Reference	FIN23
Legislation	Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (NI) 2019
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Scheme of Allowances - Councillors
Attachments	Appendix 1 Determination from Department for Communities Appendix 2 Draft Scheme of Allowances (Version 11.2) - 2023/24 Appendix 3 Draft Scheme of Allowances (Version 12) - 2024/25

**BACKGROUND**

Regulation 3 of the Payments to Councillors regulations requires district councils to prepare and publish a scheme of allowances payable to its Members for each year.



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## SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES

Following the recent National Joint Council (NJC) pay agreement for staff, the Department for Communities (DfC) have issued Circular LG 23/2023 (attached in Appendix 1), which sets new limits on all allowances for the current financial year and for dependant carers allowance for the 2024/25 financial year. The Committee considered this circular when setting the budget for Members' allowances for the 2024/25 financial year.

Appendix 2 sets out a draft revised scheme of allowances for 2023/24. When the budget for this year was set no provision was made to increase allowances as per column 1 (version 11.1). The additional cost of implementing version 11.2 in column 2 below would be in the region of £100k.

Appendix 3 sets out a draft revised scheme of allowances for 2024/25. The budget for the next financial year is recommended to include an additional £100k to accommodate the increase proposed in version 12 (set out in column 4 below).

These are both substantially the same with only changes being in regard to the rates of allowance paid. The table below sets out a comparison for Members convenience:

	1 Current 2023/24 Version 11.1	2 Draft 2023/24 Version 11.2	3 DfC Circular	4 Draft 2024/25 Version 12	5 DfC Circular
Basic Allowance	£15,071	£17,030	£17,030	£17,030	Note 1
Special Responsibility	£51,040	51,040	£83,944	£51,040	Note 1
Dependant Carers Allowance - Std	£10.42	£10.42	£10.42	£11.44	£11.44
Dependant Carers Allowance - Specialist	£20.84	£20.84	£20.84	£22.88	£22.88
Mileage (max rate)	£0.45	£0.45	£0.65	£0.45	Note 2
Subsistence - Accommodation	£152.00	£152.00	£122.45 + inflation	£158.00	Note 2
Subsistence - Meals	£68.00	£68.00	£50.65 + inflation	£72.00	Note 2

Note 1 - The maximum payable for basic and special responsibility allowances for the 2024/25 financial year will be issued once the NJC pay agreement for staff has been published, which the DfC uses as a benchmark for making its determination.

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Note 2 – The maximum payable for mileage and subsistence will be published at the same time as for basic and special responsibility allowances but these amounts have not changed in a number of years and are unlikely to for the foreseeable future.

Both the scheme of allowances and the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Communities form Part 5 of the Council's constitution and therefore need updating following approval of the new schemes.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council:

1. Considers version 11.2 of the Scheme of Allowances to replace the previous version 11.1 with effect from 1 April 2023;
2. Considers version 12 of the Scheme of Allowances with effect from 1 April 2024; and
3. Updates its constitution accordingly.



Department for

**Communities**

An Roinn

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Department for

**Commonities**

[www.communities-ni.gov.uk](http://www.communities-ni.gov.uk)

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Chief Executive of each District Council  
Finance Officer of each District Council  
Other Interested Parties

Local Government and Housing  
Regulation Division  
Finance Branch  
Causeway Exchange  
1-7 Bedford Street  
BELFAST  
BT2 7EG  
Phone: 028 9082 3375  
email:  
[Anthony.carleton@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:Anthony.carleton@communities-ni.gov.uk)

Our ref: CO1-23-1118

28 November 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

**CIRCULAR LG 23/2023 - CONSOLIDATED COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES CIRCULAR**  
**(Updated November 2023)**

This Local Government Circular provides a consolidated record of all councillor allowances and supersedes Local Government Circular LG 3/2023.

This consolidated circular is required to determine and reflect an increase in maximum rates for Basic and Special Responsibility Allowance from 1 April 2023 and an increase in Dependants' Carers' Allowance from 1 April 2024.

All determinations are made by the Department under section 31 of the Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019.

If you have any queries on the content of this circular please contact Jeff Glass on 028 9082 3375 or Ian Lewis on 028 9082 3506 or by email [jeff.glass@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:jeff.glass@communities-ni.gov.uk) or [ian.lewis@communities-ni.gov.uk](mailto:ian.lewis@communities-ni.gov.uk) .

Yours faithfully,

**ANTHONY CARLETON**  
**Director**  
**Local Government and Housing Regulation**

1. **Basic Allowance**

- valid from 1 April 2023

Basic Allowance
Maximum £17,030 per annum ≠

≠ (The basic allowance includes an element for incidental and consumable costs incurred by councillors in their official capacity. In 2015/16 this element was £1,000 and each year this amount is uplifted in line with the increase applied to the basic allowance, therefore this element within the basic allowance is £1,199 from 1 April 2023.)

2. Dependants’ Carers’ Allowance

- valid from 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

The following table states the maximum rates for dependants’ carers’ allowance.

Dependants’ Carers’ Allowance	Hourly Rate £	Maximum Monthly Amount £
Standard	10.42^	542
Specialist	20.84	1,084

^(Based on national living wage)

- valid from 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025

The following table states the maximum rates for dependants’ carers’ allowance.

Dependants’ Carers’ Allowance	Hourly Rate £	Maximum Monthly Amount £
Standard	11.44^	595
Specialist	22.88	1,190

^(Based on national living wage)

### 3. Travel Allowances

– valid from 1 April 2017

The following table states the maximum rates for travel allowances.

Type of Vehicle	Rate per Mile  Pence	Rate per Mile Above 8,500 miles  Pence	Rate per Mile Above 10,000 miles  Pence
A pedal cycle	20.0p	20.0p	20.0p
A motor cycle (all engine capacities)	24.0p	24.0p	24.0p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 450cc but not exceeding 999cc	46.9p	13.7p	13.7p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 999cc but not exceeding 1,199cc	52.2p	14.4p	14.4p
A motor car of cylinder capacity exceeding 1,199cc	65.0p	16.4p	16.4p
An electric car	45.0p	45.0p	25.0p
Passenger rate (per passenger)	5.0p	5.0p	5.0p

**4. Special Responsibility Allowance**

– valid from 1 April 2023

The following table states the maximum rate of Special Responsibility Allowance that a council may pay. The maximum rate is based on the size of the council population. Each council's population figures are updated each year by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and it is the duty of each council to operate within the total maximum rate appropriate to its population band. For ease the maximum any councillor can receive, within each band, is also provided.

<b>Population of council</b>	<b>Maximum Special Responsibility Allowance  £</b>	<b>Maximum (1/5<sup>th</sup>) for individual councillor  £</b>
Less than 120,000	59,960	11,992
120,000 to 199,000	83,944	16,789
200,000 +	129,513	25,903



## 5. Subsistence Allowances

– valid from 1 April 2015

The following table states the maximum rates for subsistence; however, where councils believe it is necessary there is flexibility for councils to increase these rates by applying a suitable measure of price inflation.

PERIOD/MEAL	British Isles Rates £	London Rates £
<b>Accommodation allowance</b> - An absence involving an overnight stay, away from the normal place of residence. This rate does not include any meal allowance.	100.70	122.45
<b>Breakfast allowance</b> - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period before 11 am)	11.50	11.50
<b>Lunch allowance</b> - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period including the period between 12 noon and 2pm)	13.50	13.50
<b>Tea allowance</b> - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period including the period between 3pm and 6pm)	4.70	4.70
<b>Evening meal allowance</b> - (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period ending after 7pm)	20.95	20.95



# Ards and North Down Borough Council

## SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES PAYABLE TO COUNCILLORS Version 11.2

This Scheme is made under the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 and takes account of the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Communities set out in Circular 23/2019 (as amended).

### 1. Definitions

In this scheme 'approved duty' and committee member are as defined in Regulation 2 of the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (NI) 2019 and Section 36 Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011.

### 2. Commencement Date

This scheme of allowances shall be operational from 1 April 2023.

### 3. Basic Allowance

An annual basic allowance of £17,030 shall be paid to each councillor. Where applicable this will be paid pro-rata.

The basic allowance includes an element for incidental and consumable costs incurred by Councillors in their official capacity. This element is £1,199.

### 4. Special Responsibility Allowance

- 4.1 A special responsibility allowance shall be paid to those councillors in accordance with Schedule 1 for those who carry out special responsibilities. An allowance per meeting shall be paid to the Member Chairing the meeting.
- 4.2 The amount of allowance shall be the amount specified against that special responsibility in the Schedule and will be paid either as a lump sum or on

submission of a claim through the electronic portal for those marked with a star.

- 4.3 At any time, only one special responsibility allowance will be paid to a councillor.

## 5. Mayor and Deputy Mayor Allowance

- 5.1 Expenditure paid under Section 32 Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 is on a receipts basis only to cover expenses of the Mayor's office. Council has agreed a limit for this type of expenditure of £15,000.
- 5.2 The rules governing the use of the Mayor's Allowance is set out in Appendix F.

## 6. Dependents' Carers' Allowance

- 6.1 Councillors are entitled to claim a dependants' carers' allowance (DCA) towards reimbursement of actual reasonable costs necessarily incurred in providing care for an eligible dependant, while carrying out an approved duty.
- 6.2 A dependant is defined as:
- a child under 16 years old;
  - a child 16 years old or more, where there is medical or social work evidence that full-time care is required;
  - an adult with a recognised physical or mental disability where there is medical or social work evidence that full-time care is required; or
  - an elderly relative requiring full-time care.
- 6.3 For the purposes of this allowance, a carer is defined as a responsible person over 16 years old who does not normally live with the councillor as part of that household; and is not a parent/guardian of the dependent child.
- 6.4 A specialist carer is defined as a qualified person who is needed where it is essential to have professional assistance. In these circumstances a receipt must be attached to the claim.
- 6.5 A dependants' carers' allowance shall be payable based upon actual receipted costs or at the appropriate hourly rate, whichever is the lower; up to the monthly maximum.
- 6.6 The rates are as follows:

	Hourly Rate	Maximum monthly amount
Standard	£10.42	£542
Specialist	£20.84	£1,084

- 6.7 Councillors may claim only one DCA in respect of each occurrence of approved duty. Only one DCA is payable even if there are two or more children or dependants being cared for.

## 7. Travel and Subsistence Allowances

- 7.1 A councillor or committee member shall be entitled to claim travel and subsistence allowances where expenditure on travelling or subsistence has been necessarily incurred in connection with an approved duty as specified in Schedule 2 (Appendix B). The amount claimed should not exceed expense incurred and when by air, boat or public transport should be at economy or 2<sup>nd</sup> class. Council will not reimburse seat reservation charges. Where a Councillor travels by taxi in preference to public transport the amount reimbursed will be limited to what would have been the cost of the equivalent public transport.
- 7.2 Where the council deems a hired car is necessary a councillor or committee member may be reimbursed the receipted cost of the hired car along with the applicable mileage rate.
- 7.3 The rates paid for travel by car must not exceed the amount that would result from using an alternative mode of transport; e.g. public transport or air fare, unless previously agreed by the council.
- 7.4 The rates of travel allowance for travel by private vehicle shall be as shown in the table below.

TYPE OF VEHICLE	RATE (pence per mile)
A pedal cycle	20.0
A motor cycle of all engine sizes	24.0
Motor car and Electric car	45.0 up to 10,000 miles 25.0 beyond 10,000 miles

- 7.5 The rates of subsistence shall be as show in the table below, which include VAT.  
No claims for alcohol are permitted.

PERIOD/MEAL	RATES	
	British Isles £	London £
<b>Overnight allowance</b> an absence involving an overnight stay, away from the normal place of residence. This rate does not include any meal allowance.	124	152
<b>Breakfast allowance</b> (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period before 11 am)	15	15
<b>Lunch allowance</b> (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period including the period between 12 noon and 2pm)	18	18
<b>Tea allowance</b> (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period including the period between 3pm and 6pm)	7	7
<b>Evening meal allowance</b> (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period ending after 7pm)	26	28
<b>Sub-total for meals</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>Total maximum rate (absence of 24 hours)</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>220</b>

- 7.6 For subsistence outside the British Isles, Council will use Overseas Subsistence Rates produced by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) as the maximum payable. These rates which can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scale-rate-expenses-payments-employee-travelling-outside-the-uk>. The newest version is effective from 6 April 2020.

## 8. General

- 8.1 This scheme may be revoked or amended at any time.

- 8.2 The amounts stated in paragraph 6 will be subject to any increase to the national living wage for ages of 25 years and over.
- 8.3 A Councillor may, if they wish, renounce their entitlement to basic, mayor, deputy mayor or special responsibility allowances. This should be done by writing to the Chief Executive. A councillor can subsequently withdraw the renunciation. They can also amend a renunciation (for example, to limit it to one kind of allowance only). The withdrawal or amendment cannot have retrospective effect.
- 8.4 In accordance with section 59(5) or section 60(1) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, where a Councillor is suspended from carrying out the duties, the part of basic allowance, special responsibility allowance, chairperson and vice chairperson allowance payable for the period of suspension to the councillor will be withheld.

## 9. Claims and Payment

- 9.1 Councillors are required to sign their declaration of acceptance of office before any allowances can be paid.
- 9.2 Payments regarding basic allowance and those special responsibility allowances marked with a star in Appendix A shall be made in instalments of one-twelfth of the amount specified in this scheme.
- 9.3 Claims for all other special responsibility allowances, dependants' carers' allowance, travelling allowance or subsistence allowance should be made, in accordance with paragraph 9.6 below, within three months through the online portal, and should be accompanied by receipts.
- 9.4 Tax and MOT status will be checked electronically on the Gov.uk website and Councillors must have provided a copy of their current driving licence, VC5 (vehicle registration certificate) and motor insurance certificate (covering business use) before any mileage allowances will be paid.
- 9.5 Councillors are required to make the following declaration on each claim for travelling and subsistence allowances:
- I have necessarily incurred expenditure on travel and subsistence for the purpose of enabling me to perform the approved duties of the Council;
  - I have actually paid the fares shown and all other amounts claimed are in accordance with the rates approved by the Council;
  - I have attached all necessary receipts in connection with travel and subsistence expenses claimed;
  - I have not made, and will not make, any other claim under any enactment for travel and subsistence expenses in connection with duties indicated on this form;

- The amounts claimed are strictly in accordance with the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (NI) 2019;
  - I hold a valid licence, V5C (vehicle registration certificate), and MOT certificate (if applicable) and appropriate motor insurance, which covers my vehicle being used for business purposes.
- 9.6 Claims should be submitted by 8th day of the month following the period of claim and may be made electronically via the Core Expense system.
- 9.7 Payment will be made by BACS directly to Members' bank accounts no later than the 25<sup>th</sup> day of each month.

## **10. Publication of Allowances Paid to Councillors**

- 10.1 The Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 provide for the publication of schemes of allowances payable to councillors and the associated payments. This forms part of the Council's constitution. The Council will publish the return made to the Department for Communities and include both amounts paid to and on behalf of each Councillor.

**Appendix A**

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**SCHEDULE 1**

The following are specified as the special responsibilities in respect of which special responsibility allowances are payable and the amounts of those allowances.

Position of Responsibility	Assumed Meetings	Allowance Per Meeting	Allowance £
Mayor*			14,880
Deputy Mayor*			7,440
Chairperson Corporate Services Committee	14	365	5,110
Chairperson Environment Committee	10	365	3,650
Chairperson Regeneration & Development Committee	10	365	3,650
Chairperson Planning Committee	12	425	5,100
Chairperson Community & Wellbeing Committee	10	365	3,650
Chairperson Audit Committee	4	300	1,200
Chairperson PCSP*	-	-	1,200
Audit Committee members (9 members at £250 per annum)	-	-	2,250
ARC 21 members (3 members at £750 per annum)	-	-	2,250
Partnership Panel Representative*	-	-	660
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>51,040</b>



## **SCHEDULE 2**

### **Approved Duties**

In accordance with Regulations, only the following are specified as the duties in respect of which basic allowance, dependents' carers' allowances, and travel and subsistence allowances are available:

1. attendance at a meeting of the council;
2. attendance at a meeting of a committee of the council;
3. attendance at a meeting of a sub-committee of the council;
4. attendance at a meeting of a joint committee;
5. attendance at a meeting of a sub-committee of a joint committee; or
6. the doing of anything approved by the council or anything of a class so approved, for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the council, or any of its committees or sub-committees, or as the case may be, of the joint committee or any of its sub-committees.

<b>Examples of Approved Duties included under point 6*</b>	<b>Examples of Duties which are not Approved*</b>
a. Event or photo-shoots for Council or where Council is a main sponsor of, for Chair or Vice-Chair of sponsoring Committee only. (eg. Aspects Festival launch or attendance at Ards Business Awards)	i. Attendance at Committees of which the Councillor is not a member
b. Pre-meeting briefing of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees with Chief Executive or Directors	ii. Events to which Councillors have received either a personal or general invitation to (with no accompanying minute)
c. Group Leaders meeting with Chief Executive	iii. Mayor's Installation Dinner / At Home / Civic Receptions / Remembrance Services / Church Services
d. Official opening of Council facilities	iv. Consultations, workshops and public meetings organised by special interest groups
e. Interview or Grant selection panels	v. Other meetings with officers other than those listed under approved duties
f. Commemoration events of regional or national significance	vi. Constituency Work
g. Training, consultations, workshops, and public meetings organised by Council	
h. Planning site meetings	
i. Any other duties for which there is a specific minute. (eg. Nominated members to NILGA conference)	
* These apply to outside bodies as they apply to Council.	

# Mayor's Allowance

## Allowance and Budget

It is the responsibility of the Mayor not to exceed the budget set by Council during the Estimates process. Should it be anticipated that there is a likelihood of an overspend on the Mayoral expenses then Council approval will be needed in advance to approve this.

At the end of a mayoral year, if there are any unspent funds, these do not carry to the new Mayor.

Access to this budget will only be granted on receipt of a signed copy of these conditions.

## Permitted Expenditure

1. Expenditure must be in respect of expenses of the office of Mayor. Examples include:

- Reasonable clothing expenses may be purchased during the mayoral year. Expenditure in this regard should not exceed £700. Any clothing expenditure incurred is taxable, in line with HM Revenue and Customs rules. A P11d will be issued at the end of the tax year and appropriate returns made to HMRC.
- Small donations may be made to voluntary bodies which the Mayor may have a connection with during the mayoral year, provided the 'voluntary body provides a public service in Northern Ireland' as required by the Local Government Act (NI) 1972. Donations should be processed through the normal payments procedure, in order to provide an audit trail. Cheques can be provided in advance but require 3 days notice. This type of expenditure should not exceed £500 in total during the mayoral year, including donations made to the Mayor's Charity Appeal.
- A modest donation to the Charity Account to offset some event costs only, up to a maximum of £500 in total during the mayoral year.

## Restrictions on Expenditure

The following restrictions apply:

2. No personal expenditure. Examples include:

- any travel or other expenditure relating to the Mayor's partner, family or friends (even if accompanying the Mayor on official duties);
- gifts and hospitality to staff and other Members. Note that the Gifts and Hospitality Policy requires staff to decline all offers of gifts and hospitality in excess of £30 in the first instance and if accepted to register them with the Human Resources and Organisational Development Service. The general advice is that the Mayor should

refrain from using his/her allowance to provide gifts and/or hospitality to staff where possible.

3. No party political expenditure.
4. No expenditure in respect of the Mayor's Charity Appeal or running charity events. This is properly payable from the Mayor's Charity Account.

### **Procedure for Incurring expenditure**

Normal Council procedures apply.

- a. Where possible the Mayor should request the Democratic Services staff to place purchase orders for expenditure, which will be approved in line with the normal authorisation procedures in advance of placing the order.
- b. Where this is not possible till receipts for all expenditure must be submitted for reimbursement as part of the normal monthly expenses claim.
- c. Receipted cash donations can be reimbursed as part of the normal monthly expenses claim.
- d. In line with Department for Communities guidance no expenditure can be reimbursed without a receipt. Credit and debit card receipts are not acceptable if they do not detail the items purchased.

### **Mileage**

Any mileage incurred in carrying out the duties on behalf of the Mayor or in the Deputy Mayor role can be claimed on the monthly expenses claim form but should be clearly marked as 'Mayor's business' which is distinct from mileage incurred on Council business.

### **Monitoring Expenditure**

The Finance Service will send a budget report to the Mayor and Democratic Services on a monthly basis detailing payments which have been made for the year to date.

The Democratic Services staff will ensure that expenditure which the Mayor incurs is allowable. If they have any concerns, they will check with the Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services or Head of Finance.

### **Transparency**

As with all Council expenditure, the records of how the Mayoral Hospitality budget is spent may be obtained under Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation.

### **Mayor's Charity Account**

The Mayors Charity Account is a separate bank account and is independent of the Council. All monies received from groups or individuals should be lodged to the account.

All expenses in respect of charitable functions (such as catering or advertising) should be paid out of the funds raised during the Mayoral year and not from the hospitality budget.



# Ards and North Down Borough Council

## SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES PAYABLE TO COUNCILLORS Version 12

This Scheme is made under the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 and takes account of the statutory guidance issued by the Department for Communities set out in Circular 23/2019 (as amended).

### 1. Definitions

In this scheme 'approved duty' and committee member are as defined in Regulation 2 of the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (NI) 2019 and Section 36 Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011.

### 2. Commencement Date

This scheme of allowances shall be operational from 1 April 2023.

### 3. Basic Allowance

An annual basic allowance of £17,030 shall be paid to each councillor. Where applicable this will be paid pro-rata.

The basic allowance includes an element for incidental and consumable costs incurred by Councillors in their official capacity. This element is £1,199.

### 4. Special Responsibility Allowance

- 4.1 A special responsibility allowance shall be paid to those councillors in accordance with Schedule 1 for those who carry out special responsibilities. An allowance per meeting shall be paid to the Member Chairing the meeting.
- 4.2 The amount of allowance shall be the amount specified against that special responsibility in the Schedule and will be paid either as a lump sum or on

submission of a claim through the electronic portal for those marked with a star.

- 4.3 At any time, only one special responsibility allowance will be paid to a councillor.

## 5. Mayor and Deputy Mayor Allowance

- 5.1 Expenditure paid under Section 32 Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011 is on a receipts basis only to cover expenses of the Mayor's office. Council has agreed a limit for this type of expenditure of £15,000.
- 5.2 The rules governing the use of the Mayor's Allowance is set out in Appendix F.

## 6. Dependents' Carers' Allowance

- 6.1 Councillors are entitled to claim a dependants' carers' allowance (DCA) towards reimbursement of actual reasonable costs necessarily incurred in providing care for an eligible dependant, while carrying out an approved duty.
- 6.2 A dependant is defined as:
- a child under 16 years old;
  - a child 16 years old or more, where there is medical or social work evidence that full-time care is required;
  - an adult with a recognised physical or mental disability where there is medical or social work evidence that full-time care is required; or
  - an elderly relative requiring full-time care.
- 6.3 For the purposes of this allowance, a carer is defined as a responsible person over 16 years old who does not normally live with the councillor as part of that household; and is not a parent/guardian of the dependent child.
- 6.4 A specialist carer is defined as a qualified person who is needed where it is essential to have professional assistance. In these circumstances a receipt must be attached to the claim.
- 6.5 A dependants' carers' allowance shall be payable based upon actual receipted costs or at the appropriate hourly rate, whichever is the lower; up to the monthly maximum.
- 6.6 The rates are as follows:

	Hourly Rate	Maximum monthly amount
Standard	£11.44	£595
Specialist	£22.88	£1,190

- 6.7 Councillors may claim only one DCA in respect of each occurrence of approved duty. Only one DCA is payable even if there are two or more children or dependants being cared for.

## 7. Travel and Subsistence Allowances

- 7.1 A councillor or committee member shall be entitled to claim travel and subsistence allowances where expenditure on travelling or subsistence has been necessarily incurred in connection with an approved duty as specified in Schedule 2 (Appendix B). The amount claimed should not exceed expense incurred and when by air, boat or public transport should be at economy or 2<sup>nd</sup> class. Council will not reimburse seat reservation charges. Where a Councillor travels by taxi in preference to public transport the amount reimbursed will be limited to what would have been the cost of the equivalent public transport.
- 7.2 Where the council deems a hired car is necessary a councillor or committee member may be reimbursed the receipted cost of the hired car along with the applicable mileage rate.
- 7.3 The rates paid for travel by car must not exceed the amount that would result from using an alternative mode of transport; e.g. public transport or air fare, unless previously agreed by the council.
- 7.4 The rates of travel allowance for travel by private vehicle shall be as shown in the table below.

TYPE OF VEHICLE	RATE (pence per mile)
A pedal cycle	20.0
A motor cycle of all engine sizes	24.0
Motor car and Electric car	45.0 up to 10,000 miles 25.0 beyond 10,000 miles

- 7.5 The rates of subsistence shall be as show in the table below, which include VAT.  
No claims for alcohol are permitted.

PERIOD/MEAL	RATES	
	British Isles £	London £
<b>Overnight allowance</b> an absence involving an overnight stay, away from the normal place of residence. This rate does not include any meal allowance.	129	158
<b>Breakfast allowance</b> (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period before 11 am)	16	16
<b>Lunch allowance</b> (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period including the period between 12 noon and 2pm)	19	19
<b>Tea allowance</b> (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period including the period between 3pm and 6pm)	7	7
<b>Evening meal allowance</b> (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence or, where approved by the council, a lesser period ending after 7pm)	26	30
<b>Sub-total for meals</b>	68	72
<b>Total maximum rate (absence of 24 hours)</b>	197	230

- 7.6 For subsistence outside the British Isles, Council will use Overseas Subsistence Rates produced by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) as the maximum payable. These rates which can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/scale-rate-expenses-payments-employee-travelling-outside-the-uk>. The newest version is effective from 6 April 2020.

## 8. General

- 8.1 This scheme may be revoked or amended at any time.



- 8.2 The amounts stated in paragraph 6 will be subject to any increase to the national living wage for ages of 25 years and over.
- 8.3 A Councillor may, if they wish, renounce their entitlement to basic, mayor, deputy mayor or special responsibility allowances. This should be done by writing to the Chief Executive. A councillor can subsequently withdraw the renunciation. They can also amend a renunciation (for example, to limit it to one kind of allowance only). The withdrawal or amendment cannot have retrospective effect.
- 8.4 In accordance with section 59(5) or section 60(1) of the Local Government Act (Northern Ireland) 2014, where a Councillor is suspended from carrying out the duties, the part of basic allowance, special responsibility allowance, chairperson and vice chairperson allowance payable for the period of suspension to the councillor will be withheld.

## **9. Claims and Payment**

- 9.1 Councillors are required to sign their declaration of acceptance of office before any allowances can be paid.
- 9.2 Payments regarding basic allowance and those special responsibility allowances marked with a star in Appendix A shall be made in instalments of one-twelfth of the amount specified in this scheme.
- 9.3 Claims for all other special responsibility allowances, dependants' carers' allowance, travelling allowance or subsistence allowance should be made, in accordance with paragraph 9.6 below, within three months through the online portal, and should be accompanied by receipts.
- 9.4 Tax and MOT status will be checked electronically on the Gov.uk website and Councillors must have provided a copy of their current driving licence, VC5 (vehicle registration certificate) and motor insurance certificate (covering business use) before any mileage allowances will be paid.
- 9.5 Councillors are required to make the following declaration on each claim for travelling and subsistence allowances:
- I have necessarily incurred expenditure on travel and subsistence for the purpose of enabling me to perform the approved duties of the Council;
  - I have actually paid the fares shown and all other amounts claimed are in accordance with the rates approved by the Council;
  - I have attached all necessary receipts in connection with travel and subsistence expenses claimed;
  - I have not made, and will not make, any other claim under any enactment for travel and subsistence expenses in connection with duties indicated on this form;

- The amounts claimed are strictly in accordance with the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (NI) 2019;
  - I hold a valid licence, V5C (vehicle registration certificate), and MOT certificate (if applicable) and appropriate motor insurance, which covers my vehicle being used for business purposes.
- 9.6 Claims should be submitted by 8th day of the month following the period of claim and may be made electronically via the Core Expense system.
- 9.7 Payment will be made by BACS directly to Members' bank accounts no later than the 25<sup>th</sup> day of each month.

## **10. Publication of Allowances Paid to Councillors**

- 10.1 The Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 provide for the publication of schemes of allowances payable to councillors and the associated payments. This forms part of the Council's constitution. The Council will publish the return made to the Department for Communities and include both amounts paid to and on behalf of each Councillor.

## Appendix A

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### SCHEDULE 1

The following are specified as the special responsibilities in respect of which special responsibility allowances are payable and the amounts of those allowances.

Position of Responsibility	Assumed Meetings	Allowance Per Meeting	Allowance £
Mayor*			14,880
Deputy Mayor*			7,440
Chairperson Corporate Services Committee	14	365	5,110
Chairperson Environment Committee	10	365	3,650
Chairperson Regeneration & Development Committee	10	365	3,650
Chairperson Planning Committee	12	425	5,100
Chairperson Community & Wellbeing Committee	10	365	3,650
Chairperson Audit Committee	4	300	1,200
Chairperson PCSP*	-	-	1,200
Audit Committee members (9 members at £250 per annum)	-	-	2,250
ARC 21 members (3 members at £750 per annum)	-	-	2,250
Partnership Panel Representative*	-	-	660
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>51,040</b>

## SCHEDULE 2

### Approved Duties

In accordance with Regulations, only the following are specified as the duties in respect of which basic allowance, dependents' carers' allowances, and travel and subsistence allowances are available:

1. attendance at a meeting of the council;
2. attendance at a meeting of a committee of the council;
3. attendance at a meeting of a sub-committee of the council;
4. attendance at a meeting of a joint committee;
5. attendance at a meeting of a sub-committee of a joint committee; or
6. the doing of anything approved by the council or anything of a class so approved, for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the council, or any of its committees or sub-committees, or as the case may be, of the joint committee or any of its sub-committees.

<b>Examples of Approved Duties included under point 6*</b>	<b>Examples of Duties which are not Approved*</b>
a. Event or photo-shoots for Council or where Council is a main sponsor of, for Chair or Vice-Chair of sponsoring Committee only. (eg. Aspects Festival launch or attendance at Ards Business Awards)	i. Attendance at Committees of which the Councillor is not a member
b. Pre-meeting briefing of Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees with Chief Executive or Directors	ii. Events to which Councillors have received either a personal or general invitation to (with no accompanying minute)
c. Group Leaders meeting with Chief Executive	iii. Mayor's Installation Dinner / At Home / Civic Receptions / Remembrance Services / Church Services
d. Official opening of Council facilities	iv. Consultations, workshops and public meetings organised by special interest groups
e. Interview or Grant selection panels	v. Other meetings with officers other than those listed under approved duties
f. Commemoration events of regional or national significance	vi. Constituency Work
g. Training, consultations, workshops, and public meetings organised by Council	
h. Planning site meetings	
i. Any other duties for which there is a specific minute. (eg. Nominated members to NILGA conference)	
* These apply to outside bodies as they apply to Council.	

# Mayor's Allowance

## **Allowance and Budget**

It is the responsibility of the Mayor not to exceed the budget set by Council during the Estimates process. Should it be anticipated that there is a likelihood of an overspend on the Mayoral expenses then Council approval will be needed in advance to approve this.

At the end of a mayoral year, if there are any unspent funds, these do not carry to the new Mayor.

Access to this budget will only be granted on receipt of a signed copy of these conditions.

## **Permitted Expenditure**

1. Expenditure must be in respect of expenses of the office of Mayor. Examples include:

- Reasonable clothing expenses may be purchased during the mayoral year. Expenditure in this regard should not exceed £700. Any clothing expenditure incurred is taxable, in line with HM Revenue and Customs rules. A P11d will be issued at the end of the tax year and appropriate returns made to HMRC.
- Small donations may be made to voluntary bodies which the Mayor may have a connection with during the mayoral year, provided the 'voluntary body provides a public service in Northern Ireland' as required by the Local Government Act (NI) 1972. Donations should be processed through the normal payments procedure, in order to provide an audit trail. Cheques can be provided in advance but require 3 days notice. This type of expenditure should not exceed £500 in total during the mayoral year, including donations made to the Mayor's Charity Appeal.
- A modest donation to the Charity Account to offset some event costs only, up to a maximum of £500 in total during the mayoral year.

## **Restrictions on Expenditure**

The following restrictions apply:

2. No personal expenditure. Examples include:

- any travel or other expenditure relating to the Mayor's partner, family or friends (even if accompanying the Mayor on official duties);
- gifts and hospitality to staff and other Members. Note that the Gifts and Hospitality Policy requires staff to decline all offers of gifts and hospitality in excess of £30 in the first instance and if accepted to register them with the Human Resources and Organisational Development Service. The general advice is that the Mayor should

**Appendix C****38**

refrain from using his/her allowance to provide gifts and/or hospitality to staff where possible.

3. No party political expenditure.
4. No expenditure in respect of the Mayor's Charity Appeal or running charity events. This is properly payable from the Mayor's Charity Account.

**Procedure for Incurring expenditure**

Normal Council procedures apply.

- a. Where possible the Mayor should request the Democratic Services staff to place purchase orders for expenditure, which will be approved in line with the normal authorisation procedures in advance of placing the order.
- b. Where this is not possible till receipts for all expenditure must be submitted for reimbursement as part of the normal monthly expenses claim.
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- d. In line with Department for Communities guidance no expenditure can be reimbursed without a receipt. Credit and debit card receipts are not acceptable if they do not detail the items purchased.

**Mileage**

Any mileage incurred in carrying out the duties on behalf of the Mayor or in the Deputy Mayor role can be claimed on the monthly expenses claim form but should be clearly marked as 'Mayor's business' which is distinct from mileage incurred on Council business.

**Monitoring Expenditure**

The Finance Service will send a budget report to the Mayor and Democratic Services on a monthly basis detailing payments which have been made for the year to date.

The Democratic Services staff will ensure that expenditure which the Mayor incurs is allowable. If they have any concerns, they will check with the Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services or Head of Finance.

**Transparency**

As with all Council expenditure, the records of how the Mayoral Hospitality budget is spent may be obtained under Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation.

### **Mayor's Charity Account**

The Mayors Charity Account is a separate bank account and is independent of the Council. All monies received from groups or individuals should be lodged to the account.

All expenses in respect of charitable functions (such as catering or advertising) should be paid out of the funds raised during the Mayoral year and not from the hospitality budget.

Unclassified

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## ITEM 7

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Finance
Date of Report	26 February 2024
File Reference	FIN58
Legislation	Section 1 Local Finance 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	Finance Policies
Attachments	Appendix 1 Draft Purchasing and Payments Policy Appendix 2 Draft Inventories Policy

### Background:

Section 1 of the Local Government Finance Act requires councils to “make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs”. For a number of years, the Finance Service has been operating under legacy policies and has therefore been working on a programme to reviewing and updating current practice. To date following policies have been approved:

1. Anti-fraud, bribery and corruption v3 (March 2023)
2. Asset Management v1 (March 2023)
3. Reserves v1 (July 2023)
4. Charging and Income v1.1 (July 2023)
5. Budgeting v1 (November 2023)



Unclassified

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The next two policies for approval are the draft Purchasing and Payments Policy and the draft Inventories Policy. Corporate Leadership Team, Heads of Service and Service Unit Managers have all been consulted on during the drafting process and their responses considered.

The main points of both documents are set out below:

### **Purchasing and Payments:**

#### Chapter 1: Purchasing and Payments Policy Statement

Setting targets of paying 95% of invoices within 30 days and 85% within 10 working days. In addition, the draft policy requires the use of electronic purchase orders for most purchases, puts in place numbering system for grant payments, standardises delegated authority thresholds for approving purchases and puts special delegations for repayment of loans.

#### Chapter 2: Overview of Responsibilities

#### Chapter 3: Suppliers and Payees Database

#### Chapter 4: Ordering of Goods and Services

This chapter sets out the arrangements for purchase orders and provides details on when they are not required and indicates that invoices not quoting a purchase order number will be returned to the supplier.

#### Chapter 5: Receipt of Goods and Services

#### Chapter 6: Internal Payments

#### Chapter 7: Non-Purchase Order Payments

#### Chapter 8: Completing the Weekly Authorisation Report

#### Chapter 9: Credit Card Controls

#### Chapter 10: Transitional Arrangements

As the new policy moves away from a paper-based purchasing ordering system, transitional arrangements are required to move to an interim system before the implementation of a new corporate financial management system.

#### Appendix 1: Chief Executive Credit Card Conditions of Use

#### Appendix 2: Performance Accountant Credit Card Conditions of use

### **Inventories:**

#### Chapter 1: Inventories Policy Statement

Introduction, Policy Objectives, Policy Statement and Related policies

#### Chapter 2: Holding Stock

Need for stock, Service Unit Procedures, Finance Service Responsibilities and Importance of Maintaining Internal Controls

#### Chapter 3: Security and Records

Security, Records, Stock takes and Returns to Finance Service

Unclassified

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Chapter 1 in each policy document is the formal policy and as such subject to Council approval. The remaining chapters are procedural in nature and therefore subject to periodic management review.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council approves the Purchasing and Payments Policy and the Inventories Policy.



Policy Title	Purchasing and Payments Policy
Policy/File Reference	FIN58 Ref 325
Version	1.0
Policy Summary	The purpose is to set a framework within which Council acquires goods and services and makes payments to suppliers and other payees in order to effectively and efficiently manage its finances and deliver its corporate strategy, in line with its risk appetite.
Responsible Officer(s)	Head of Finance
Date of Equality Screening	xx February 2023
Date of consultation - with Consultative Panel	
Date of consultation - with Unions	
Date of Council approval	Target March 2024
Implementation date	1 April 2024
Appendices attached	
Next review date	September 2025

Revision History:

Version	Changes made by	Date	Reason for change
0.1	Head of Finance	Feb 2024	Draft for consultation

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## Chapter 1: Purchasing and Payments Policy Statement

### Introduction

Council processes around 20,000 payments each year across 2,800 different payees amounting to around £50M. 80% of these are for less than £1,000.

Chapter 1 of this document is policy and subject to Council approval. The remaining chapters are processes and subject to periodic management review.

### Policy Objectives

1. Define the process for making purchases and payments
2. Set target for paying suppliers
3. Provide management information for effective financial management
4. Move to mobile, paperless transaction processing
5. Comply with legal requirements as set out in LGFA 2011 and good practice

### Policy Statement

Council aims to pay 95% of its suppliers within 30 calendar days of receipt of a valid invoice and 85% within 10 working days using a paperless payments system.

Purchase orders should be completed and approved for all purchases before placing the order, except electricity, water, rates, gas, telephone charges, those paid by direct debit and those paid by credit, debit or purchasing card, in order to comply with good practice and provide sufficient information for effective financial management.

Purchases may be made online when this provides a value for money option. A purchase order number should still be quoted where possible. If payment by invoice is not an option payment may be made using a Council credit or purchasing card, on completion of the appropriate form.

Purchases paid for by direct debit, should have a Council direct debit approval form completed prior to being set up.

Small purchases may be made by employees and will be refunded through the Core Expenses system, on submission of a completed expense report and accompanied by a valid receipt.

Payments will be made at least once per week by BACS for at least 50 weeks per annum.

Advance payments will only be made if:

- there are acceptable methods of obtaining a refund should non-delivery occur (eg. credit card payments or written contractual arrangements); or
- there are extenuating circumstances. In this case permission must be obtained from the Head of Finance before an order is placed requiring payment in advance.

Urgent payments will be made in extenuating circumstances with the permission of the Head of Finance.

Grant payments should have a unique reference attributed to them, to assist with the prevention of duplicate payments.

Authorisation for purchases is delegated as follows:

Purchases up to (excl VAT)	Minimum Grade
£1,000	6
£3,000	PO1
£10,000	PO4
£30,000	PO11
Unlimited	DO4

No one individual should be responsible for requesting an order be placed, approving that order, placing it and receiving goods, even when the purchase is within the above limits.

New suppliers and grant payees will be set up only on completion of a standard council form.

Changes to standing data should be by means of an appropriately completed standard council form and bank detail changes verified by another method, in line with good practice.

Standing data will be cleansed after 2 years of inactivity and will require the new supplier process to be completed before the account may be reactivated.

Borrowing decisions will be made in line with the Treasury Management Policy Statement and periodic payments made on the foot of these arrangements will be approved by the Head of Finance.

## Related policies

Reference	Title
123	Procurement
311	Budgeting
63	Grants
284	Anti-fraud, bribery and corruption
286	Asset Management
290	Treasury Management Policy Statement

## Assistance

Should you have any queries regarding this policy and any other ordering and payment queries please contact supplier payments at [supplierpayments@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:supplierpayments@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

## Chapter 2: Overview of Responsibilities

### Segregation of Responsibilities

To ensure that adequate levels of internal control are in place, the responsibilities of ordering, receiving, authorising and paying for goods, services and works supplied to the Council must be separated as far as is reasonably and practically possible. There should be no instances where one officer is the only officer involved in all stages of the purchasing process.

It is the responsibility of Heads of Service and Service Unit Managers to ensure that segregation of duties is applied where possible.

### Service Area Responsibilities

Responsibility for raising purchase orders for goods, services and works supplied to the Council lies with relevant Heads of Service or Service Unit Managers.

Service areas are therefore required to undertake the following duties:

- raising of purchase orders for goods and services, including compliance with Council procurement requirements (procurement guidance can be found [here](#));
- authorisation of purchase orders prior to the placing of the order;
- coding of expenditure;
- receiving delivery of goods and services and recording on electronic system;
- checking and matching supplier invoices to purchase orders, when automatic matching fails and timely approval of invoices;
- Determining the employment status of individuals before issuing a purchase order, in order to comply with HMRC rules.

### Finance Service Responsibilities

Responsibility for the payment of all supplier invoices for goods, services and works supplied to the Council and for maintaining information in relation to supplier payment days lies with the Finance Service.

The Finance Service is therefore responsible for the following duties: -

- setting up new suppliers on the Council's financial system;
- registration of all invoices received directly from suppliers on the Council's financial system;
- ensuring the correct VAT treatment and calculation;
- authorising supplier invoices for payment once invoices have been approved by Service Units;
- maintenance and monitoring of supplier payment days.

## Chapter 3: Suppliers and Payees Database

Controls around the maintenance of the supplier and payees database in order to prevent supplier fraud and to facilitate the Council meeting its statutory reporting responsibilities.

### Existing Suppliers

Purchases should be made from established Council suppliers, where possible. This reduces the likelihood of fraudulent activity and the amount of administration for both Services and the Supplier Payments Team.

Change of details will only be processed when notified on an official Council change request form, which is available for download [here](#) from the Council website. These controls are in place to prevent supplier fraud.

Please contact the Supplier Payments Team, if unsure, to confirm whether a proposed supplier is currently on our database.

### New Suppliers

When purchases are to be from a new supplier, these must be set up on the suppliers database on the financial management system so as a purchase order can be completed. The supplier must complete a Council new supplier request form which is available for download [here](#) from the Council website. These controls are in place to prevent supplier fraud.

### Grant Payees

New grant payees must complete a Council new supplier request form which is available for download [here](#) from the Council website.



## Chapter 4: Ordering of Goods and Services

Once the relevant procurement procedure has been followed and the appropriate approvals have been received, the process of purchasing can begin.

### Self-employed or Employed status

In order to comply with HM Revenue and Customs rules it is essential that Service Units determine whether the contractual arrangements that they are intending to enter into with individuals should be regarded as self-employed (paid by invoice) or employed (recruited through HR and paid by electronic Core timesheet).

This status can be determined by completing an online questionnaire available on the Gov.uk website [Check employment status for tax - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/check-employment-status-for-tax).

### Exceptions to Raising Purchase Orders

Purchase orders are not required to be raised for the following:

- utility contracts electricity, water, rates, gas and telephone charges
- direct debits [here](#)
- grant payments (refer to the Council Grants Policy [here](#));
- internet purchases or payments made with the Council credit card where a supplier account cannot be set up e.g. Amazon and similar (use the internet purchase request form [here](#));

### Purchase Orders

A Council purchase order must be completed on the electronic purchase ordering system by an appropriate officer for every supply of goods, services or works to the Council, except for those listed in the section below.

Fully completed purchase orders must be authorised by an Officer from the Council's approved list of authorised officers prior to the order being placed. The Supplier Payments Team publish a list of all authorisers [here](#).

**All suppliers must be provided with an official purchase order number** and emailed a copy of the order, if requested.

Suppliers must send all invoices electronically to [p2p@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:p2p@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk).

A hard copy invoice will only be accepted in extenuating circumstances or from suppliers whom have a valid reason for not being able to submit electronically.

## Online system

Purchase orders should be completed using the online form available. The style of this form differs for each of the following types of purchase:

- payment by direct debit
- internet purchase requiring payment by card
- agency staff request
- all other purchases.

The whole form must be completed before an order number is generated; this ensures that all information required has been provided.

## Coding

All income and expenditure must be assigned to an accounting code to enable it to be appropriately recorded on the financial management system and managed by budget holders.

Expenditure should be coded to the most appropriate accounting code and NOT only to codes which the budget holder has budget allocated to. If the purchase is better coded to another budget holder's budget, the purchasing officer must liaise with them before placing the order.

The chart of accounts is available on ANDi [here](#) to assist with allocating the appropriate accounting code.

## Authorisation

The supplier payments team maintain a register of all authorisers. This is available on the Finance ANDi site. Changes to this list must be requested by email from the appropriate budget manager (Service Unit Manager, Head of Service or Director).

The online system has a built-in work flow which directs the purchase order to the appropriate authoriser.

Where the most appropriate Officer is not available to approve expenditure, approval must be sought from the most appropriate Officer on the next tier up to and including the Director and Chief Executive level.

## Invoices not quoting a purchase order number

Invoices not quoting a purchase order number will be returned to the supplier requesting one.

If this causes undue problems because of staff absences, please contact Supplier Payments Team.

## Chapter 5: Receipt of Goods and Services

### Introduction

A key element of the payment system is to establish that the goods were delivered or services were provided and of sufficient quality to meet the Council's needs.

### Checks and Signatures Required for Standard Purchases

When goods or services are received that have been purchased using the purchase orders ie., they are **NOT** internet purchases, grant or financial assistance payments or direct debit contracts, the following procedure should be followed:

- the delivery notes or equivalent must be checked by the receiving officer against the purchase order, to ensure that the quantities ordered have been received or the exact service or works requested have been delivered;
- the receiving officer should mark the purchase as delivered or part delivered as appropriate in order to confirm that the goods or services have been received or that work has been carried out satisfactorily;
- the receiving officer should obtain and retain any evidence that the goods/services have been delivered e.g., supplier delivery notes, emails, or other documentation.
- Particular care should be taken with direct debit payments, that delivery is received for each invoice or on scheduled dates.

### Audit Requirements

The Council's auditors will require evidence of satisfactory delivery and receipt of goods and services which must be retained and available for audit purposes. Where possible an electronic copy should be retained in an appropriate filing structure. This will ensure all proof of receiving goods or services, will be available for auditors to check should they request to do so.

Examples of proof of delivery include:

- supplier delivery notes;
- consultant's timesheets;
- documents produced as part of the service requested e.g. feasibility studies;
- copies of newspaper articles, advertisements etc...

## Chapter 6 Internal Payments

Internal invoices or grant payments should be processed in line with chapter 8 of the Income and Charging Policy, available on ANDi [here](#).

Copy invoices or grant payment forms should be attached to the [journal request](#).

## Chapter 7 Non-Purchase Order Payments

### Grant Payments

Please refer to the [Grant Policy](#) for more information on the process for Grant and Financial Assistance payments before preparing the documentation for these payments.

For a grant payment to be made a Grant Financial Request form needs to be completed online and submitted for approval through the electronic purchase ordering system. Once approved online it will be forwarded to the Supplier Payments Team for processing. The form has help boxes included to guide you during this process.

Use the online purchase ordering system to request payment.

### Internet Purchase Process

In the scenario where a purchase is made online and a supplier invoice cannot be issued in the normal way, the purchase required will be made with the Council's credit or procurement card.

Purchasers should contact [Sarah Shaw](#) (or David McCallum, in Sarah's absence) to establish if an online account for the particular supplier is already in existence. If the account does not already exist an [Internet Purchase Request Form](#) will need to be completed and submitted.

Once an account is active, the purchaser will be required to complete the transaction as far as possible online, including placing items in baskets, up to the point of payment.

### Direct Debit Contracts Process

Requests to make payment by direct debit should be submitted for approval to [David McCallum](#) using the [Direct Debit Request Form](#) on ANDi. Please ensure the form is fully completed. There are four sections to the form to be completed once a supplier has been selected following the procurement process and the preferred method of payment has been agreed between the Council and the supplier.

The supplier's Direct Debit Instruction (DDI) will be completed by Finance and returned to you for sending on to your supplier. Finance will assign a unique reference to each request and include it on the DDI form. This will be in the format e.g., 'DD012-12345', the last five digits being your purchase order number.

The periodic payments for approved direct debit requests will be included on the normal Registered Invoice Reports issued weekly for your further approval (see [Chapter 8](#)). You will be able to identify these payments from the unique reference (see above) which will be included in the purchase order column of your report.

By approving the periodic payments on the weekly invoice reports, you will be confirming that the goods or services were satisfactorily received, and that payment is due for the period stated. If this is not the case e.g., the contract has been terminated early, please indicate that you are not approving the expenditure and provide an explanation in the adjacent column in the report (see [Chapter 8](#)). Any expenditure 'not approved' will require follow up action as the payment will have automatically been taken as a direct debit. Follow up actions required may include taking measures to recoup the payment from the supplier and cancellation of the direct debit contract.

### **Expenditure below £25**

In addition to using either a purchase order or internet purchase expenditure below £25 may be incurred directly by an employee up to the limit of £25 and reclaimed using Core Expense providing a valid receipt is provided as evidence of purchase. A credit or debit card receipt is only valid for reclaiming expenses if it details the items purchased. If it is only a payment voucher showing the shop and total amount paid but no details of the purchase, reimbursement will not be approved.

Staff should not accrue clubcard or loyalty points on personal accounts when directly purchasing supplies or services for Council.

If you do not have a debit or credit card please contact [Sarah Shaw](#) or [David McCallum](#).

## **Chapter 8: Completing the Weekly Authorisation Report**

### **Introduction**

The process for the payment of supplier invoices is the responsibility of the Finance Service and is therefore separated completely from the purchase ordering process.

The process for matching supplier invoices to purchase orders is the responsibility of the service area.

To make a payment to a supplier, the supplier must have already been set up on the Council's financial management system.

The Council's preferred payment method is BACS. To facilitate this, all suppliers and other Council payees should be requested to submit their bank account details.

All suppliers and payees must have completed a new supplier/payee form (please see [HERE](#) for guidance) to enable payment to be made.

Invoices will not be distributed to Services, however soft copies are available within the financial management system.

Authorisation of invoices is required to be made on the **Registered Invoices Report**. These will be issued by email on a weekly basis from Supplier Payments Team.

### Outstanding Invoices Report Process

This process is an interim system, in place until a fully electronic purchase to pay system is implemented as part of the new financial management system. The interim system cannot provide the full range of internal controls that would be expected for an organisation the size and complexity of the Council.

The Supplier Payments Team will register all invoices received onto the TOTAL finance system and generate weekly reports of all supplier invoices which have been registered and which remain unpaid at the date of the report.

Reports will be issued to authorisers by email on a weekly basis, usually on the Friday afternoon or Monday morning following completion of the weekly payment run and each new report will supersede the previous report.

The reports (in spreadsheet format) provide summary detail of all invoices that require authorisation for payment, with separate sections on the spreadsheet for the authoriser to complete to confirm that they have carried out all necessary checks and give approval for a payment to be made.

Authorisers are required to check each invoice line diligently before approving for payment by:

- matching it to the purchase order to check that quantities and prices agree or that the payment hasn't previously been processed
- ensuring all goods and services have been satisfactorily received; and
- reviewing the invoice on the **TOTAL** finance system, if authorisers are having difficulties getting access to the system contact [David McCallum](#) in Finance at the earliest opportunity.

Full guidance on 'how to complete' the weekly report can be found in the weekly email.

## Chapter 9 Credit Card Controls

### Introduction

The Council currently holds two credit cards which are in the names of the Chief Executive and the Performance Accountant.

This document details the procedures for use of these cards and has been developed in line with guidance issued by the Department of Finance & Personnel (DAO (DFP) 24/02 'Issue and Use of Payment Cards (inc Credit Cards)') and with the associated Department of the Environment circular to Northern Ireland Councils (LG35/01).

### Key Controls

The key controls for credit and payment cards are as follows:

- Expenditure and merchant sector limits will be set, by Finance Service management, in line with operational requirements.
- Officers holding and or using credit or payment cards are required to sign up to the 'Conditions of Use' prior to issue (Appendix 1). The officers currently responsible for cards are as follows:

Card	Card Type	Card Holder Name	User
1	Credit	Chief Executive	Chief Executive
2	Credit	Performance Accountant	Team Leader – Income Collection

- Card details may be saved on Council networks in documents that are encrypted and only accessible by those authorised to process transactions.
- CVC codes should not be saved in the same location as the card number and expiry date.
- All expenditure must be appropriately authorised before carrying out a card transaction.
- All expenditure must be supported by receipts and where appropriate an official VAT receipt.
- Segregation of duties and reconciliation procedures are in place as follows:
  - Only employees who have signed the 'Conditions of Use' (Appendices 1 and 2) are authorised to have access to the card details, process transactions and download statements.
  - The Team Leader – Supplier Payments prepares the monthly reconciliation of purchase documentation to statement.
  - A Finance Service Unit Manager will approve the monthly reconciliation and General Ledger posting transactions.
  - A Finance Officer will record the monthly transactions on the financial system general ledger after all checks have been completed.
- Irregularities be reported to Financial Operations Accountant immediately to allow appropriate action to be taken.

- When an authorised user leaves the Council or changes duties (including on secondment) the card to which they had access will be replaced.
- In the event that a credit or purchase card is lost or the details become known to an unauthorised person, the cardholder must immediately contact the manager in whose name the card is issued who will inform the card issuer requesting the card be cancelled. The Performance Accountant and Income Collection Manager should also be informed and arrange for a new card to be issued

### Anti-fraud measures

The following measures are in place:

- Users are advised that card details must never be given or communicated verbally to any employee or supplier of goods or services;
- Card transactions via the telephone on a person to person basis are not permitted. All such transactions must be **automated** ('Automated transactions' are transactions where the keypad of the telephone is used to record/provide the credit card number for the purchase of the goods/service)
- Transactions must only be carried out on Council ICT equipment and through secure websites.
- For internet purchases only secure websites should be used (eg. https);
- Misuse of a credit or purchase card in any way is considered a disciplinary offence.

## Chapter 10 Transitional Arrangements

The process of moving from a paper-based system to a modern fully electronic system will take a number of years to complete.

Additional controls and functionality will be added periodically, including:

- field for quotation references to be added to the purchase order,
- goods received processing, to allow matching with invoices
- substitute authorising facility
- facility to select accounting codes from drop down menus,
- facility to request direct debit payments
- facility to request credit card payments
- facility to request grant payments
- automatic matching of purchase orders, goods received notes and invoices
- authorisation workflows

Changes will be made incrementally and will be tested prior to general release.

These procedures will be updated to reflect these changes as they are made.



## Appendix 1 Chief Executive Credit Card Conditions of Use

1. This card is issued to the Chief Executive to hold personally and must only be used by the Chief Executive and no other person;
2. The card should be kept in a safe place at all times;
3. In the event of losing the card, the cardholder must inform the Head of Finance immediately in order to arrange cancellation of the card with the bank;
4. The card may only be used for:
  - purchases which are solely of a business nature including hospitality and entertaining expenses;
  - travel and subsistence payments for self and other council employees or councilors who are in attendance with the Chief Executive;
  - automated telephone and internet transactions;
  - transactions which are dealt with in person via a 'chip and pin machine' (i.e. for 'cardholder present' transactions only);
5. The card must not be used for:
  - purchases which are of a personal nature;
  - travel and subsistence payments for non-employees unless approved by Council;
  - cash withdrawals;
  - non-automated telephone transactions.
6. The cardholder must obtain both the customer copy of the credit card voucher and the invoice/receipt for all purchases.
7. Details of purchases including signed vouchers and receipts, nature of items purchased and nominal coding should be forwarded to the finance section on a monthly basis on the appropriate claim form in order to facilitate agreement to the credit card statements. The credit card statements must be countersigned by an authorised cheque signatory other than the Chief Executive.
8. Misuse of the card in any way will be considered a disciplinary offence.

### Declaration

I acknowledge receipt of this document, detailing the terms and conditions of use of the Council credit card issued in my name and confirm that I have read and understand these conditions.

Chief Executive

Date

## Appendix 2 Performance Accountant Credit Card Conditions of use

1. This card (although in the name of the Performance Accountant and held personally by them) is issued to the Finance Service to facilitate purchases of a business nature which require to be paid by credit card;
2. The card must only be used by a Finance Team Leader.
3. In the event of losing the card, the Performance Accountant must inform the bank immediately in order to arrange cancellation of the card;
4. The card may only be used for:
  - purchases which are solely of a business nature;
  - travel and subsistence payments for council employees, councillors and any other person approved by Council;
  - automated telephone and internet transactions;
5. The card must not be used for:
  - purchases which are of a personal nature;
  - travel and subsistence payments for non-employees unless approved by Council;
  - transactions dealt with in person by the Performance Accountant or any other person;
  - cash withdrawals;
  - non-automated telephone transactions.
6. Requests for purchases by internet/credit card must be submitted to the Finance Service by purchasing officers on the relevant claim form. The claim form should detail the nature of items being purchased, prices, accounting code and be authorised manner;
7. The Finance Team Leader must complete the relevant payment information for all automated purchases on screen (i.e. provide details of the credit card type, number and expiry date). These details must never be provided to the supplier of goods and services via telephone and should never be issued to another Council employee or Councillor;
8. The Finance Team Leader must obtain documentation in relation to all purchases e.g. copies of payment confirmation printouts or e-mails for internet purchases and invoices or receipts;
9. The supporting documentation must be retained and attached to the internet/credit card purchase form and agreed to the monthly credit card statements. Any discrepancies will be investigated.
10. Misuse of the card in any way will be considered a disciplinary offence.

### Declaration

I acknowledge receipt of this document, detailing the terms and conditions of use of the Council credit card issued in my name and confirm that I have read and understand these conditions.

**Date**





Policy Title	Inventories Policy
Policy/File Reference	FIN58 Ref 326
Version	1.0
Policy Summary	The purpose is to set a framework within which Council can manage its stock holdings to effectively and efficiently deliver its corporate strategy, in line with its risk appetite.
Responsible Officer(s)	Head of Finance
Date of Equality Screening	28 February 2024
Date of consultation - with Consultative Panel	
Date of consultation - with Unions	
Date of Council approval	Target March 2024
Implementation date	1 April 2024
Appendices attached	
Next review date	April 2026

Revision History:

Version	Changes made by	Date	Reason for change
0.1	Head of Finance	Jan 2024	Draft for Finance consultation
0.2	Head of Finance	Feb 2024	Draft for CLT, HoST & SUM consultation
1.0	Head of Finance	Feb 2024	Draft for Council approval

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# Chapter 1: Inventories Policy Statement

## Introduction

The Council holds stock balances in excess of £250k and handles expenditure of £1.75M through stock and inventories in the course of a year. It is therefore imperative that it has appropriate policies and procedures in place to manage such significant balance and transaction values.

Chapter 1 of this document is policy and subject to Council approval. The remaining chapters are processes and subject to periodic management review.

## Policy Objectives

- 1. Set a framework for managing stock holdings in an effective and efficient manner
- 2. Provide management information for effective financial management
- 3. Comply with legal requirements as set out in LGFA 2011 and good practice

## Policy Statement

Stock and inventory should only be held where they facilitate the effective and efficient delivery of Council services.

Formal control procedures should be put in place by Service Units for stocks with a value of £5,000.

Stocks should be held securely, and computerised records kept.

Physical verification should be conducted once per annum or at least twice a year where shrinkage exceeds 2.5% of the stock value.

Write-offs must be authorised by a budget holder (Service Unit Manager, Head of Service or Director) in conjunction with the Corporate Accountant or Head of Finance.

## Definitions

Term	Definition
Budget Holder (per Budgeting Policy)	Revenue – Directors, Heads of Service and Service Unit Managers
	Capital – Senior Responsible Owners
Stock Holder	The officer responsible for controlling the stock on a day-to-day basis.

**Related policies**

Refence	Title
311	Procurement
326	Budgeting
284	Purchasing and Payments
	Anti-fraud, bribery and corruption

**Assistance**

Should you have any queries regarding this policy please contact the Corporate Accountant at: [stuart.waring@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.waring@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

## Chapter 2: Holding Stock

### Need for stock

Stock ties up financial resources and requires management and therefore should only be held where this allows for increased efficiency in the delivery of services, which outweighs the cost of holding such stock. Service units will need to determine the quantity of each item that should be maintained in the inventory. Consider factors such as demand, lead time, and storage capacity.

Typically, items that will be held in stock are items for resale, fuel, bins, consumables (such as protective clothing, stationery, cleaning materials and vehicle maintenance items). All items should be procured and purchased in line with the Procurement and Purchasing & Payments Policies.

### Procedures

Each Service Unit which holds stock should document its procedures in connection with those stocks, including at least the following topics:

- Who the stockholder is
- How access is controlled
- Minimum and maximum levels and re-order quantities
- Goods received and issues processes
- Record keeping (including unique references)
- Stock take procedures
- Management review
- Determining which items to hold or stop holding (including regular reviews)
- Processes to maintain quality
- How responsibilities are segregated so no-one person is in control of the whole stock system
- Processes for ensuring that all appropriate staff are aware of the items held in stock;
- Process for disposing of obsolete stock

### Obsolete stock

Service Units should consider the following once obsolete stock has been identified:

- Could the items be put to another use within the Service Unit?
- Could the items be put to another use within another Service Unit?
- How can the Council realise maximum value while ensuring disposal is carried out in a sustainable way? (eg. discount, auction, scrapped.)



## Finance Service Responsibilities

The Finance Service is therefore responsible for the following duties

- Maintaining this policy document;
- Setting up appropriate accounting records for inventories covered by the policy;
- Carrying out spot checks;
- Carrying out sample checks at stock takes
- Approving write offs in association with the responsible budget holder.

## Importance of Maintaining Internal Controls

It is important that internal controls are kept in place, as in situations like the recent health emergency, the Council is more vulnerable than usual to fraud activity.

## Chapter 3: Security and Records

### Security

Stock is a valuable asset and should therefore be under the control of a specified Service Unit Manager although daily transactional responsibilities may be delegated to other members of the Service Unit.

Stock should be held in an appropriately secure manner with access controlled.

### Records

Stock and inventory records should include at least the following topics:

- Item reference
- Item description
- Item location or bin number
- Quantity
- Purchase price
- Issue price (either weighted average or first in first out method of valuation)
- Details of additions to stock (PO number, supplier, date received etc.)
- Details of issues (Requisition number, date issued, etc.)
- Stock take details

Records form part of the financial records of the Council and should be kept for six years after the year end in which the transactions occurred (i.e. managers should hold records for the current year plus the six previous years).

### Stock takes

Stock takes should be conducted blind (without knowledge of what the records state) and where possible by individuals independent of the stockholder. Where this is not

possible, Service Unit managers should liaise with the Corporate Accountant to arrange for random checks to be carried out by Finance staff.

All stock take documents should be reviewed by management and appropriately signed. This is particularly important for adjustments to the balances for each item.

### **Returns to Finance Service**

Each year Service Unit Managers are required to confirm stock valuations and provide appropriate back-up to the Corporate Accountant. This should allow the timely and accurate preparation of the financial statements and assist with the statutory audit.

Unclassified

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## ITEM 8

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	.
Date of Report	19 February 2024
File Reference	'-
Legislation	'-
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Revenue Raising Consultations
Attachments	* Letter from NILGA to LPS * Letter from NILGA to Permanent Secretary, Department of Finance * Letter from NILGA to Council CE's

A letter has been received from The Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) in relation to the Revenue Raising Consultations initiated by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and NILGA in turn has written to the Land and Property Services and the Chief Executives of the Northern Ireland Councils. Copies of the letters are attached.

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes the letters.



*the voice of local government*

Sharon Magee  
Chief Executive  
Land & Property Services  
Department of Finance  
Lanyon Plaza  
7 Lanyon Place  
Belfast, BT1 3LP

29<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Dear Sharon

### **Revenue Raising – Rates Measures Consultation**

Thank you for working so closely with NILGA in relation to the above rates measures consultation. The information you provided and your participation in our recent policy event was extremely helpful to our members and council finance officers. We would particularly like to thank you for the additional 'council-specific' breakdown of how these measures impact across the 11 council areas.

The rates measures consultation is one of a suite of active and forthcoming consultations, issued at the behest of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, about which NILGA has grave concerns.

Firstly, NILGA is of the view that that these issues should be dealt with by incoming NI Executive Ministers. These are devolved matters and rates are devolved taxes. Our members have serious concerns regarding the potential undermining of local democratic decision-making that these consultations foreshadow.

There is little to no information on how the revenue raising consultations will interrelate, or what their potential cumulative impact might be. The wider cumulative context, could include a proposed 15% hike in the regional rate, and we are unsure at present if that figure will include water charges. We also note that the ongoing discussions regarding a 'fiscal floor' include consideration on taxable capacity, which is also likely to impinge on local government.

NILGA is of the view that these revenue raising consultations are poorly timed in the context of the wider cost of living crisis, with the potential to cause great financial difficulty for people and businesses across Northern Ireland, should the proposals be brought to bear. We believe strongly that it is the wrong time in the current economic context, to be

**Northern Ireland Local Government Association**

Bradford Court, Upper Galwally, Castlereagh, BT8 6RB

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introducing these changes, particularly given the limited revenue that would be raised, even if all proposals were implemented.

The rates measures consultation does not appear to have been designed using an appropriate evidence base, and there is scant information on the evidence for, or information surrounding the proposals as they impact on the economy as an ecosystem. There is insufficient information to form a sound opinion on the proposals, and no future plan or strategy evident.

Some of the rates measures proposals have the potential to increase income for some councils but could disrupt the distribution of rates income. There is not enough information to enable us to have a full picture of the economic impact of these proposals, in what is a largely SME-based economy.

Councils and LPS must keep in mind that the rating system impacts on each council differently in terms of income and what each council is trying to achieve locally, and given the high potential for cumulative or interactive impacts of the various rates measures proposals, NILGA believes that it would be inadvisable to 'cherry pick' individual reliefs in the absence of a wider review.

It is imperative that councils have certainty in what is currently a very volatile 'macro' environment. NILGA highlights the cumulative impact of recent pay agreements and recent cuts including substantial cuts to the rates support grant and complete withdrawal of animal welfare and good relations funding (which came mid-year unexpectedly with council finance officers unable to prepare for this change). To balance out finances for coming years, councils need to be sure of their rate setting process, since rates provide 80% of council income.

We would also take this opportunity to highlight the alarm expressed by our members and senior council officers regarding the proposed 15% increase to the regional rate and its potential local impact, which we firmly believe would hamper councils in setting a reasonable district rate.

There is already a great deal of uncertainty for councils in trying to establish what their district rate should be, and the variation between councils of the relationship between the regional and district rate is highlighted.

Any change of the magnitude of 15% would require a substantial lead-in period, within a timeframe cognisant of the legal timeline and framework for district rates setting. It is noted that if councils reduce their rate correspondingly to minimise the impact on ratepayers, they would effectively be subsidising the regional rate.

The situation is already very difficult for councils who are being asked to make decisions in the absence of a more complete financial picture, with no clarity at present, including on how these proposals are going to impact on ratepayers. There is insufficient information at

present about where this is going to land, and consequently NILGA is unable to give a view on the overall impact.

We note that LPS intends to issue further more detailed consultation, should it be decided to take forward any of the rated measures proposals. NILGA will participate in more detail when appropriate but at this point in time we would again thank you for the information you have been able to give and we look forward to a time when we can have a more fruitful, pragmatic, evidenced-based discussion on modernisation of the rates system in Northern Ireland.

Yours sincerely,



**Cllr Matt Garrett**  
**President (SF)**



**Cllr Alison Bennington**  
**Vice-President (DUP)**



**Cllr Billy Webb**  
**Vice-President (All)**



**Ald Hazel Legge**  
**Vice-President (UUP)**



**Cllr Brian Tierney**  
**Vice-President (SDLP)**

16<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Dear Chief Executive

You will be aware of the recent Department of Finance consultations on general revenue raising opportunities across the public sector in NI and the specific consultation on the revenue raising opportunities from the NI rates system.

Thank you for your input and the input of the Association of Local Government Finance Officers to the final NILGA responses, which are attached.

These responses are the result of extensive engagement across the NILGA membership and with unanimous cross party political agreement now form agreed positions.

I would be grateful if you could bring these letters to the attention of the relevant committee within your Council as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,



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**Alison Allen**  
**Chief Executive**

**ENC: Response Letter to Neil Gibson and Response letter to Sharon Magee**



*the voice of local government*

Neil Gibson  
Permanent Secretary  
Department of Finance  
Clare House  
303 Airport Road  
Belfast  
BT3 9ED

17<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Dear Neil

### **Financial Context for Revenue Raising Consultations**

Thank you for providing some overarching context for the suite of active and forthcoming revenue raising consultations issued at the behest of the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, about which NILGA has grave concerns. The information you provided, including the presentation and discussion at Stormont Pavilion on 9<sup>th</sup> November was extremely helpful to our members and council finance officers.

Firstly, NILGA is of the view that that these issues should be dealt with by incoming NI Executive Ministers. These are devolved matters requiring local decisions. Our members have serious concerns regarding the potential undermining of local democratic decision-making that these consultations foreshadow.

There is little to no information on how the revenue raising consultations will interrelate, or what their potential cumulative impact might be. The wider cumulative context, could include a proposed 15% hike in the regional rate, and we are unsure at present if that figure will include water charges. We also note that the ongoing discussions regarding a 'fiscal floor' include consideration of taxable capacity, which is also likely to impinge on local government.

NILGA is of the view that these revenue raising consultations are poorly timed in the context of the wider cost of living crisis, with the potential to cause great financial difficulty for people and businesses across Northern Ireland, should the proposals for revenue raising be brought to bear. We believe strongly that while modernisation is undoubtedly necessary, and we would assure government that councils are committed to working towards transformation and improvement of public services, this is the wrong time - in the current economic context - to be introducing these changes, particularly given the limited revenue that would be raised, even if all proposals were implemented.

**Northern Ireland Local Government Association**

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Although the need for more resources is clearly identified, an appropriate evidence base and case for change does not appear to have been developed for the emerging specific proposals, and there is scant information on how the proposals impact on the economy as an ecosystem. There is insufficient information to form a sound opinion on the proposals, and no future plan or strategy evident.

Some of the proposals have the potential to benefit councils but could disrupt current systems e.g. the distribution of rates income. There is not enough information to enable us to have a full picture of the economic impact of these proposals, in what is a largely SME-based economy.

Government must keep in mind that the revenue raising proposals could impact each council differently in terms of income and what each council is trying to achieve locally, and given the high potential for cumulative or interactive impacts of the various proposals, NILGA believes that it would be inadvisable to 'cherry pick' individual revenue-raising policies in the absence of a wider review. We look forward to a successful outcome from the ongoing political discussions in relation to setting a fiscal floor, which we believe will set Northern Ireland on a much more sustainable, appropriately funded pathway.

### **'Fiscal Floor' Discussions**

NILGA would like to highlight that in the Fiscal Council technical report there was reference to the impact on domestic rates in their information on the 127% fiscal floor figures (which included taxable capacity), indicating that around £22m may be available to local government in the event that this option was chosen and taxable capacity was included in the calculations. NILGA is keen to ensure that early discussions with local government take place in the event that the 'taxable capacity option' is chosen, to discuss how this possible revenue stream to councils might be applied.

NILGA notes that the UK government is responsible for the sustainability of UK public finances, to which NI and devolved government contributes its part.

We are of the view that the biggest threat to the sustainability of the Executive's finances in terms of its ability to deliver services comparable to those in the rest of the UK is the 'Barnett Squeeze' but we believe that perhaps too much credence is currently being given to the idea that NI's public finance issues can be fixed by further devolution of tax raising powers, revenue raising for 'super-parity' and/or a move to a needs-based system based on replication of the Welsh model.

NILGA is of the view that Northern Ireland *should* move to a needs-based system but that it is necessary to better explore what 'relative need' means in the Northern Ireland context.

It is also clear that there is much to be learned from the Welsh experience, in particular:

- NI should build in regular review to ensure that ‘need’ continues to be met over time. Failure to do this is considered to be a major flaw in the Welsh system.
- The Welsh have never received 115% nor are they likely to for many years to come – instead there is a ‘transitional arrangement’ in place without a definite end.
- Wales is yet to diverge from England in terms of income tax and is still tied to England in terms of block grant allocation. Council tax has instead increased, which is a less progressive lever of raising revenues than income tax.
- The biggest demonstrable impact in the Welsh system has been a continuing uplift in council taxes. This may mirror the proposed 15% regional rate uplift in Northern Ireland but more information will be needed for a valid assessment. Welsh council funding is on an unsustainable path, with the funding gap growing each year (even after inflation and pay pressures diminish).
- 124% for Northern Ireland isn’t enough. We need at least 127% to bring us back to 2015 levels.
- Wales has effectively had to put an ‘emergency budget’ in place this year to counter the impact of inflation

It is clear that the Welsh model, while an improvement on the prior system, is not a panacea and should not be regarded as such.

**NILGA Response to Consultation Question 4: “Are there public services that could be delivered by others (e.g. local government, voluntary & community sector or private sector) or are there are other areas in which greater collaboration could deliver better outcomes?”**

Although not ruling out the potential for local government to deliver new services, such as through transfer of function, NILGA is keen to emphasise that councils require both the legal vires to deliver, and the provision of corresponding and negotiated ongoing funding.

As a priority, NILGA is keen to see government put in place a legislated ‘New Burdens’ mechanism in Northern Ireland, to ensure appropriate funding for councils is transferred with any future transfer of function.

Councils **will not** take on a new function (including ‘by stealth’) without transfer of agreed levels of accompanying funding, thus negating the potential for cost savings. It is therefore difficult to see how a transfer of delivery would provide a saving for government.

Our experience as a sector is that grant funding can be removed arbitrarily (e.g. animal welfare and good relations funding), so grants, while welcome, are neither a satisfactory nor sustainable arrangement.

A more sustainable system including all costs, would need to be found – to include e.g. maintenance budgets. The experience of transfer of off-street car parking at the time of local government reform was not a particularly positive one in this regard.

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Councils are actively involved in working collaboratively with each other, with NDPBs and with government departments to deliver shared outcomes e.g. through community planning, but would observe that there are distinct barriers in terms of sharing/pooling budgets, and movement of money between councils and departments (e.g. to give effect locally using developer contributions). More effective legislation and policy would be helpful to drive change, and to give effect to our shared commitment to improving the efficiency of public services.

### **Local Government Finance**

NILGA is keenly aware of the frequently expressed (government) view that in Northern Ireland, councils can raise their own revenue via rates. We would emphasise at this juncture that a transfer of function in the current circumstances would force councils to raise the district rate, which a) could be construed as double taxation, with a lack of transparency about how the regional rate is spent and b) is a less progressive tax when compared with e.g. a locally applied income tax.

It is imperative that councils have certainty in what is currently a very volatile 'macro' economic environment. NILGA highlights the cumulative impact of recent pay agreements and recent cuts including substantial cuts to the rates support grant and complete withdrawal of good relations and animal welfare funding (which came mid-year unexpectedly with council finance officers unable to prepare for this change). To balance out finances for coming years, councils need to be sure of their income within a timeline conducive to informing their rate setting process, since district rates provide 80% of council income.

Local government is keen to see a fundamental strategic review of the rates support grant to ensure the purpose and need for this support is fully understood across government. It is likely that revisiting first principles would be helpful in ensuring this critical enhancement of council finances is modernised appropriately and rendered sustainable.

We would also take this opportunity to highlight the alarm expressed by our members and senior council officers regarding the proposed 15% increase to the regional rate and its potential local impact, which we firmly believe would hamper councils in setting a reasonable district rate.

Any change of the magnitude of 15% would require a substantial lead-in period, within a timeframe cognisant of the legal timeline and framework for district rates setting. It is noted that if councils reduce their rate correspondingly to minimise the impact on ratepayers, they would effectively be subsidising the regional rate.

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There is already a great deal of uncertainty for councils in trying to establish what their district rate should be, and the variation between councils in the relationship between the regional and district rate is highlighted.

The situation is very difficult for councils who are being asked to make decisions in the absence of a more complete financial picture, with no clarity at present, including on how these proposals are going to impact on ratepayers. There is insufficient information at present about where this is going to land, and consequently NILGA is unable to give a view on the overall impact.

We note that further more detailed consultation will be undertaken on key issues. NILGA will participate in more detail when appropriate but at this point in time we would again thank you for the information you have been able to give and we look forward to a time when we can have a more fruitful, pragmatic, evidenced-based discussion on modernisation of the Northern Ireland fiscal system.

Yours sincerely,



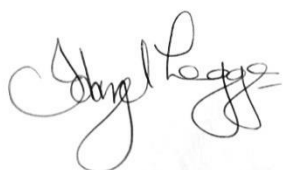
**Cllr Matt Garrett**  
**President (SF)**



**Cllr Alison Bennington**  
**Vice-President (DUP)**



**Cllr Billy Webb**  
**Vice-President (All)**



**Ald Hazel Legge**  
**Vice-President (UUP)**



**Cllr Brian Tierney**  
**Vice-President (SDLP)**

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## ITEM 9

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	19 March 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Organisational Development and Administration
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administration
Date of Report	01 March 2024
File Reference	EQ 33
Legislation	Section 75 The Northern Ireland Act 1998; Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Quarterly Report on Equality and Good Relations (Section 75 of The N.I. Act 1998) 1 January 2024- 31 March 2024
Attachments	'-

In accordance with the Council's Equality Scheme, a progress report is required to be submitted to the Council's Corporate Services Committee every quarter. This ensures the Council complies with its obligations to meet its equality and good relations duties and responsibilities, as identified in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

This report lists the actions of Council officers to meet the statutory duties since 1 January 2024.

#### Consultative Panel

A meeting of the consultative panel was held on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2024 in Alderman George Green Community Centre, all members were invited to come along a meet with the panel. The panel members reviewed Council policies, and suggestions were taken on board and added to the screening forms.

## **Screening of Council policies**

The Internal Screening Panel met in January 2024 and again in March 2024. Officers from across the Council directorates screened 11 Council policies. This enabled comments to be received, considered, and addressed. All Heads of Service and Service Unit Managers have been issued a reminder of the Council's screening obligations and instructions on completing the Jot Form.

## **Quarterly Consultations**

The Council has a requirement within the Equality Scheme to publish the outcome of screened policies quarterly. A quarterly report was uploaded onto the Council's website on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

## **Equality Action Plan**

The Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding) continues to review and ensure that items outlined in the plan are in place and on track. Officers are reminded of their responsibilities during the quarterly Screening Panel meetings. A review of the EAP is required and a new EAP for 2025 – 2030 is underway.

## **Disability Forum**

The Disability Forum met in March 2024.

At the meeting, Linda Doherty from the Patient and Client Council gave a presentation on their services.

The Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding) updated members regarding the review of the Disability Action plan. A number of parking issues and concerns have been identified by both the Over 50s Council and Disability Forum members. As a result, a workshop will be facilitated on Wednesday 13 March 2024, 2pm – 4pm at Londonderry Park, Newtownards. The aim of the workshop is to develop key messages for an awareness campaign that will help people to understand the consequences of their actions and to alter their parking habits.

## **Disability Confident Scheme**

Ards and North Down Borough Council signed up to the Disability Confident scheme, level 1 in January 2024. The scheme has 3 levels

- Level 1 to become a Disability Confident Committed
- Level 2 to become Disability Confident Employer
- Level 3 to become Disability Confident Leader

The Disability Confident scheme developed by CIPD supports employers to make the most of the talents disabled people can bring to the workplace. whilst

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- challenging attitudes towards disability
- increasing understanding of disability
- removing barriers to disabled people and those with long-term health conditions
- ensuring that disabled people have the opportunities to fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations.

Together with Councils Human Resources department, the Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding) will work towards achieving level 2.

## **Disability Action Plan**

The Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding) continues to work to deliver the Disability Action Plan. This is reported through the Internal Screening Group and the Disability Forum. At these meetings, any identified concerns may be added to the plan to ensure appropriate actions are identified and undertaken promptly to enable the Council to remain compliant with the relevant legislation. A review of the DAP is required and a new DAP for 2025 – 2030 is underway.

## **Disability Employment and Support Day**

In conjunction with the Labour Market Partnership Manager the Compliance Officer (Equality and Safeguarding) held a Disability Employment and Support Day In February 2024. The programme was aimed at those who self-identify as having a disability or a neurodiverse condition as well as parents, carers, or guardians of someone with a disability or neurodiverse condition. Local exhibitors who offer programmes and support packages for those with a disability were in attendance, to give advice on training, employment options and offer help and assistance.

## **Complaints**

During this period, no Section 75 complaints have been received.

## **Safeguarding**

Employee training has been developed in line with the Keeping Safe initiative, which aims to raise awareness of the issues concerning Safeguarding Children and adults at risk. Between November 2023 and March 2024, the Council has trained 170 employees across all directorates.

The Compliance officer (Equality and Safeguarding) continues working together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and prevent and protect them from risk and harm.

No Safeguarding referrals have been made in this reporting period.

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**It Takes All Sorts**

The It takes all sorts events 2023/2024 were very successful and gave staff and members of the public a wide variety of information ranging from Money advice to suicide prevention advice.  
It is envisaged that another 4 events will take place from September 2024 through to January 2025, this will be reported in the next quarterly report.

**RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council notes this report.



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## ITEM 10

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	.
Date of Report	26 January 2024
File Reference	'-
Legislation	'-
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	LGSC for NI-continuing operations beyond 2024
Attachments	* Letter from LGSC for NI

A letter has been received from the Local Government Staff Commission for Northern Ireland in relation to their continuing operations beyond 2024. The letter indicates that Department of Communities have advised the Commission that their operations will be extended to March 2027. The Commission have advised that once the schedule detailing the Estimated Penny Rate Product for Rates Support Grant for the incoming financial year is forwarded by the Department for Communities that they will advise Ards and North Down Borough Council of the Councils apportioned contribution for the financial year 2024/2025.

### RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes the letter.



CHAIRPERSON  
Mr Bumper Graham

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25 January 2024

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

BY EMAIL: [stephen.reid@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.reid@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

Dear Stephen

# **LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND CONTINUING OPERATIONS BEYOND 2024**

The Department for Communities has informed the Local Government Staff Commission (the Commission) that the provisional date for dissolution has been further extended to 31 March 2027.

In order to implement our statutory functions, it is necessary for the Commission to determine a Financial Scheme up to 31 March 2025. At its meeting on 23 January 2024 the Commission considered a draft Financial Scheme for 2024/25.

Due to the ongoing budgetary efficiencies achieved by the Commission it is estimated that there will be a below inflationary level of increase in its total financial requirement for the year ahead. Once the schedule detailing the Estimated Penny Rate Product for Rates Support Grant for the incoming financial year is forwarded by the Department for Communities, I will be in contact to advise you of your apportioned contribution for the financial year 2024/2025.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continuing support and if you have any queries in relation to the work of the Commission or the services provided, or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Diana Stewart  
Director of Corporate Services

Cc Rosemary McCullough by email [rosemary.mccullough@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:rosemary.mccullough@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk)

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT STAFF COMMISSION  
FOR NORTHERN IRELAND**

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Unclassified

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## ITEM 11

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administration
Date of Report	09 February 2024
File Reference	HR27
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Charter Plus Award for Member Development
Attachments	Charter Plus Framework

### Charter Plus Award for Member Development

On 29 January 2024, NILGA assessed the Council under the Charter Plus Framework (attached) for Member Development. Over 30 councillors and officers were interviewed as part of the day long assessment process, which was successful.

The Charter Framework helps councils to support councillor development and recognises those that have built an effective approach. The Elected Member Development Steering Group lead the work involved and provide a comprehensive menu of development opportunities across a 4 year period after each election.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council note the information contained in this report.



# The Councillor Charter Development

## Charter and Charter Plus

Supporting continuing professional development for councillors

# Foreword

The role of a councillor is a unique, complex, yet privileged position that can make a real difference to people's lives by focussing on improving social, economic and environmental wellbeing.

Effective councillors can help to change the world – or at least their part of it. However, it is not easy in today's working environment for a councillor to be effective. More than ever before, councillors' role as political, civic and community leaders requires visible, responsive and resilient leadership as we advocate on behalf of residents, work accountably and innovatively and help shape places in which people want to live, work and play.

Democracy and decision-making are strengthened when councillors are empowered to speak to, and for, communities and to support the effective business of local government. If we are to continue to meet the expectations of those we serve, in an ever-changing world, we need to make sure we have the skills and expertise to carry out our duties.

The Councillor Development Charter and Charter Plus provides councils with a robust framework, that is flexible to local needs, ensures effective leadership, equips members with the support they need, and provides resilience in times of challenge.

The council I am part of, Belfast City Council, is accredited to the Councillor Development Charter and Charter Plus standards. I know therefore from first-hand experience the benefits of this guidance in helping councils build an even more effective and positive approach to ensuring all councillors are developed and supported to be effective in their roles.

The Councillor Development Charter and Charter Plus are part of NILGA's coordinated approach to sector-led improvement across local government, supporting councils to continue their own improvement journey, take up our support tools and offers and contribute to the improvement of local government as a whole.

I know today that local government is more committed to investing in councillors' growth and development, and I strongly encourage all councils to adopt and maintain the Councillor Development Charter and Charter Plus – benchmarks of your improvement journey. Continued professional development is important for effective democracy and good governance, and I hope NILGA Charter councils will inspire the next generation of councillors and political leaders to stand for election and make a clear difference for the people we serve.



*Matt Gamble*

# Values and Purposes

Learning and development is an important tool for councils, councillors and officers to deliver what our communities need. Inspiring local communities and ensuring the wellbeing of the people and places we represent takes ambitious leadership – and effective political leadership is at the heart of a healthy democracy; with councillors who are well equipped and supported, resilient in times of challenge or usual business/service provision is disrupted and/or has to be delivered in a new/different way, and confident to make a difference, deliver and be trusted.

The Charter and Charter Plus helps councils to support councillor development and recognises those that have built an effective approach.

This document will take you through:

- Benefits of achieving the charter and charter plus
- Resource of commitments involved
- Details of each element and the requirements to achieve the charter
- The types of evidence you could use

The framework in this document gives concise and clear guidance on how to achieve the charter without being too onerous or overly bureaucratic.

The charter is flexible and focuses positively and supportively on what councils already have in place.

There is a strong emphasis on a local approach to a national framework. Rather than dictating a council's strategy, content or delivery mechanisms, the emphasis is on ensuring that all councillors are appropriately developed and supported to be effective in their roles.

The Charter and Charter Plus are also based on the principles of sector-led improvement, whereby councils:

- Are responsible for their own performance
- Are accountable locally, not nationally
- Have a sense of collective responsibility for the performance of the sector as whole
- Can access support and tools from NILGA and regional organisations

# Benefits

The following benefits have been reported by councils through the regional local government organisations which assess and award the Charter.

## Benefits: processes and strategies

- Concise and clear guidance on how to achieve the Charter without being too onerous or overly bureaucratic.
- Flexible and focusses positively and supportively on what councils already have in place – a local approach to a national framework.
- Helps councils decide what to prioritise and improve.
- Councillor development needs are better understood and supported.
- Demonstrates the value placed on councillors carrying out their important and complex role.
- Helps set aside time to reflect and celebrate the good practice already happening.

## Benefits: impact on councillors

- The quality of councillor development is improved.
- New councillors are better prepared for their roles and responsibilities.
- Councillor progression is better enabled.
- Helps ensure councillors can operate at their most knowledgeable, skilled and effective.
- Increases councillors' competence and confidence.
- Helps councillors navigate the ever more complex and demanding role and local government landscape.
- Self-care and reflection for councillors through development and growth.

## Benefits: impact on all partners

- Strengthens member-officer relationships.
- Helps ensure effective top team political and managerial leadership.
- Encourages robust and accountable decision making.
- Helps ensure proactive succession planning.
- Helps improve councillor diversity.
- Enhances democracy and participation.
- Strengthens relationships with residents and partners.
- Improves outcomes for communities.
- Fosters a culture of learning and support within the council and with partners.



## Additional benefits of Charter Plus accreditation

- Highest level of commitment and a holistic approach means the benefits filter more widely.
- Case studies highlight successes and encourage more councillors to participate.
- Evaluation ensures high quality learning and development is delivered to councillors.
- Learning and development for councillors supports council's objectives.
- Councillors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
- Successful and impactful Personal Development Plans (PDPs) for councillors.
- Deeper intel of the impact of learning and development.
- Helps prioritise, horizon-scan and deliver the 'next level' of member development.
- Strengthened place-based focus by sharing development opportunities and promoting the role of the councillor to other organisations in the local area.
- Effective succession planning and candidate recruitment activities.
- Evaluation draws out the impacts to the community through feedback from local partners.

## Resource commitment

- The framework gives concise and clear guidance on how to achieve the charter without being too onerous or overly bureaucratic.
- A flexible approach that focusses positively and supportively on what councils already have in place – a local approach to a national framework.
- Examples of evidence are clearly detailed in the framework.
- Many councils are already doing this work – the charter is a chance for it to be recognised.

Please contact NILGA  
[f.douglas@nilga.org](mailto:f.douglas@nilga.org)  
 for more information

# Guidelines and Evidence

**There are three essential criteria to achieving the Charter:**



There is a clear commitment to councillor development and support.



The Council has a strategic approach to councillor development.



Learning and development is effective in building councillors' skills and knowledge.

Within each of these, there are a number of elements and requirements to demonstrate that the criteria are being met.

These do not dictate what should be in the strategy, the nature of the content or the delivery mechanisms that should be used. The emphasis is on ensuring that all councillors are appropriately developed and supported so that they can be effective in their roles.

The following lists are intended to indicate the sorts of evidence that can be used to show that the council's approach to councillor development meets the charter criteria. Note that:

- There is no need to show all the evidence listed
- This does not preclude the use of other evidence that may not be listed. The emphasis is on a local approach to a national framework
- Some are likely to be stronger indicators than others
- Some pieces of evidence may be applicable to more than one element of the criteria

As described over the next pages, evidence is wide-ranging and could include anything that demonstrates meeting the requirements, for example:

- Meeting notes
- Feedback from councillors and officers
- Strategy and policy documents
- Details of development events

# Requirements and examples of evidence



## Criterion 1 There is a clear commitment to councillor development and support

### Element 1.1

Political and managerial leadership is committed to the development of councillors

Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter +	Examples of evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear commitment from the top political and managerial leadership</li> <li>• Established Cross-party elected member development group that meets regularly</li> <li>• Clear elected member development strategy/framework which is embedded into practice and regularly reviewed</li> <li>• Named councillor/s and officer/s responsible for councillor development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear, formal commitment from political and managerial leadership to shape/provide development opportunities across local government (including partners, e.g. strategic community planning partners)</li> <li>• There is a clear, finance and officer resourced elected member development framework which is embedded into practice and regularly reviewed.</li> <li>• Strategic approach to forward planning of councillor development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed formal commitment to achieve the charter and charter plus</li> <li>• Plans and processes are in place to support councillor development</li> <li>• Cross party elected member development group showing active involvement of councillors in the learning and development process</li> <li>• Councillors are included in any best practice accreditation process such as Investors in People (IiP) Award questioning process (where applicable)</li> <li>• Elected members feedback confirms the plans, processes and confirmed actions are in place.</li> <li>• Learning and development programme informed by members PDP's and Senior Management Team.</li> </ul>

## Element 1.2

The council has a designated resource and budget for elected member development which is adequate to meet priority development needs.

Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter +	Examples of evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate and adequate officer resources are in place to support councillor development</li> <li>• Budget is explicit and clearly defined and monitored</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor development and support staff have their own skills development programme</li> <li>• The officer/s are involved in regional and national learning networks to support continuing professional development (CPD)</li> <li>• The budget is carefully reviewed, set and prioritised at a corporate level with input from the elected member development group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officer/s job descriptions</li> <li>• Named officer/s in information distributed to councillors and staff</li> <li>• Councillors are able to name the officer/s</li> <li>• The officer/s are able to demonstrate their understanding of learning and development in a political context</li> <li>• Cross-party member development group terms of reference and active involvement of councillors in the learning and development process demonstrated</li> <li>• Budget reports</li> <li>• Information that informs councillors of the existence of the budget</li> <li>• Minutes of meetings that shows councillors' involvement in setting and monitoring the budget.</li> <li>• Councillors confirm that the budget is sufficient to meet priority current and future development needs</li> </ul>

### Element 1.3

The council is committed to ensuring equal access to best practice learning and development for all councillors

Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter +	Examples of evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistical analysis of categories or types of adjustments needed to enable full and equal access to development opportunities</li> <li>• Timing of events takes account of cultural and personal circumstances</li> <li>• All councillors have equal access to development opportunities</li> <li>• The development programme includes a range of delivery methods to meet different learning styles</li> <li>• Councillors are regularly updated on councillor development activities</li> <li>• Access provision to existing and /or necessary new learning continues should usual business/service provision be disrupted and/or should learning activities have to be delivered in a new/different way.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of equality of access is monitored, reviewed and actioned.</li> <li>• Clear alignment to prevailing Local Government Training Group / NILGA regional &amp; national best practice L&amp;D.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistical evidence of attendance levels</li> <li>• A range of learning and development options to meet individual needs are provided and promoted. The range of options is sufficiently robust to cope with any disruption to usual business/service provision and/or new ways of working.</li> <li>• A range of learning and development activities to meet individual needs are provided and promoted</li> <li>• A range of communication methods e.g. internet / intranet / social media and positive case studies, is used to promote development</li> <li>• Councillors confirm that action is taken to respond to and accommodate diversity of needs</li> <li>• Evidence of flexibility and consideration of the timing of development events demonstrated</li> </ul>

The council actively promotes democratic participation, publicises the role of councillors as community leaders and proactively engages with under-represented groups

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Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter +	Examples of evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The council holds events and undertakes activities to encourage people to engage with council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•The council takes action to encourage people to engage with council, particularly from under-represented groups and evaluates the impact and success of the activities</li> <li>•The council builds links with local businesses, community organisations and other active citizen bodies through partnership working.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• local democracy week, promoted programme of activities and events delivered</li> <li>•Youth council</li> <li>•Citizenship links with local schools, colleges and universities</li> <li>•Presentations/events delivered in the community specifically to target under-represented groups</li> <li>•Promotional material is made available on the council websites which includes positive media stories.</li> </ul>



## Criterion 2 The council has a strategic approach to councillor development

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### Element 2.1

The council has a councillor development strategy/framework in place

Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter +	Examples of evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The strategy/framework is developed and monitored by the cross-party member development group</li> <li>• Strategy/framework identifies priority development needs and makes stated and clear links with councils corporate/strategic objectives. Risk management processes are also in place to deal with any disruption to usual business/service provision or when business has to be delivered in a new/different way</li> <li>• The strategy/framework is regularly reviewed (at least once every three years) by the cross-party member development group</li> <li>• The strategy/framework includes an induction process that is evaluated after each election</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The cross-party elected member development group leads the evaluation of the strategy/framework and identifies and ensures improvements are addressed</li> <li>• Clear alignment to prevailing Local Government Training Group / NILGA regional &amp; national best practice L&amp;D</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A strategy/framework is in place</li> <li>• Cross-party elected member development group has clear, timebound, output driven, terms of reference</li> <li>• Notes of member development meetings showing monitoring and evaluation of the strategy</li> <li>• Member development group demonstrates their involvement in formulating the strategy/framework</li> <li>• Overview and scrutiny review of the effectiveness of the strategy/framework</li> <li>• EMD Body regularly reviews the strategy/framework and its effective implementation and how it aligns to the corporate/strategic objectives, clearly demonstrating the rationale behind stated priorities</li> </ul>

The council has a structured process for regularly assessing councillors' individual learning and development needs based on focused objectives

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Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter +	Examples of evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A structured process exists to identify individual development needs in the form of a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) or Personal Development Plans (PDP) and is working effectively</li> <li>• The council is able to react and quickly adapt to offer new development opportunities/activities when usual business/service provision is disrupted and/or has to be delivered in a new/different way.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All councillors are offered Personal Development Plans, and more than half of councillors take them up</li> <li>• Council has a process for individual councillor reviews to reflect on strengths and support progression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor role profiles</li> <li>• Training needs analysis</li> <li>• Personal development plans</li> <li>• Use of the LGA/bespoke Political Skills Framework and/or the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Councillor</li> <li>• Take up of regional training co-ordinated by NILGA</li> </ul>



The various councillor roles are clearly defined and outline how they contribute to the achievement of community, political and council objectives

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Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter +	Examples of evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors demonstrate an understanding of the skills and knowledge required in their DEA's and council wide roles</li> <li>• Councillor role profiles exist and are reviewed for all key roles including the ward councillor</li> <li>• Councillors are clear about what the council is trying to achieve and the key role they play in this as councillors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role profiles are used to identify and prioritise development needs</li> <li>• Role profiles are used to support mentoring or the appointment of new committee chairs</li> <li>• Evidence that councillors are clear about:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the role of partner bodies</li> <li>- the role of other stakeholders</li> <li>- their own role on partner bodies</li> <li>- their own role in relation to other stakeholder bodies</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systems are in place to identify individual development and support needs</li> <li>• Learning styles and training needs analysis</li> <li>• Personal Development Plans link to role and corporate objectives</li> <li>• Councillors are able to describe how learning and development activities have helped them to carry out their role and contribute to the achievement of the council's objectives</li> </ul>

The council has a structured process for assessing current and future leadership and executive team development needs

Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter +	Examples of evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structured process to assess current and future leadership development needs</li> <li>• This considers corporate risk management planning when usual business/service provision is disrupted and/or has to be delivered in a new/different way.</li> <li>• Joint member-officer development activities in place to support working effectively together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaders, members and chairs have identified and undertaken development appropriate to their responsible area</li> <li>• Councils make provision for leadership development for elected members including NILGA accredited courses if assessed to be of council / community value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process in place to identify leadership requirements</li> <li>• Leadership Development Plans</li> <li>• 360 Degree Leadership Audits or use of leadership diagnostic tools as part of leadership development activities.</li> <li>• Political leadership development programmes e.g. NILGA Leadership Programme and other bespoke internal council programmes put in place</li> <li>• Events that support joint member / officer team development</li> <li>• Joint events with executive and senior management</li> <li>• Succession planning strategies</li> <li>• Community leadership development programmes</li> <li>• The political leadership can describe actions taken to develop political leadership capacity</li> <li>• The political and managerial leadership can give examples of how they work together as a team</li> </ul>

## Element 2.3

There is a corporate councillor learning and development plan in place

Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter +	Examples of evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plan links to council's corporate objectives and the development of councillors</li> <li>• The plan includes individuals, committees and political leadership needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The plan clearly prioritises learning and development that supports the corporate objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate councillor learning and development plan</li> <li>• The cross-party councillor development group are able to explain how learning and development activities are prioritised</li> </ul>

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## Criterion 3 Learning and development is effective in building skills and knowledge

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### Element 3.1

Investment in learning and development is regularly evaluated and improvements implemented

Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter +	Examples of evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation approach is in place to analyse the cost and benefits of councillor development</li> <li>• Evaluation and improvement processes consider corporate risk management when usual business/service provision is disrupted and/or has to be delivered in a new/different way.</li> <li>• Political and managerial leadership display a good understanding of both the costs and benefits of development activities</li> <li>• Councillors can describe why they did certain activities, what they learnt and what difference it has made to them carrying out their various roles</li> <li>• Continuous improvement in the approach to developing councillors is identified and implemented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation approach is in place to analyse the impact of councillor development activities</li> <li>• Some form of impact assessment at the corporate and community level exists and is used to evaluate the impact of development (e.g. feedback from partners is actively sought, linked to a defined community-based project or development activities in general).</li> <li>• Case studies of how learning and development has impacted on individual and corporate performance</li> <li>• There are links to an evaluation approach including a quality assurance process</li> <li>• Evaluation outcomes inform change and drive continuous improvement</li> <li>• A quality assurance process is in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluation approach is in place and is effective</li> <li>• Analysis of costs and benefits to the council from councillor learning and development</li> <li>• Case studies of how learning and development has impacted on individual and corporate performance</li> <li>• Notes of meetings, focus groups, questionnaires or interviews involving councillors evaluating the impact of their development on overall performance</li> <li>• Political and managerial leadership display a good understanding of both the costs and benefits of development activities</li> <li>• Political and managerial leadership can provide examples and evidence of the impact and benefits of councillor development</li> <li>• Evaluation strategy is in place and is effective</li> <li>• Written reviews of learning and development activities with recommendations for change</li> <li>• Notes of meetings, reports, personal statements providing examples of improvements to learning activities</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Changes to development programmes and a rationale for the changes made</li><li>• Councillors can describe what has been done to improve the development activities</li><li>• Quality assurance process is in place and is effective</li></ul>
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Learning is shared with other councillors and, where appropriate, with officers and stakeholders to encourage capacity building and a culture of learning across the council and externally

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Requirements for Charter	Requirements for Charter +	Examples of evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge and learning is shared with councillors' peers, officers, other councils and organisations. This should also be the case should usual business/service provision be disrupted and/or has to be delivered in a new/different way</li> <li>• Clear alignment to prevailing Local Government Training Group / NILGA regional &amp; national best practice L&amp;D</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is an effective process in place for disseminating, sharing and exchanging knowledge and learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of reports, briefing sessions, and information exchange systems used to capture and disseminate learning programmes of joint learning exchanges</li> <li>• Councillor formal / informal mentoring arrangements</li> <li>• Shared development activities with members, officers and stakeholders.</li> <li>• Developing councillor champions for topic areas</li> <li>• Councillors can give examples of how they have supported and learned from the development of others</li> </ul>

Produced in conjunction with the following organisations



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Unclassified

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## ITEM 12

### Ards and North Down Borough Council

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2024
Responsible Director	Chief Executive
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Communications and Marketing
Date of Report	16 February 2024
File Reference	CJ/2024RS
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Residents Survey 2023
Attachments	Appendix 1: Overview of findings Appendix 2: Survey Report

The Council has committed to undertaking a formal survey of residents every two years to gain an insight into satisfaction levels with the organisation and the services we deliver. The information gathered is shared across all service areas and used to inform a number of performance improvement measures including our annual service plans, performance improvement plan and financial statements.

A procurement exercise was undertaken to secure a market research company to deliver a survey that would provide:

- an insight into how the Council is perceived by the community it serves
- satisfaction with the local area
- satisfaction with 'key' Council services
- the responsiveness of the Council
- how informed residents feel
- their perception of the value for money the Council provides.



Unclassified

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Social Market Research Ltd (SMR) was successful in the procurement exercise and commissioned to undertake the survey. The research was conducted in line with ISO20252 of which Social Market Research (SMR) is fully accredited.

The survey is based on a representative sample of 1,004 residents aged 16+, with quotas applied for age, gender, social class and location within the Borough.

The survey was conducted using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). All interviews were conducted by telephone with interviewers fully briefed before the commencement of fieldwork.

A summary of the headline findings is attached in Appendix A.

It is encouraging to note that residents report a high level of overall satisfaction with the Council – 83%. The comparative figure for all GB Councils in June 2021 was 60%.

The findings have been considered by Corporate Leadership Team and Heads of Service and as referenced previously, will be used to inform a number of our performance improvement publications.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Council notes the results of the 2023 Resident Survey, which will be shared across all service areas and used to inform a number of performance improvement measures including our annual service plans, performance improvement plan and financial statements.



## Executive Summary

# Ards and North Down Borough Council: Residents' Survey (2023)

22 February 2024



**SMR**

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## Executive Summary

This report presents the findings from a survey of Ards and North Down Borough Council residents. As well as providing a measure of resident satisfaction with the Council, the survey also focused on awareness and use of Council services and contact with the Council. Other areas covered in the survey included: recycling; use of the Council's website; support for making more Council services available online; engagement; value for money; and resident perceived priorities. The survey was undertaken in October and November 2023 and is based on a representative sample of 1004 residents covering all areas of the Borough. The survey was conducted by telephone and in accordance with the ISO20252:2019 Standard.

### Overall Satisfaction

- 83% of residents were satisfied with the Council overall, 11% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 5% were dissatisfied and 1% were undecided (*the overall satisfaction level is consistent with that recorded in the Council's 2021 survey, 82%. The comparative figure for all GB Councils in June 2023 was 60%*);
- Hollywood and Clondeboy (97%) residents recorded the highest level of satisfaction with the Council, with Newtownards residents least likely to be satisfied (64%);
- The most common suggestions for Council improvement included: keeping areas clean and tidy, reducing litter, reducing fly tipping, street cleaning and keeping grassed areas weed free. Reducing or freezing domestic and business rates, was also commonly suggested;

### Awareness and Use of Council Services

- Residents were more likely to be aware of the Council's waste collection service (98%) and less likely to be aware of its business support service (56%);
- The most commonly used Council services in the last 12 months included: waste management services (73%); car parks (67%); parks and open spaces (51%); household recycling centres (42%); and, leisure and community centres (38%);
- 97% of residents had used at least one Council service in the previous 12 months *[73% in 2021]*;

### Satisfaction with Council Services

- Residents using Council services reported relatively high levels of satisfaction, with the highest level of satisfaction recorded for registration of births, deaths and marriages and civil partnerships (99%), with a relatively lower level of satisfaction recorded for business support (73%)<sup>1</sup>;

### Recycling

- 58% rated their commitment to recycling as high, 32% as medium and 9% as low *[67% in 2021]*;
- Those less committed to recycling included: men; residents aged under 35; those in lower social grades; residents with a disability; economically inactive residents; and residents living in Newtownards;
- 87% of residents said they are confident that they put different waste materials in the right bins, with 14% saying they are not confident *(84% in 2021)*;

### Contact with the Council

- 38% of residents had contacted or made an enquiry to the Council in the last 12 months, with phone contact accounting for 67% of all recent contacts *[40% had contacted the Council in 2021]*;

<sup>1</sup> Please note that satisfaction levels for some services such as business support are based on small sample sizes and as such caution should be exercised in extrapolating these findings to all service users

- 82% rated their most recent contact as either excellent or good, 12% fair and 6% poor *[72% in 2021];*

#### Council Website

- 49% had visited the Council website in the last 12 months, with the most common reasons for doing so including: getting information on a Council service (50%) and to find out about opening times (33%) *[28% had visited the Council's website in 2021];*
- Residents using the website to get information on a Council service were most likely to be seeking information on household recycling centres (31%);
- 99% were able to find the service-related information they were looking for *[97% in 2021]*, with 92% of visitors to the website satisfied with it *[88% in 2021];*

#### Support for More Council Services being Available Online

- 82% are supportive of the Council making more of its services available online *[74% in 2021];*

#### Broadband and Online Activity

- 94% said their household is connected to broadband, with 77% of those with a broadband connection rating their connection as either excellent or good *[72% in 2021];*
- Bangor Central (98%) residents were more likely to rate the quality of broadband coverage where they live as excellent or good whereas residents in Bangor East and Donaghadee were least likely to do so (62%);
- 77% use the internet / go online on a daily basis with 73% using social media platforms such as Facebook (67%), Instagram (39%); and Twitter (38%) *[in 2021, 51% used the internet / went online on a daily basis];*

#### Consultations, Communication, Perception and Engagement

- 85% said they find it easy to get information on Council services or initiatives *[71% in 2021];*
- The Council's website was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in terms of the best way for the Council to communicate with residents, followed by email (2<sup>nd</sup>) and a Council magazine posted to all households (3<sup>rd</sup>);
- 86% are supportive of a Council magazine being sent to all households in the Borough *(6% are unsupportive and 8% were undecided);*
- 2% had taken part in a Council engagement / information exercise in the last 12 months with 11% doing so more than 12 months ago;
- 87% of those who had engaged in a Council engagement / information exercise rated their experience as excellent or good;
- Among those who had never participated in a Council engagement / information exercise, lack of interest (42%), and being unaware of Council consultations (35%), were the most common reasons for not doing so;
- 64% would like the Council to consult with them in the future using online methods, with 14% preferring a letter and 9% preferring a Council newsletter / Borough Magazine *(in 2021, 33% preferred online methods and 33% preferred a Council newsletter);*
- 78% believe the Council keeps residents well informed about the services and benefits it provides *(the figure was 72% in 2021. The comparative figure for all GB Councils in June 2023 was 55%);*
- 65% are satisfied with the level of engagement the Council offers local residents *(the figure was 68% in 2021);*
- Thinking of the Council as a person, residents most commonly used the following terms to describe its personality: 'helpful'; 'friendly'; 'professional'; 'responsive'; and 'nice'.

### Value for Money

- 68% believe that 'given the range of services provided to residents, Ards and North Down Borough Council provides good value for money' (the comparative figure in 2021 was 49%. The comparative figure for all GB Councils in June 2023 was 42%);

### Council Priorities

- In rank order, residents identified the top 3 Council priorities as: attracting jobs and investment into the local economy (1st); ensuring annual rate increases are kept at or below inflation (2nd) and supporting residents and businesses' health and wellbeing (3rd);

### Local Area as a Place to Live

- 93% said they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live [90% in 2021. The comparative figure for all GB Councils in June 2023 was 73%];
- All residents in Bangor East and Donaghadee, and Bangor West, were satisfied with their local area as a place to live, with Newtownards residents least likely to be satisfied (80%);

## Key Conclusions

### Resident Satisfaction

Overall, residents report a high level of satisfaction with Ards and North Down Borough Council with more than 8 out of 10 satisfied. This level of satisfaction is consistent with previous resident satisfaction surveys conducted by the Council in 2018 and 2021.

### Awareness, Use and Satisfaction with Council Services

Awareness of specific Council services was found to be relatively high, with the most commonly used services including waste management, car parks, parks and open spaces, household recycling centres (HRCs) and leisure and community centres.

Although most residents using individual services reported to be satisfied with each service, services reporting proportionately higher levels of *dissatisfaction* included planning and / or building control and HRCs. In relation to planning and / or building control, dissatisfaction related to users finding the process difficult as well as speed of response by the Council. In relation to HRCs, dissatisfaction primarily related to having to book an appointment to use a HRC.

### Recycling

Residents being fully committed to recycling is key to the Council delivering on its waste management strategy. Although the current survey found that most residents say their commitment to recycling is high (58%), this level of commitment has fallen significantly from the figure of 67% recorded in 2021, with those less likely to say their commitment is high representing particular resident groups such as younger residents, those in lower social grades, and those living in Newtownards.

### Resident Contact with the Council

The current survey shows that approximately four out of ten residents had contacted the Council in the last 12 months, with this level of contact similar to that recorded in 2021. In terms of contact experience, and on a positive note for the Council, the contact experience of residents has improved with a significantly greater number of residents in the current survey reporting their contact experience as either excellent or good (up from 72% to 82% compared with 2021).

### Council's Website

As in previous surveys, the importance of the Council's website to residents is borne out in the current survey, with visits to the website almost doubling compared with 2021 (*up from 28% to 49%*). In almost all cases, residents were able to find the service related information they were looking for, with the overwhelming majority of visitors to the site satisfied with it. Indeed residents say that the Council website is the best way for the Council to communicate with them.

### Broadband Connectivity

Resident perception of the quality of broadband in their local area has remained unchanged since 2021, with most residents continuing to use the internet daily, most use social media platforms, and most use Facebook.

### Communication with Residents

Effective communication by the Council is critical to ensuring that residents are informed about what is going on across the Borough. As with previous surveys, this current survey shows that the Council is performing well on this measure, with most residents of the view that it is easy to get information on Council services or initiatives (*up significantly from 71% in 2021 to 85% in the current survey*). Residents are also highly supportive of a Council magazine being sent to all households in the Borough. Although participation in Council engagement and information exercises is low, the overwhelming majority of those who have taken part in these consultations found it a positive experience. Among the vast majority of residents who have never taken part in a Council consultation exercise, lack of interest and being unaware of consultations are the most common reasons for not doing so. Looking to the future, residents believe that online methods are the best way for the Council to engage with them. Overall, most residents are satisfied with the level of engagement the Council offers residents, with this pattern of response consistent with the findings from previous surveys.

### Value for Money

In relation to value for money, the current survey found that almost 7 out of 10 residents believe that given the range of services provided to residents, Ards and North Down Borough Council provides good value for money. Compared with 2021, this represents a significant improvement for the Council (*up from 49% in 2021 to 69% in the current survey*);

### Council Priorities and Ards and North Down as a Place to Live

With regard to Council priorities, residents have prioritised attracting jobs and investment into the local economy, ensuring annual rate increases are kept at or below inflation and supporting residents and businesses' health and wellbeing. This marks a change in the top priority from 2021, when health and wellbeing was most important to residents. This is probably no surprise given that in 2021 survey was conducted during the pandemic.

Again, and as with previous surveys, residents have strongly endorsed Ards and North Down Borough as a place to live, with resident satisfaction with their local area very high, and significantly above the GB average.

## Overall Conclusions

Overall the survey findings suggest a high level of satisfaction with the Council overall, with the Council scoring well on specific measures such as providing value for money, satisfaction with Council provided services and Council consultation and engagement activities. In terms of priorities for the Council, residents believe that the focus should be on prioritising attracting jobs and investment, ensuring annual rate increases are kept at or below inflation, and the health and wellbeing of residents and businesses.



## Ards and North Down Borough Council: Residents' Survey (2023)

22 February 2024



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## Executive Summary

This report presents the findings from a survey of Ards and North Down Borough Council residents. As well as providing a measure of resident satisfaction with the Council, the survey also focused on awareness and use of Council services and contact with the Council. Other areas covered in the survey included: recycling; use of the Council's website; support for making more Council services available online; engagement; value for money; and resident perceived priorities. The survey was undertaken in October and November 2023 and is based on a representative sample of 1004 residents covering all areas of the Borough. The survey was conducted by telephone and in accordance with the ISO20252:2019 Standard.

### Overall Satisfaction

- 83% of residents were satisfied with the Council overall, 11% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 5% were dissatisfied and 1% were undecided (*the overall satisfaction level is consistent with that recorded in the Council's 2021 survey, 82%. The comparative figure for all GB Councils in June 2023 was 60%*);
- Hollywood and Clondeboy (97%) residents recorded the highest level of satisfaction with the Council, with Newtownards residents least likely to be satisfied (64%);
- The most common suggestions for Council improvement included: keeping areas clean and tidy, reducing litter, reducing fly tipping, street cleaning and keeping grassed areas weed free. Reducing or freezing domestic and business rates, was also commonly suggested;

### Awareness and Use of Council Services

- Residents were more likely to be aware of the Council's waste collection service (98%) and less likely to be aware of its business support service (56%);
- The most commonly used Council services in the last 12 months included: waste management services (73%); car parks (67%); parks and open spaces (51%); household recycling centres (42%); and, leisure and community centres (38%);
- 97% of residents had used at least one Council service in the previous 12 months [*73% in 2021*];

### Satisfaction with Council Services

- Residents using Council services reported relatively high levels of satisfaction, with the highest level of satisfaction recorded for registration of births, deaths and marriages and civil partnerships (99%), with a relatively lower level of satisfaction recorded for business support (73%)<sup>1</sup>;

### Recycling

- 58% rated their commitment to recycling as high, 32% as medium and 9% as low [*67% in 2021*];
- Those less committed to recycling included: men; residents aged under 35; those in lower social grades; residents with a disability; economically inactive residents; and residents living in Newtownards;
- 87% of residents said they are confident that they put different waste materials in the right bins, with 14% saying they are not confident [*84% in 2021*];

### Contact with the Council

- 38% of residents had contacted or made an enquiry to the Council in the last 12 months, with phone contact accounting for 67% of all recent contacts [*40% had contacted the Council in 2021*];

<sup>1</sup> Please note that satisfaction levels for some services such as business support are based on small sample sizes and as such caution should be exercised in extrapolating these findings to all service users

- 82% rated their most recent contact as either excellent or good, 12% fair and 6% poor *[72% in 2021];*

#### Council Website

- 49% had visited the Council website in the last 12 months, with the most common reasons for doing so including: getting information on a Council service (50%) and to find out about opening times (33%) *[28% had visited the Council's website in 2021];*
- Residents using the website to get information on a Council service were most likely to be seeking information on household recycling centres (31%);
- 99% were able to find the service-related information they were looking for *[97% in 2021]*, with 92% of visitors to the website satisfied with it *[88% in 2021];*

#### Support for More Council Services being Available Online

- 82% are supportive of the Council making more of its services available online *[74% in 2021];*

#### Broadband and Online Activity

- 94% said their household is connected to broadband, with 77% of those with a broadband connection rating their connection as either excellent or good *[72% in 2021];*
- Bangor Central (98%) residents were more likely to rate the quality of broadband coverage where they live as excellent or good whereas residents in Bangor East and Donaghadee were least likely to do so (62%);
- 77% use the internet / go online on a daily basis with 73% using social media platforms such as Facebook (67%), Instagram (39%); and Twitter (38%) *[in 2021, 51% used the internet / went online on a daily basis];*

#### Consultations, Communication, Perception and Engagement

- 85% said they find it easy to get information on Council services or initiatives *[71% in 2021];*
- The Council's website was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in terms of the best way for the Council to communicate with residents, followed by email (2<sup>nd</sup>) and a Council magazine posted to all households (3<sup>rd</sup>);
- 86% are supportive of a Council magazine being sent to all households in the Borough *(6% are unsupportive and 8% were undecided);*
- 2% had taken part in a Council engagement / information exercise in the last 12 months with 11% doing so more than 12 months ago;
- 87% of those who had engaged in a Council engagement / information exercise rated their experience as excellent or good;
- Among those who had never participated in a Council engagement / information exercise, lack of interest (42%), and being unaware of Council consultations (35%), were the most common reasons for not doing so;
- 64% would like the Council to consult with them in the future using online methods, with 14% preferring a letter and 9% preferring a Council newsletter / Borough Magazine *(in 2021, 33% preferred online methods and 33% preferred a Council newsletter);*
- 78% believe the Council keeps residents well informed about the services and benefits it provides *(the figure was 72% in 2021. The comparative figure for all GB Councils in June 2023 was 55%);*
- 65% are satisfied with the level of engagement the Council offers local residents *(the figure was 68% in 2021);*
- Thinking of the Council as a person, residents most commonly used the following terms to describe its personality: 'helpful'; 'friendly'; 'professional'; 'responsive'; and 'nice'.

### Value for Money

- 68% believe that 'given the range of services provided to residents, Ards and North Down Borough Council provides good value for money' (the comparative figure in 2021 was 49%. The comparative figure for all GB Councils in June 2023 was 42%);

### Council Priorities

- In rank order, residents identified the top 3 Council priorities as: attracting jobs and investment into the local economy (1st); ensuring annual rate increases are kept at or below inflation (2nd) and supporting residents and businesses' health and wellbeing (3rd);

### Local Area as a Place to Live

- 93% said they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live [90% in 2021. The comparative figure for all GB Councils in June 2023 was 73%];
- All residents in Bangor East and Donaghadee, and Bangor West, were satisfied with their local area as a place to live, with Newtownards residents least likely to be satisfied (80%);

## Key Conclusions

### Resident Satisfaction

Overall, residents report a high level of satisfaction with Ards and North Down Borough Council with more than 8 out of 10 satisfied. This level of satisfaction is consistent with previous resident satisfaction surveys conducted by the Council in 2018 and 2021.

### Awareness, Use and Satisfaction with Council Services

Awareness of specific Council services was found to be relatively high, with the most commonly used services including waste management, car parks, parks and open spaces, household recycling centres (HRCs) and leisure and community centres.

Although most residents using individual services reported to be satisfied with each service, services reporting proportionately higher levels of *dissatisfaction* included planning and / or building control and HRCs. In relation to planning and / or building control, dissatisfaction related to users finding the process difficult as well as speed of response by the Council. In relation to HRCs, dissatisfaction primarily related to having to book an appointment to use a HRC.

### Recycling

Residents being fully committed to recycling is key to the Council delivering on its waste management strategy. Although the current survey found that most residents say their commitment to recycling is high (58%), this level of commitment has fallen significantly from the figure of 67% recorded in 2021, with those less likely to say their commitment is high representing particular resident groups such as younger residents, those in lower social grades, and those living in Newtownards.

### Resident Contact with the Council

The current survey shows that approximately four out of ten residents had contacted the Council in the last 12 months, with this level of contact similar to that recorded in 2021. In terms of contact experience, and on a positive note for the Council, the contact experience of residents has improved with a significantly greater number of residents in the current survey reporting their contact experience as either excellent or good (up from 72% to 82% compared with 2021).

### Council's Website

As in previous surveys, the importance of the Council's website to residents is borne out in the current survey, with visits to the website almost doubling compared with 2021 (*up from 28% to 49%*). In almost all cases, residents were able to find the service related information they were looking for, with the overwhelming majority of visitors to the site satisfied with it. Indeed residents say that the Council website is the best way for the Council to communicate with them.

### Broadband Connectivity

Resident perception of the quality of broadband in their local area has remained unchanged since 2021, with most residents continuing to use the internet daily, most use social media platforms, and most use Facebook.

### Communication with Residents

Effective communication by the Council is critical to ensuring that residents are informed about what is going on across the Borough. As with previous surveys, this current survey shows that the Council is performing well on this measure, with most residents of the view that it is easy to get information on Council services or initiatives (*up significantly from 71% in 2021 to 85% in the current survey*). Residents are also highly supportive of a Council magazine being sent to all households in the Borough. Although participation in Council engagement and information exercises is low, the overwhelming majority of those who have taken part in these consultations found it a positive experience. Among the vast majority of residents who have never taken part in a Council consultation exercise, lack of interest and being unaware of consultations are the most common reasons for not doing so. Looking to the future, residents believe that online methods are the best way for the Council to engage with them. Overall, most residents are satisfied with the level of engagement the Council offers residents, with this pattern of response consistent with the findings from previous surveys.

### Value for Money

In relation to value for money, the current survey found that almost 7 out of 10 residents believe that given the range of services provided to residents, Ards and North Down Borough Council provides good value for money. Compared with 2021, this represents a significant improvement for the Council (*up from 49% in 2021 to 69% in the current survey*);

### Council Priorities and Ards and North Down as a Place to Live

With regard to Council priorities, residents have prioritised attracting jobs and investment into the local economy, ensuring annual rate increases are kept at or below inflation and supporting residents and businesses' health and wellbeing. This marks a change in the top priority from 2021, when health and wellbeing was most important to residents. This is probably no surprise given that in 2021 survey was conducted during the pandemic.

Again, and as with previous surveys, residents have strongly endorsed Ards and North Down Borough as a place to live, with resident satisfaction with their local area very high, and significantly above the GB average.

## Overall Conclusions

Overall the survey findings suggest a high level of satisfaction with the Council overall, with the Council scoring well on specific measures such as providing value for money, satisfaction with Council provided services and Council consultation and engagement activities. In terms of priorities for the Council, residents believe that the focus should be on prioritising attracting jobs and investment, ensuring annual rate increases are kept at or below inflation, and the health and wellbeing of residents and businesses.

## 1. Introduction

In September 2023, Ards and North Down Borough Council [the Council] commissioned Social Market Research (SMR) to undertake a residents' satisfaction survey. The survey is based on a representative sample of 1004 residents, and builds on previous surveys conducted by the Council in 2018 and 2021.

### 1.1 Survey aim and objectives

The overall aim of the project was to conduct a:

*'...consultation exercise with a representative sample of residents to ascertain their satisfaction levels with Ards and North Down Borough Council'.*

### 1.2 Survey focus and content

To meet the survey aim, and objectives, the survey focused on providing:

- an insight into how the Council is perceived by the community it serves
- resident satisfaction with their local area
- resident satisfaction with 'key' council services
- responsiveness of the council
- how informed residents feel
- resident perception of the value for money the Council provides.

A copy of the survey questionnaire is included as Appendix 1.

### 1.3 Survey methodology

The survey is based on a representative sample of 1004 residents aged 16+, with quotas applied for age, gender, social class and District Electoral Area. The research was conducted in line with ISO20252:2019 of which Social Market Research (SMR) is fully accredited.

The survey was conducted using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing or CATI (*a profile of the sample is included as Appendix 2*). Fieldwork on the survey was conducted between 27 October and 23 November 2023. All interviews were conducted by telephone with interviewers briefed before the commencement of fieldwork.

### 1.4 Notes on reporting

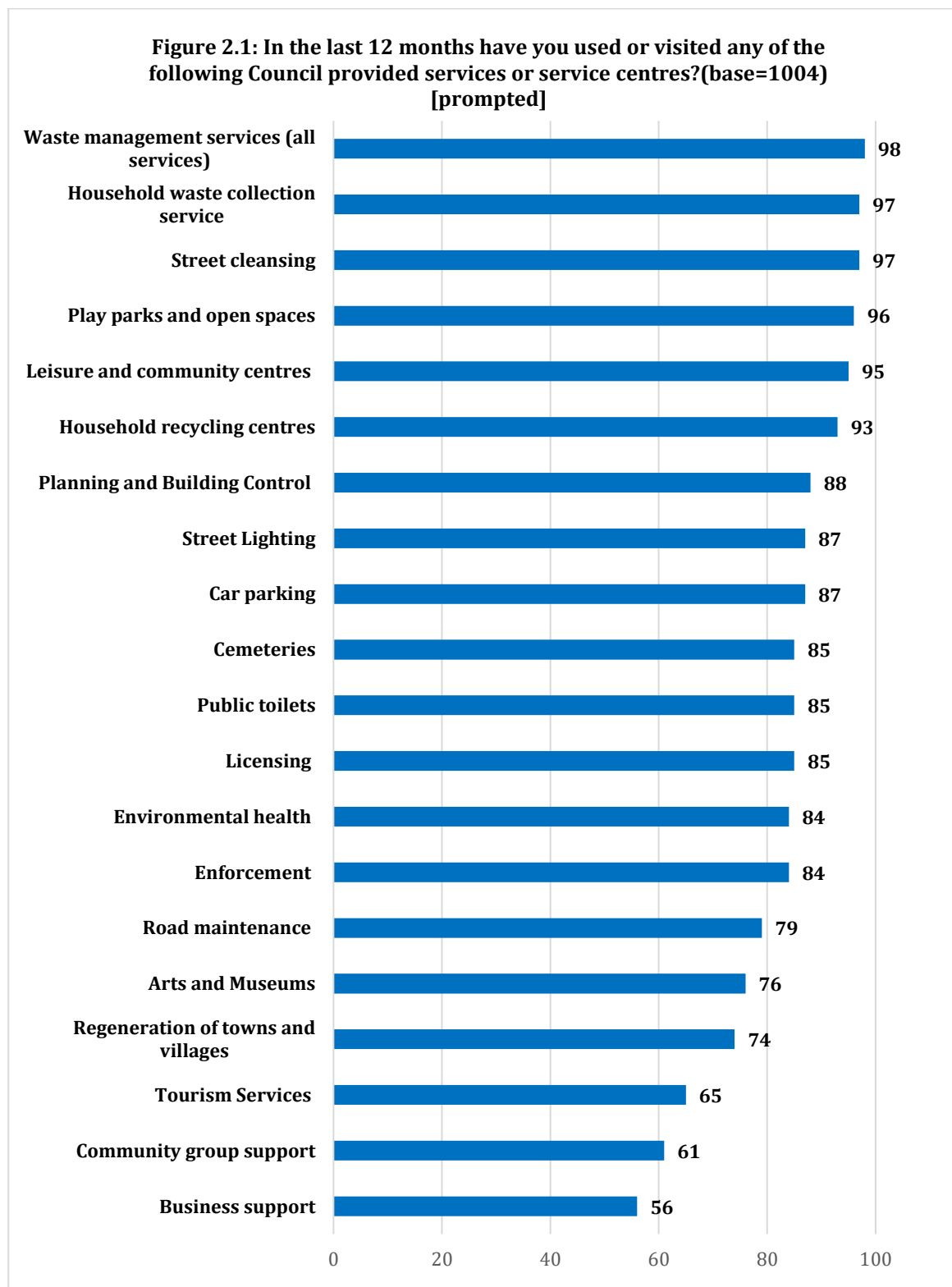
Please note that due to rounding, row and column totals in tables and figures may not sum to 100. Also, please note that any differences between respondent subgroups alluded to in the report commentary are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. The use of [-] within tables denotes less than 1%.

## 2. Survey Findings

### 2.1 Awareness of Council services

Residents were asked about their awareness of different Council provided services or service centres.

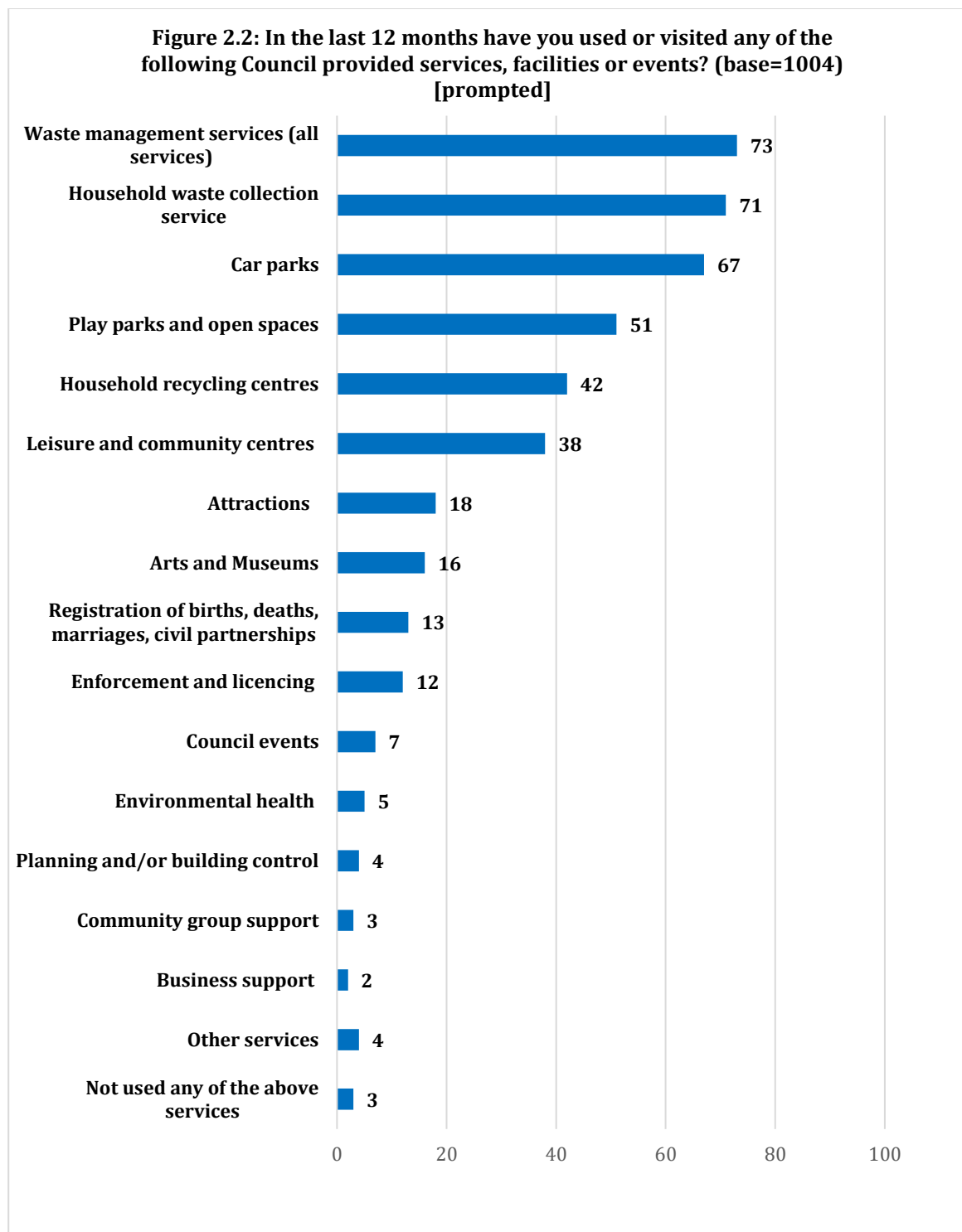
Figure 2.1 shows that residents were most likely to be aware of the Council's waste management service (98%) and least likely to be aware of its business support service (56%).



## 2.2 Use of Council services

Figure 2.2 shows that in the last 12 months residents were more likely to have used the following Council services: waste management [all services] (73%); household waste collection service (71%); car parks (67%); and play parks and open spaces (51%).

Relative to other services, residents were less likely to say they used the following services in the last 12 months: environmental health (5%); planning / building control (4%); community group support (3%); and business support (2%). Four percent (4%) said they had used other<sup>2</sup> Council services in the last 12 months.



<sup>2</sup> Included: children's flower shows / competitions / shows (n=16); Christmas events (n=13); conference / education conference (n=3); farm watch (n=1); Halloween events (n=2); information on grants (n=1); and public toilets (n=1).

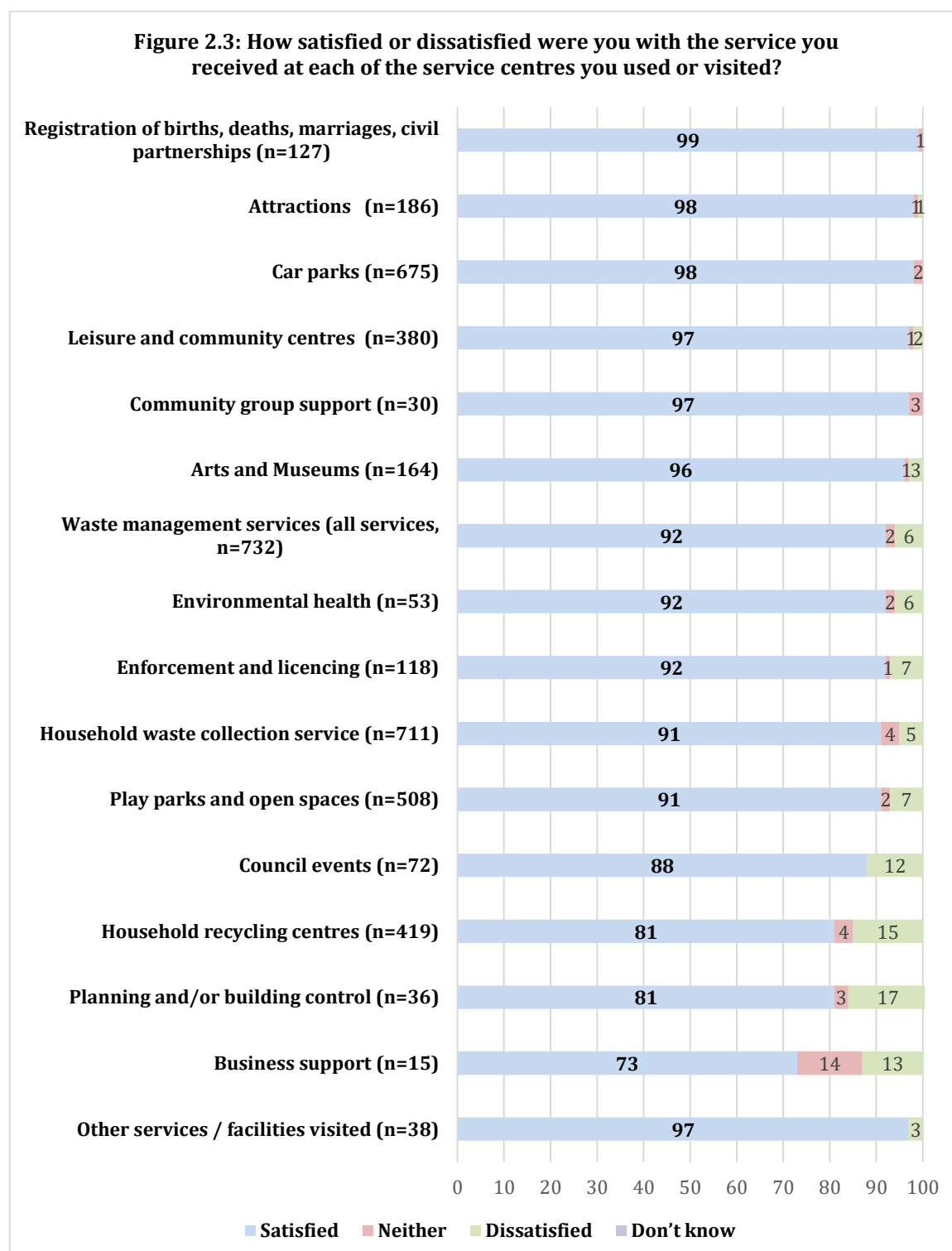


## 2.3 Satisfaction with Council services

Users of different Council services were asked to say if they were satisfied or dissatisfied with each service *[please note that caution should be used in interpreting the satisfaction levels of individual services as figures for some services are based on relatively small sample sizes]*.

Across all service areas, residents reported relatively high satisfaction levels, with the highest level of satisfaction (99%) recorded by those using registration services (e.g. births, deaths etc.).

Relative to other services, the lowest level of satisfaction was recorded for business support (73%).



### 2.3.1 Reasons for dissatisfaction with Council services

Residents dissatisfied with Council services were invited to say why they are dissatisfied, with the reasons for dissatisfaction with each Council service listed below on a verbatim basis:

#### Arts and Museums

- Cafe was very expensive.
- Not enough things on.
- old fashioned and not really relevant anymore.
- Price of food/drinks was far too expensive.
- Prices in the cafe were ridiculous.

#### Business Support

- Didn't find it particularly useful. Quite basic.
- Very basic service.

#### Enforcement and Licencing

- Dog license is great. Noise complaint just doesn't go anywhere.
- Made a complaint but nothing was done.
- Made a noise complaint but nothing was ever done about it.
- process was slow.
- Slow to take action.
- Took a long time to escalate.
- Took far too long. Didn't make a decision.
- Took too long. Hard to speak with someone over the phone.
- Very slow process.

#### Environmental Health

- Has yet to come out and visit.
- Kept re-arranging.
- Waited a while to see action.

#### Leisure and Community Services

- Always very busy.
- Community Centre needs repair and could be cleaner.
- Could have more health equipment.
- Rundown and not well looked after.
- Staff are rude.
- The toilets are filthy and the spa never works.
- Toilets were in poor condition.
- Very busy.
- Would like later opening times at weekends.

#### Planning and Building Control

- Find the portal difficult to use.
- Getting permission is too difficult. Process is slow.
- Process is quite difficult. Online feature tries to help but can get in the way.
- They take too long.
- Too slow. Correspondence has been difficult.
- Very slow process.

### Play parks and Open Spaces

- A lot of them need to be better maintained and there is a lot of dog fouling.
- Could be better looked after.
- Could look a lot nicer and more presentable.
- Dirty and broken.
- Dirty and glass.
- Dog fouling seems more prevalent.
- Equipment for kids not working and dogs fouling everywhere.
- Gardens need to be better maintained.
- Look untidy and not well attended to.
- Lots of dog fouling in play park which is not a good environment.
- Lots of graffiti and unkempt grass areas.
- Lots of litter.
- Lots of overgrown weeds and grass not been cut.
- Lots of the equipment substandard and old. Refurbishment required.
- Need more stuff for kids.
- Need more stuff for kids. Too much dog fouling.
- Needs better equipment.
- Needs to be better maintained.
- Not kept nearly as well as they used to. Lots of litter and overgrown grass.
- Not looked after. Lots of rubbish.
- Not well maintained.
- Open spaces tend to be overgrown. Footpaths overgrown with weeds and big hedges.
- Play parks are a bit dated.
- Poorly maintained.
- Rubbish everywhere. Untidy. Didn't feel very safe either.
- Should be more facilities within parks for young children.
- Should be more presentable.
- Broken swings.
- The equipment for children was broken.
- They need rubbish cleaned up and play items repaired.
- They need supervision the teenagers. They wreck it.
- They need upgraded.
- Vandalism in parks is bad.
- Went to a very beautiful place but spoiled by rubbish lying about.

### Attractions

- Too expensive.

### Council Events

- Christmas Lights Switch on. Bit underwhelming. Not enough activities for the kids.
- Expensive food/drink.
- Expensive.
- Needs to be more inclusive.
- Not good quality. Felt thrown together like there wasn't much budget for it.
- Not very inspiring. A bit cheap.
- Wasn't an awful lot to do.
- Wasn't very good and it was expensive.
- Wasn't very impressive.

### Household Waste Collection Service

- Leave bins all over the place / block drives after collection. I complained to council about this.
- Asked for things to be picked up and they weren't.
- Bin uplift missed on a few occasions due to the council saying the bin lorry cannot pass parked cars.

- I have seen with my own eyes that on these days there were no obstructions so I feel the bin men just could not be bothered. I and neighbours complained and eventually got waste uplifted.
- Bins haven't actually been taken a few times.
- Bins not collected because materials that shouldn't be in certain bins but really don't understand.
- Come home and find the bins are sometimes knocked over.
- Less time between collections. Six children and have to take rubbish away ourselves in between uplifts.
- Didn't take bins but there was nothing wrong with them.
- Far too many bins. Streets are just packed. Don't have the infrastructure.
- Glass collection needs to be more regular.
- Had to wait 3 days for a response.
- Have checked the bins a few times and they haven't been emptied.
- Haven't been collected on a few occasions.
- Haven't taken the bins on a few occasions. Got a letter saying the wrong materials were in a certain bin. No explanation when I tried to say it wasn't true.
- I keep getting stickers on bins and I do use correct bins.
- I need it collected more.
- Knocked bins over and bumped bins into cars. In too much of a rush!
- Leave the bins knocked over. Not much care.
- Leaving the bins strewn around the street.
- Stuff in the right bins but keep getting informed that there's certain materials in the wrong bins.
- Recycling bins are far too small for residents to effectively recycle. We need bigger bins.
- Since removing public bottle banks we need more frequent uplift of glass recycling bins at home.
- Sometimes the bins aren't picked up.
- The mechanics of how the bin lorry picks up bin puts stress on the bin and it splits causing seepage and smells to come out of it. Most of our bins are split because of this. Is there a better way or can bins be made stronger?
- The two weekly collection cycle is just not great. Think at certain times of the year like Christmas / New Year and holiday times weekly uplifts should return. Bins are too small for fortnightly .
- They leave a mess sometimes when emptying the bins.
- Too afraid to put anything in the bins that isn't the right bin.
- Too complicated with all the bins.
- Too many bins. Narrow street is too crowded with people's bins out.
- Too many bins. When you want them to uplift something they ask too much of you.
- Very strict rules on what you need to do when they are picking up bulk items.
- We are a family of five and our blue bin is always overflowing. We do not fit the criteria for a bigger bin without paying which I find disappointing.

#### Household Recycling Centres (HRCs)

- Appointment system a farce. No need for it. Puts a barrier up to those who want to drop waste off.
- Have to make appointment to use.
- Make it available to everyone without booking.
- Want to just go to the tip and not have to fill in forms and book it no time for it.
- Appointment system a joke and there is no need for it now.
- Appointment system not good for older people who have no access to computers.
- A waste of time. Tip normally empty. System is red tape. Not necessary. Annoying residents.
- Bit restrictive with the new booking system.
- Can't just go when you want.
- Close to early.
- Do not agree with the booking system especially since we are getting on with life after covid restrictions.
- Do not agree with the booking system. Puts a lot of people off and will encourage fly tipping..
- Do not agree with the booking. Need to get back to pre-covid and stop this waste of time system
- Do not like having to book an appointment online, it is needless.
- Do not like or agree with booking system.
- Do not like the appointment system for getting into centre it puts me off going.
- Do not see the need for the appointment system here. It actually prohibits people from recycling.
- Appointments means we have to wait and at times hold on to waste. No need.
- Felt like we were on the clock.

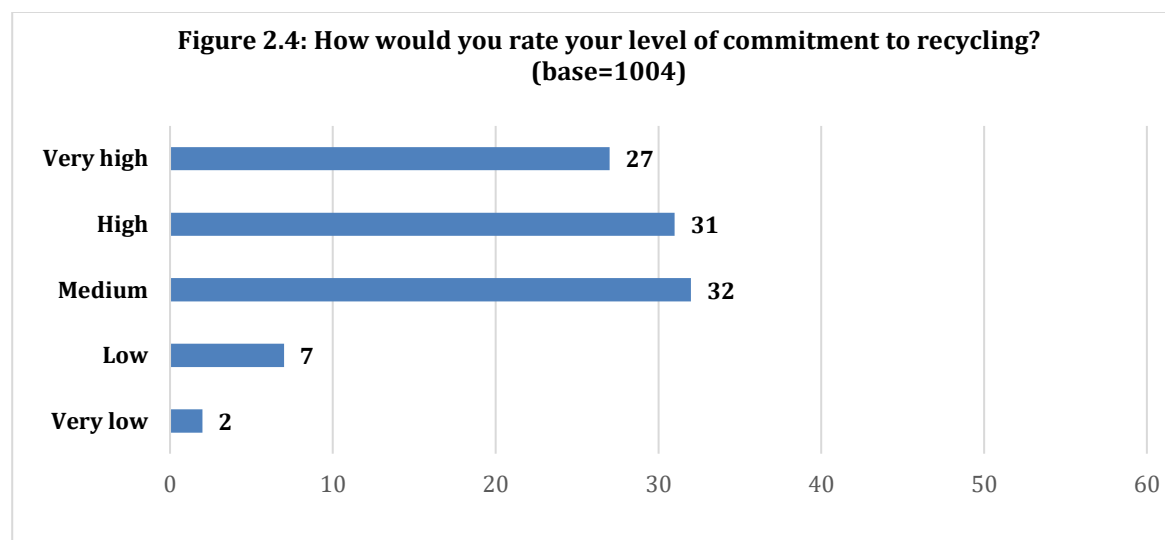
- Awkward using appointment system for recycling centre rather than just popping in when I need to.
- Getting appointment.
- Had to put things that we thought were recyclable into the landfill skip.
- Hard to get appointments.
- Have to book.
- Have to book appointment.
- Have to book takes ages to fill in forms.
- Have to make appointments it's nonsense.
- Having to book a time and if your late they turn you away.
- Having to book in advance is terrible waste of my time.
- Having to book now.
- Annoying. I have a garage full of things. Cannot be bothered to go online and book a time. I much preferred just being able to pop in when passing recycling centre.
- Having to make appointment is not practical as I may have a few runs to the tip. This actually stops me from going more often.
- I feel the appointment system doesn't work for me as I work full time then care for my elderly parents. I cannot always tell when I will be free to go as I tend to pop in when passing but due to this system I cannot do that anymore. Unfair system now.
- I did use these centres till they did appointment system. It's too much time and trouble now so I choose not to use them.
- I do not like having to make an appointment to use the recycling centre.
- I do not like the booking system. I cannot see the need for it now covid is over also I have a campervan for my car and I am turned away a lot.
- I don't think it's a good idea to book then you wait ages when you go.
- I hate having to book the tip.
- I have to make appointment. I have no time for this.
- I work early to late Monday to Friday and the tip only opens every second Saturday. It is not good enough and trying to make an appointment is frustrating.
- It is a nonsense to have to book to go to the dump. It just puts people off. Stop the appointment system as there is no need for it.
- It is a nuisance having to go online to book a slot to bring your rubbish in. I truly cannot see why we are not going back to the way it was before covid.
- It is not convenient now takes too long to book.
- It's not organised we wait too long.
- Need more available appointments.
- Need to book an appointment.
- Need to book it now and the experience feels like a rush.
- Need to book now and it is a pain.
- Need to book now and there is a time slot so it can be a bit of a squeeze.
- Need to book.
- Need to make a booking.
- Needing to book has added a layer of friction.
- Needs more opening hours.
- Not very close to us and all the public recycling bins have been taken away.
- Should be able to go when you want to.
- The appointment system is not good especially for those without computers such as older folk. There is no need for an appointment system anymore.
- The appointment system is not necessary now and it just causes me time which I do not have.
- The appointment system where you need to use your computer to apply is awful it needs to go back to simpler times as before.
- There always closing it to clean up.
- There is not a recycling centre in our town and we have to travel to the next town.
- They should have a drive in service.
- Too time consuming to go online to book a slot. Think during covid it was acceptable but now I do not and actually think it stops people from recycling and dumping rubbish in the correct way.
- Took something we believed was recyclable and it wasn't. Information is unclear.
- Very confusing. Very busy.
- You have to book now.

## 2.4 Recycling

The survey included questions on recycling including resident commitment to recycling and resident confidence in putting waste materials in the correct bins.

### 2.4.1 Commitment to recycling

Residents were asked to rate their commitment to recycling, with 58% rating their commitment as either 'very high' (27%) or 'high' (31%). Approximately one in three (32%) rated their commitment as 'medium', with 9% rating their commitment as either 'low' (7%) or 'very low' (2%).



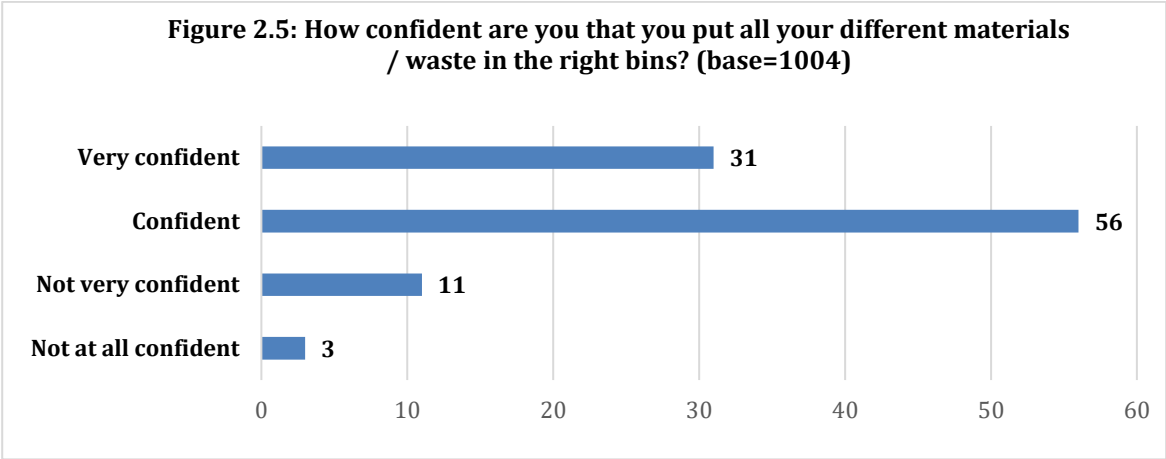
Those residents more likely to rate their level of commitment to recycling as either 'low' or 'very low' included:

- Men (12% vs. 7%);
- Those aged 16-34 (16-34, 18%; 35-59, 6%; 60+, 9%);
- Those with a disability (26% vs. 5%)
- Economically inactive residents (13% vs. 8%);
- C2DE residents (14% vs. 5%);
- Residents living in Newtownards, 21% [Holywood and Clondeboy, 0%].

2.4.2 Confidence in putting waste materials in correct bins

Residents were asked to say how confident they are about putting all their different materials / waste in the right bins.

Overall, 87% of residents said they are either 'very confident' (31%) or 'confident' (56%) that they put their waste in the correct bins, with 14% either 'not very confident' (11%) or 'not at all confident' (3%).



Those residents more likely to say they are either 'not very confident' or 'not at all confident' that they put different materials / waste in the right bins included:

- Men (17% vs. 11%);
- Those aged 16-34 (16-34, 21%; 35-59, 9%; 60+, 15%);
- Those with a disability (33% vs. 9%)
- Those with no dependents (15% vs. 10%)
- Economically inactive residents (22% vs. 10%);
- C2DE residents (20% vs. 8%);
- Residents living in Newtownards, 26% [Holywood and Clondeboy, 1%].

### 2.4.3 Factors that would help residents to recycle more

Residents were asked to say what single thing would help them recycle more, with the most common suggestions including: already do enough / best I can (12%); being able to go to the recycling centre at anytime rather than having to make an appointment (9%); having more confidence /clear guidance to know what and how to recycle/make it less complicated (7%); and more/better/bigger recycling bins at home and at work (7%).

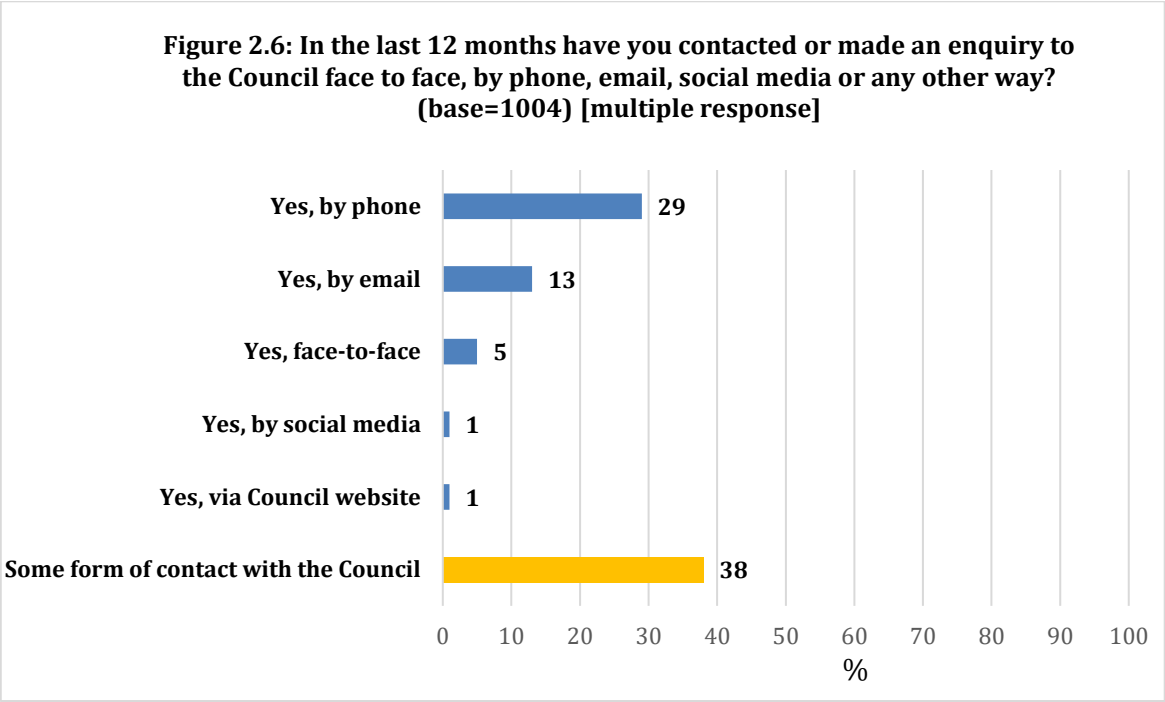
Table 2.1 What single thing do you think would help you recycle more? (Base=1004)		
	%	n
I already do enough/recycle enough/do the maximum/I do the best I can	12	120
Being able to go to the recycling centre when I want to/not needing an appointment	9	87
Having more confidence/clear guidance to know what / how to recycle/make it less complicated	7	71
More/better/bigger recycling bins at home and at work	7	70
Just too busy/haven't got time/too stressed at home and work to focus on recycling	4	36
Extended/longer opening times at the recycling centre - evening and weekend	4	36
If the centre was closer/easily accessible	3	26
More recycling collections - including glass and clothing	3	34
More accessible recycling stations/public recycling banks located locally/in centre of town	3	33
Cash incentive/deposit return scheme	2	18
I don't/can't recycle - my family or carer recycles for me	2	16
Already fully committed to recycling / already have tools and knowledge to do everything I can	2	24
Believing it would really make a difference/seeing what difference it actually makes	1	9
More uplifts/free uplifts for larger items	1	7
More bottle banks	1	7
I don't need any help	<1	3
I don't want to increase my recycling	<1	3
I just need to be more organised at home	<1	2
Having a car to drive to the centre	<1	5
More space to recycle - limited space to recycle at home/no room for bins	<1	1
I just need to try harder	<1	3
Sell less non-recyclable items	<1	2
If we had less bins	<1	5
Not having as many rules	<1	1
Other	1	12
Don't know	37	373



2.5 Contact with the Council

2.5.1 Contact with Council in last 12 months

In the last 12 months, 38% of residents said they had contacted or made an enquiry to the Council, with 29% contacting the Council by phone, 13% by email, 5% via face-to-face, 1% via social media and 1% via the Council's website.

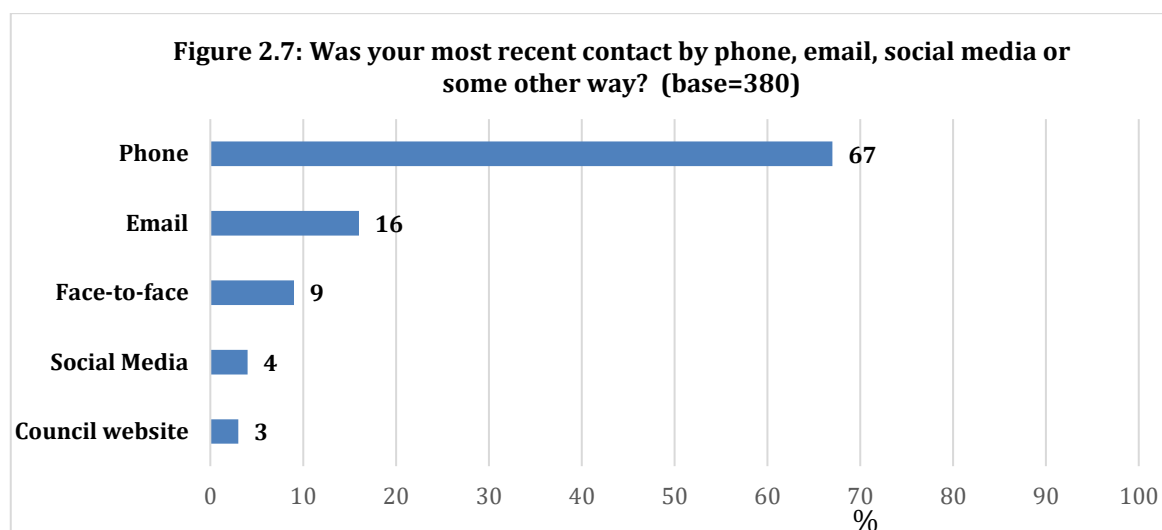


**Residents more likely to have contacted the Council in the last 12 months included:**

- Men (45% vs. 35%);
- Those aged 16-34 (16-34, 42%; 35-59, 45%; 60+, 25%);
- ABC1 (44%) residents (C2DE, 30%);
- Non-disabled residents (40% vs. 27%);
- Those with dependents (44% vs. 35%)
- Economically active residents (42% vs. 30%)
- Residents with a higher level of educational attainment (high, 46%; medium, 37%; low, 28%); and,
- Residents in Bangor Central (79%) [Holywood and Clondeboy, 7%].

## 2.5.2 Most recent contact with Council

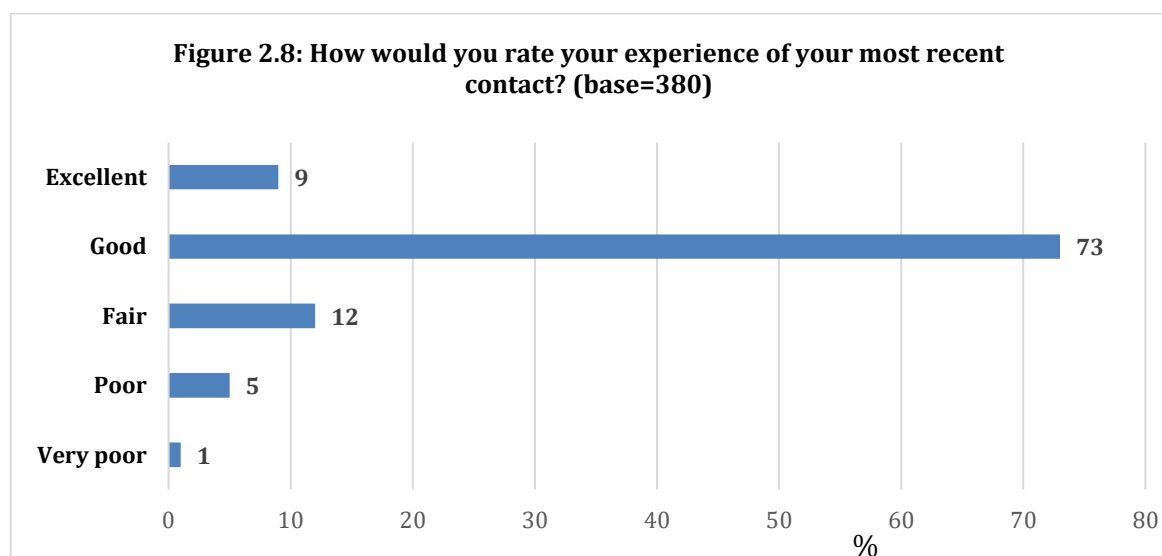
Among residents who had contacted the Council in the last 12 months, 67% said their most recent contact was by phone, 16% by email, 9% face-to-face, 4% via social media and 3% through the Council's website.



## 2.5.3 Experience of most recent contact with council

Residents who had contacted the Council in the last 12 months were asked about their experience of doing so.

Just over eight out of ten (82%) residents rated their experience of their most recent contact with the Council as either 'excellent' (9%) or 'good' (73%), 12% rated their experience as 'fair' and 6% as either 'poor' (5%) or 'very poor' (1%).



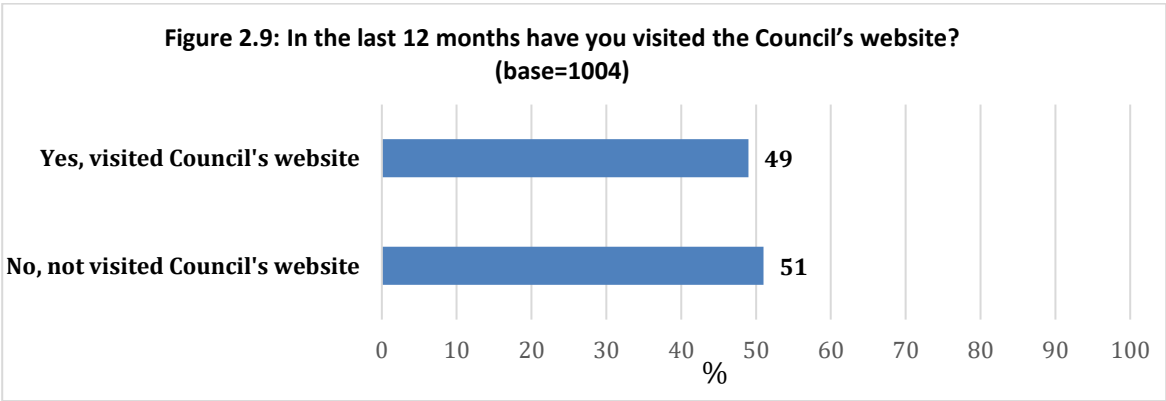
#### 2.5.4 Reasons why residents rated their recent contact experience as poor

Residents who rating their contact experience as either poor or very poor were provided with an opportunity to explain their rating, with their responses listed below on a verbatim basis.

- A bit dismissive.
- Can't get a straight answer.
- Couldn't give me all the information I was looking for.
- Felt like you are going round in circles.
- Friendly and professional but the process to get action is very frustrating.
- Friendly enough but didn't really help solve the issue related to my noise complaint.
- Complained about a street light being broken 3 times and it has taken three months to fix. Council didn't appear too bothered.
- I feel we as residents are not listened to and when we call we never get anywhere or someone will call us back and it never happens.
- I phoned to say I saw a big excavator driving over a tarmac road ripping it up as it went. The guy who answered for the council said it's done now and nothing we can really do. Most dissatisfied with this response and he plainly did not care.
- I reported a problem with drains during heavy rain, nothing got done about it.
- I was asking questions about Cook Street regarding my boat and I called several people who all said they would look into my queries I had but never did. To date no one has come back to me and I just gave up.
- I was very disappointed with the response.
- I was very unhappy with no action taken.
- I wasn't happy with the outcome.
- Issue still hasn't been resolved.
- Long process. Took a while to get any action.
- Not very helpful.
- Nothing gets done and nothing changes.
- Took a long time for someone to come out and visit.
- Took ages to speak with someone.
- Was given conflicting information.

2.6 Visits to the Council's website

Almost half (49%) of residents said they had visited the Council's website in the last 12 months.

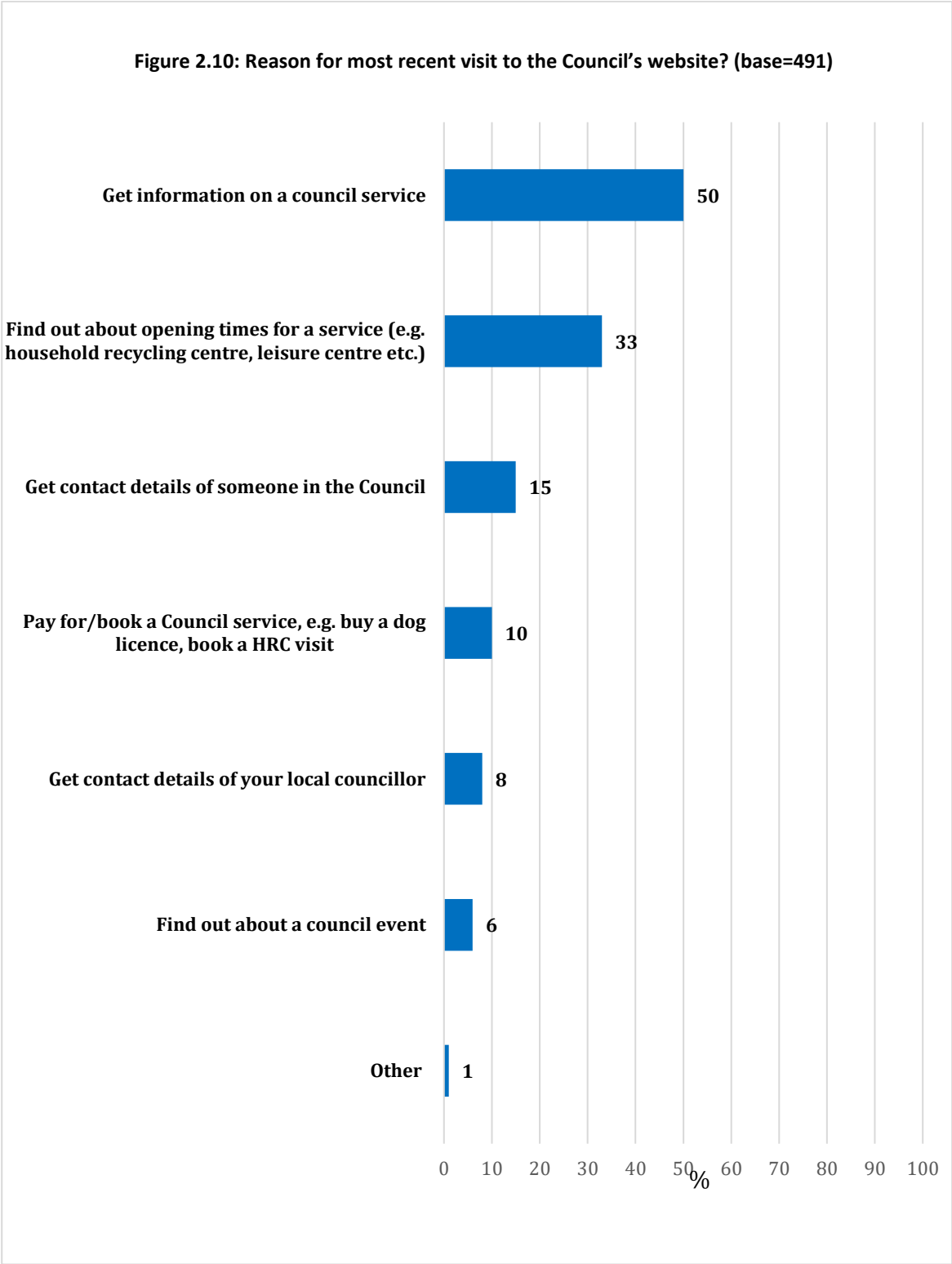


**Residents more likely to have visited the Council website in the last 12 months included:**

- Those aged under 60 (16-34, 57%; 35-59, 57%; 60+, 32%);
- ABC1 (62%) residents (C2DE, 34%);
- Non-disabled residents (60% vs. 25%);
- Those with dependents (61% vs. 43%)
- Economically active residents (57% vs. 33%)
- Residents with a higher level of educational attainment (high, 67%; medium, 46%; low, 29%); and,
- Residents in Bangor Central (83%) [Holywood and Clondeboy, 23%].

2.6.1 Reasons for visiting the website

The most common reasons why residents visited the Council’s website included: getting information on Council services (50%); to get information on opening times (33%) and to get the contact details of someone in the Council (15%). Ten percent (10%) had visited the Council’s website to pay for / book a Council service, 8% to get contact details for their local Councillor and 6% had visited the website to find out about a Council event. One percent visited the website for other reasons<sup>3</sup>.

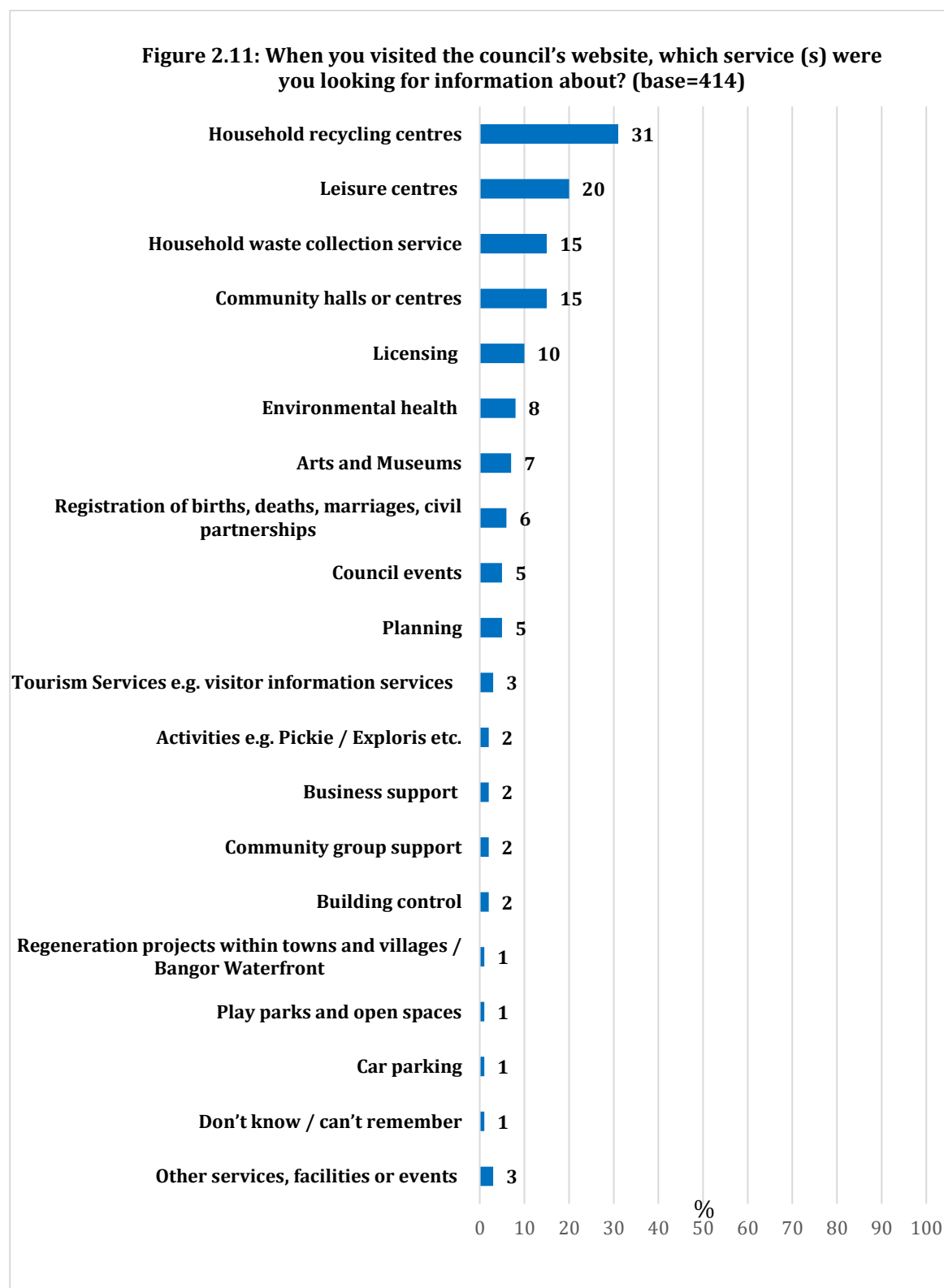


<sup>3</sup> Included: to book a class at a leisure centre (n=2); check changes to waste collection service (n=1); find out about a tourist attraction (n=1); and to check for updates (n=3).

## 2.6.2 Information being sought on specific services

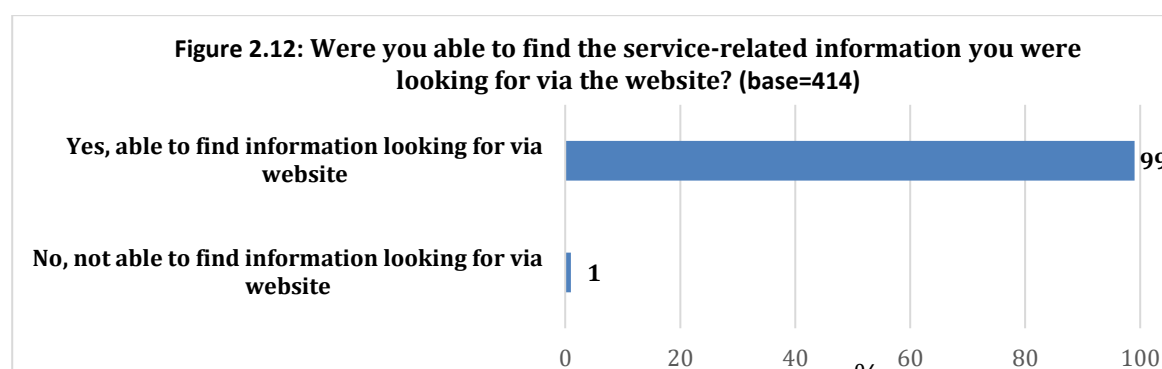
Those who had visited the Council's website to get information on specific services were asked which service(s) they were seeking information about.

Figure 2.11 shows that most commonly, residents were seeking information on household recycling centres (31%), leisure centres (20%), household waste collection (15%) and community halls or centres (15%).



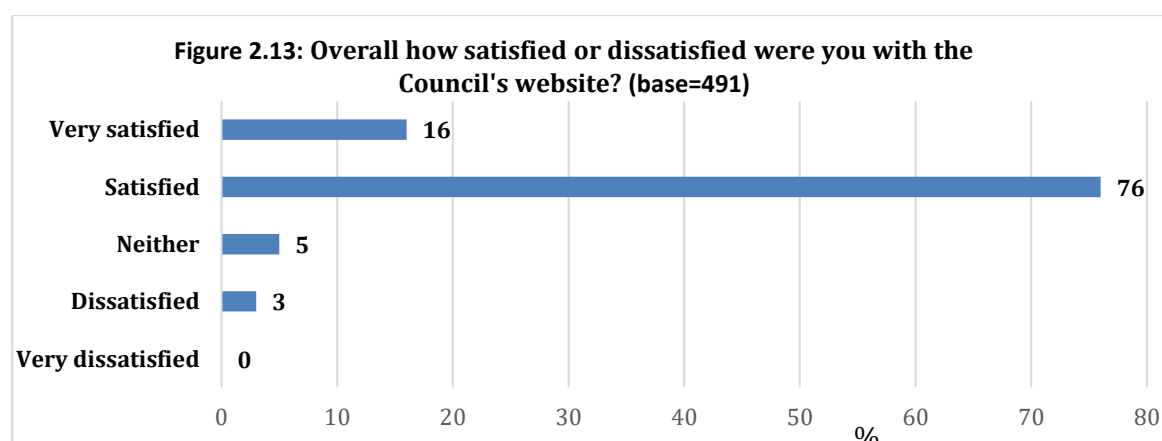
### 2.6.3 Finding service related information via website

In almost all cases (99%), residents said they were able to find the service-related information they were looking for via the Council's website.



### 2.6.4 Satisfaction with the Council's website

Overall, 92% of residents visiting the Council's website said they were either 'very satisfied' (16%) or 'satisfied' (76%) with the website, with 5% 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' and 3% 'dissatisfied'.



### 2.6.5 Reasons for dissatisfaction with council's website

The reasons why some residents were dissatisfied with the Council's website are included below on a verbatim basis.

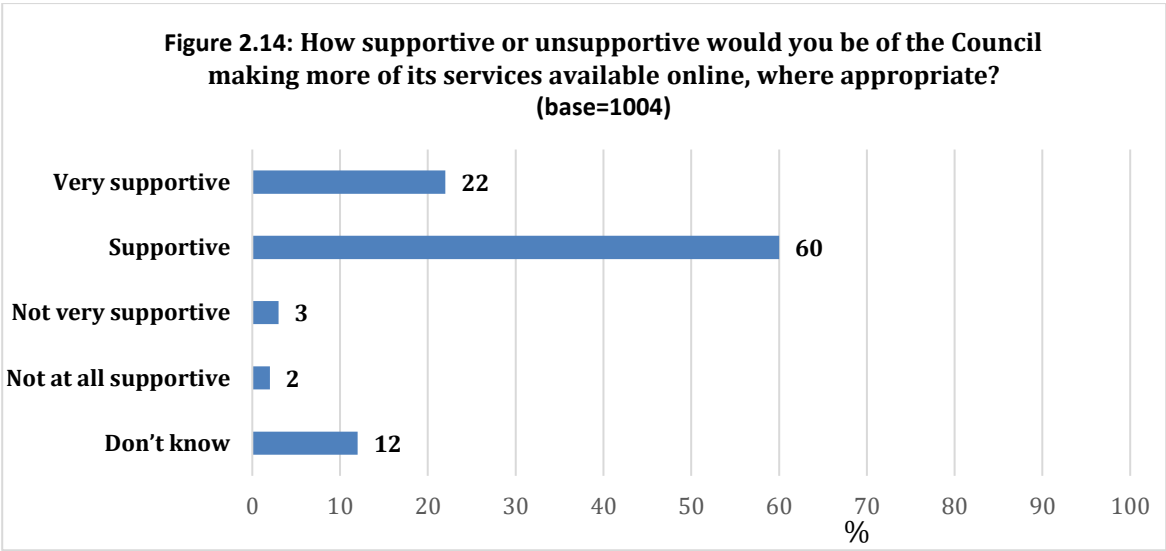
- Asks for too much information.
- Bit dated looking.
- Bit old fashioned looking. Layout a bit difficult. If anything just too much going on.
- Couldn't find what I was looking for.
- Eventually found what I was looking. There was a lot of numbers and different information to take in.
- Found it hard to find where to go. Took a while. Confusing.
- Found it hard to navigate.
- Information on the website was different to what we were told at the centre.
- Not very modern looking. Can be quite hard to know what you are looking for. So much information.
- Really difficult to locate the right places to click into.
- Takes too long to fill in all the information.
- Takes too long to fill in forms.
- Think it needs to be more modern. Clunky.
- UI is a bit old. Bit static.
- Wasn't impressed with how I was dealt with.

2.7 Support for making more Council services available online

Residents were asked about their support for making more Council services available online.

Figure 2.14 show that just over eight out of ten (82%) residents said they are either 'very supportive' (22%) or 'supportive' (60%) of the Council making more of its services available online, with 5% unsupportive ('not very supportive', 3%; 'not at all supportive', 2%). Twelve percent (12%) were undecided.

The reasons why some residents were unsupportive included: don't use online (n=1); some services more appropriate to do face to face (n=1); trusting council with data (n=1); and people need to be accountable (n=1).



**Those residents more likely to be supportive of the Council making more of its services available online, where appropriate, included:**

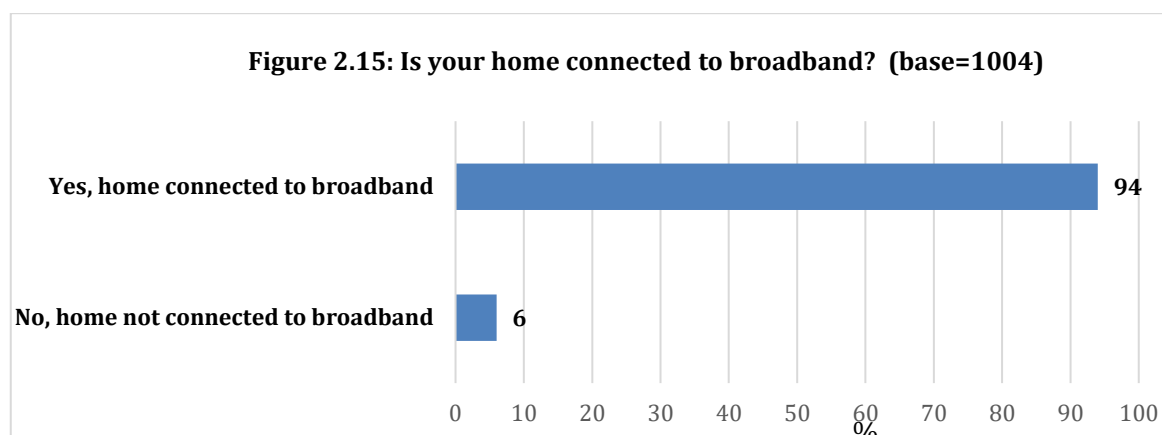
- Younger residents (16-34, 94%; 35-59, 92%; 60+, 63%);
- ABC1 (88%) residents (C2DE, 77%);
- Non-disabled residents (95% vs. 54%);
- Those with dependents (90% vs. 79%)
- Economically active residents (92% vs. 64%);
- Residents with a higher level of educational attainment (high, 90%; medium, 89%; low, 72%); and,
- Residents in Holywood and Clondeboy, 93% [Newtownards, 71%].



## 2.8 Broadband, the internet and going online

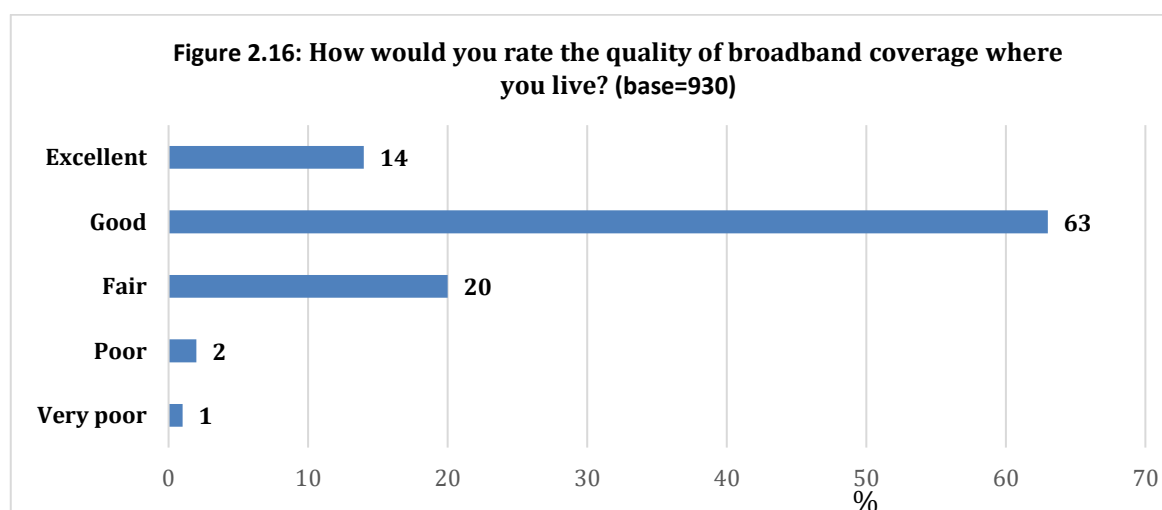
### 2.8.1 Connected to broadband

The overwhelming majority (94%) of residents said their home is connected to broadband.



### 2.8.2 Quality of Broadband

Approximately three out of four (77%) residents rated the quality of broadband in their local area as either 'excellent' (14%) or 'good' (63%), 20% rated it as 'fair', 2% as 'poor' and 1% as 'very poor' (note that those who answered 'don't know' to this question were excluded from the analysis).

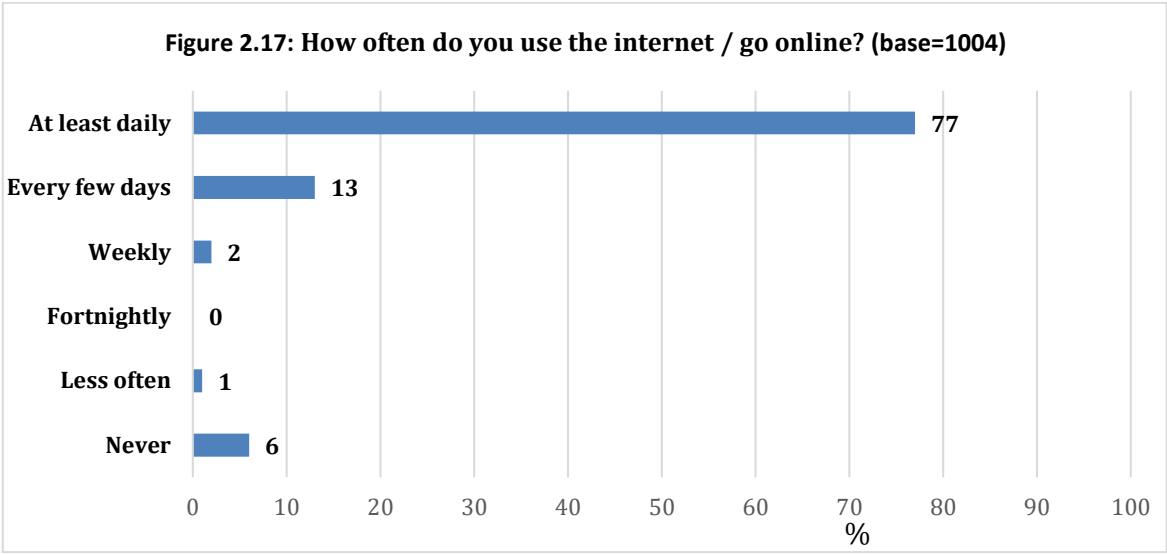


#### *Resident Differences by DEA*

Analysis by DEA found that residents in Bangor Central were more likely to rate the quality of broadband coverage where they live as excellent or good whereas residents in Bangor East and Donaghadee were least likely to do so (Ards Peninsula, 78%; Bangor Central, 98%; Bangor East and Donaghadee, 62%; Bangor West, 66%; Comber, 70%; Holywood and Clondeboy, 82%; Newtownards, 80%).

2.8.3 Use of the internet / online frequency

Among all residents, 77% said they use the internet or go online at least daily, with 13% doing so every few days, 2% weekly, 1% less often and 6% never *[note that 90% of residents go online at least daily or every few days]*.

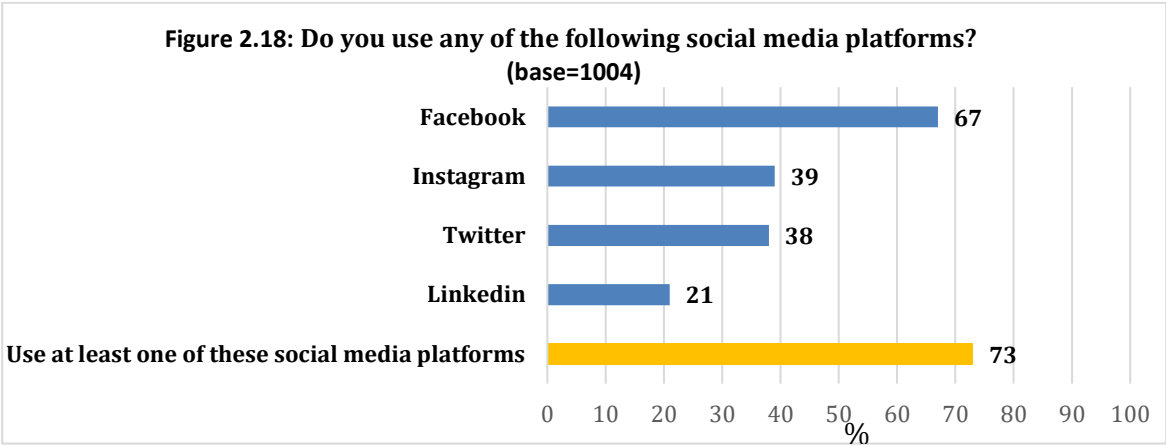


Residents more likely to use the internet / go online on a daily basis included:

- Women (80% vs. 74%)
- Younger residents (16-34, 97%; 35-59, 92%; 60+, 33%);
- ABC1 (84%) residents (C2DE, 70%);
- Non-disabled residents (84% vs. 40%);
- Those with dependents (90% vs. 71%)
- Economically active residents (89% vs. 49%);
- Residents with a higher level of educational attainment (high, 87%; medium, 80%; low, 65%); and,
- Residents in Bangor Central, 88% [Bangor East and Donaghadee, 62%].

2.8.4 Use of social media platforms

Figure 2.18 shows that 67% of residents said they use Facebook, 39% use Instagram, 38% use Twitter and 21% use LinkedIn. Almost three out of four (73%) residents said they use at least one of the social media platforms listed.



Residents more likely to use social media platforms included:

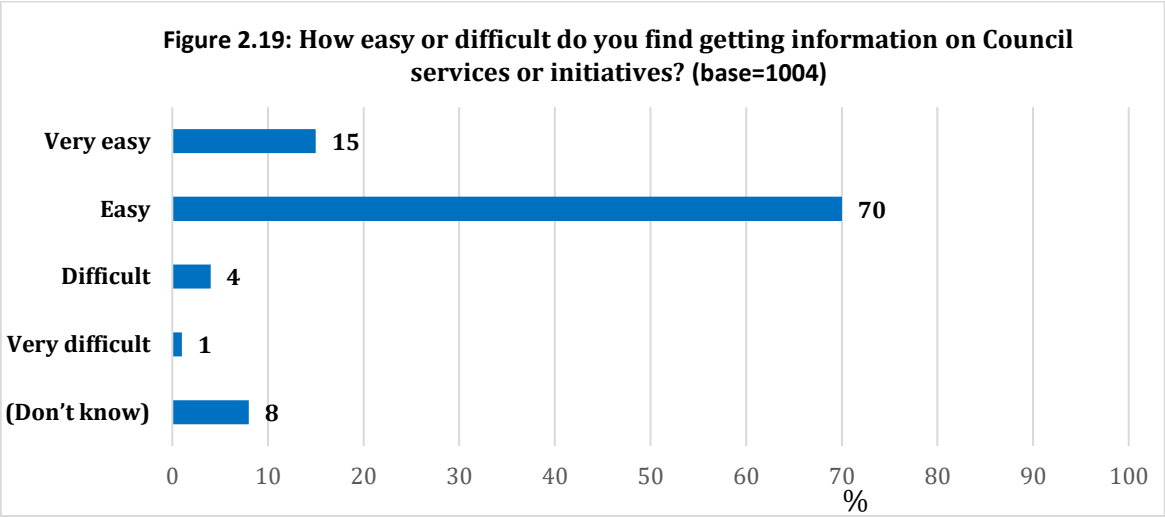
- Women (77% vs. 69%)
- Younger residents (16-34, 98%; 35-59, 88%; 60+, 36%);
- ABC1 (78%) residents (C2DE, 67%);
- Non-disabled residents (82% vs. 35%);
- Those with dependents (86% vs. 67%)
- Economically active residents (86% vs. 41%);
- Residents with a higher level of educational attainment (high, 82%; medium, 77%; low, 61%); and,
- Residents in Bangor Central, 85% [Holywood and Clondeboy, 62%].

2.9 Council communication and resident perception

2.9.1 Getting information on Council services and initiatives

Residents were asked how easy or difficult it is to get information on Council services or initiatives.

Most (85%) residents said they find it either 'very easy' (15%) or 'easy' (70%) to get information on Council services and initiatives, with 5% finding it either 'difficult' (4%) or 'very difficult' (1%). Eight percent answered, 'don't know'.



Those more likely to find it either very easy or easy to get Information on Council Services and Initiatives included:

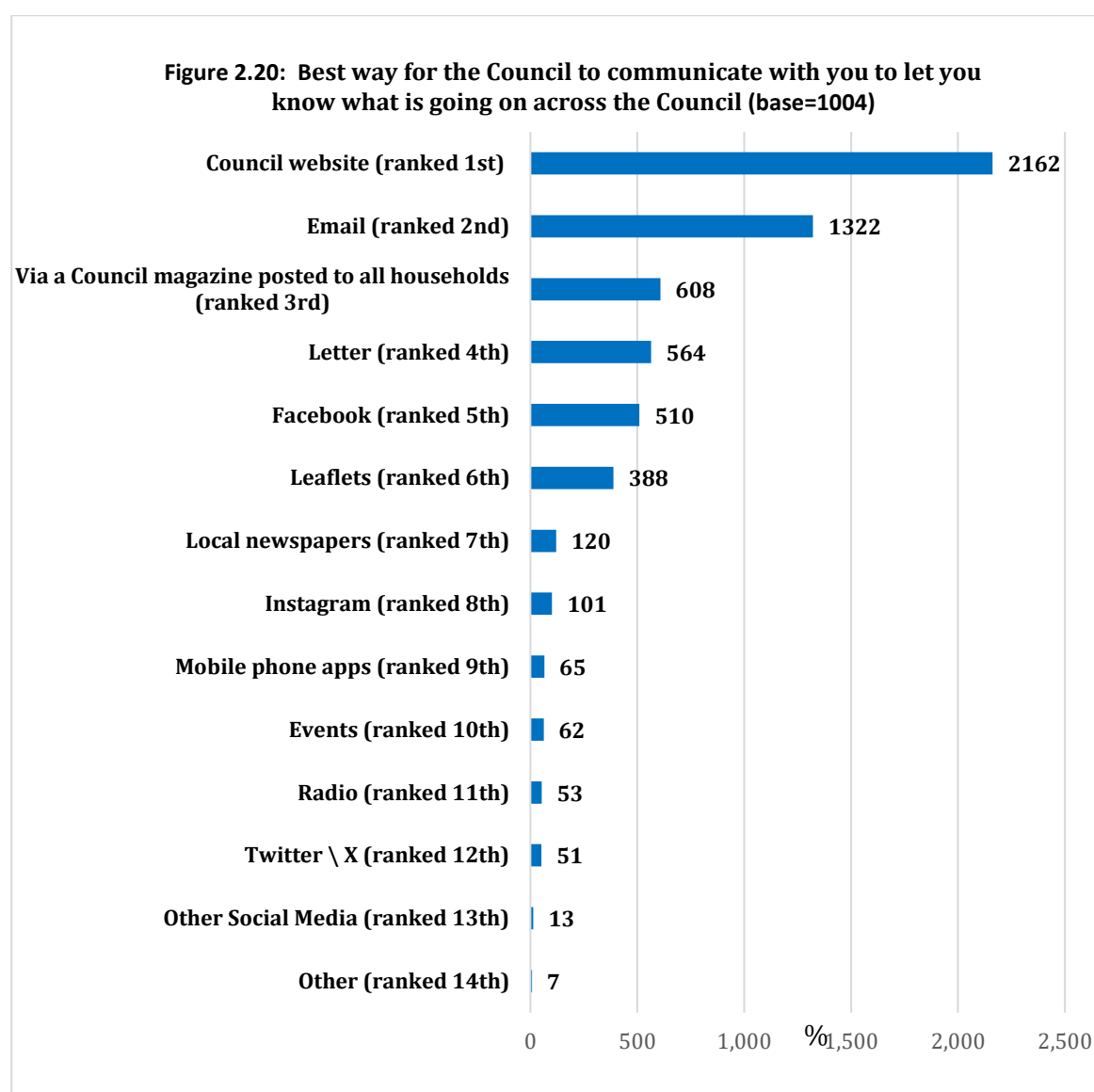
- Those aged under 60 (16-34, 90%; 35-59, 90%; 60+, 78%);
- ABC1 (91%) residents (C2DE, 80%);
- Non-disabled residents (95% vs. 71%);
- Those with dependents (93% vs. 83%)
- Economically active residents (92% vs. 75%);
- Residents with a higher level of educational attainment (high, 93%; medium, 89%; low, 77%); and,
- Residents in Bangor Central, 95% [Ards Peninsula and Newtownards, both 75%].

## 2.9.2 Best way for the Council to communicate with residents

Looking to the future, residents were asked to say what is the best way for the Council to communicate with them to let them know what is going on across the Council.

Residents were asked to list their top 3 preferences in rank order with a weighted score then calculated based on the following approach: rank 1 was scored 3 points; rank 2 was scored 2 points and rank 3 was scored 1 point.

Figure 2.20 shows that residents ranked the Council's website (weighted score=2162) as the most important way for the Council to communicate with them to let them know what is going on across the Council, followed by email (weighted score=1322) and via a Council magazine posted to all household (weighted score=608).

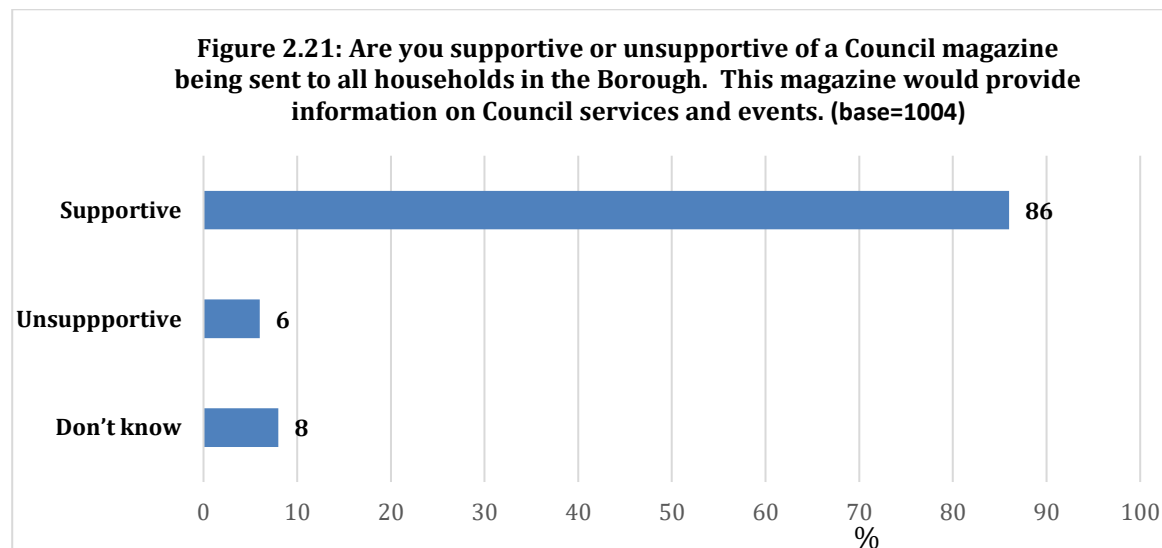


### Resident Differences

There were a number of differences between resident groups. For example, a greater proportion of older respondents preferred a letter from the Council (16-34, 1%; 35-59, 2%; 60+, 21%) whereas proportionately more younger respondents preferred email (16-34, 32%; 35-59, 20%; 60+, 13%). Similarly, those with a disability were also more likely to prefer a letter (27% vs. 4%), whereas non-disabled residents were more likely to prefer the Council website (63% vs. 29%).

### 2.9.3 Support for a Council magazine being sent to all households in the borough

Residents were asked if they are supportive or unsupportive of a Council magazine being sent to all households in the Borough. This magazine would provide information on Council services and events. Figure 2.21 shows that more than 8 out of 10 residents are supportive (86%), with 6% unsupportive and 8% undecided.



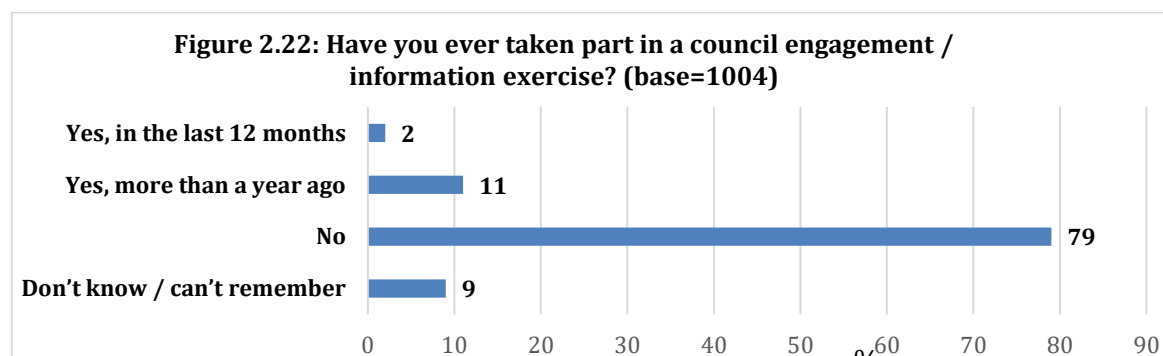
**Those residents more likely to be supportive of a Council magazine being sent to all households included:**

- Those aged under 60 (16-34, 94%; 35-59, 92%; 60+, 62%);
- ABC1 (88%) residents (C2DE, 77%);
- Non-disabled residents (95% vs. 54%);
- Those with dependents (90% vs. 79%)
- Economically active residents (92% vs. 64%);
- Residents with a higher level of educational attainment (high, 90%; medium, 89%; low, 72%); and,
- Residents in Holywood and Clondeboy, 93% [Newtownards, 71%].

## 2.10 Council consultation exercises

### 2.10.1 Participation in a Council engagement / information exercise

Two percent (2%) of residents said they had participated in a Council engagement / information exercise in the last year, with 11% having done so more than a year ago. Most (79%) residents said they had never participated in a Council engagement / information exercise.



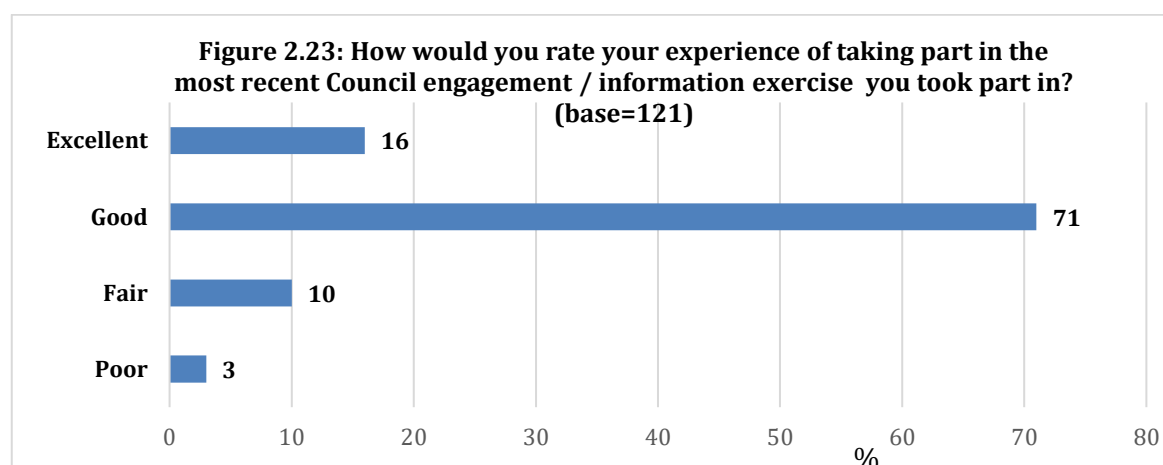
Those who had participated in a Council engagement / information exercise, cited the following consultations: Town Centre Masterplan (25%); Bangor Waterfront (22%); Good Relations (11%); Greenways Routes (9%); and 'other' consultations (9%)<sup>4</sup>. Almost one in four (24%) of those who had participated in a Council engagement / information exercise, couldn't recall the nature of the consultation / engagement exercise.

#### Those residents more likely to have participated in Council engagement / information exercise included:

- Men (15% vs. 10%)
- Those aged 35+ (16-34, 6%; 35-59, 13%; 60+, 14%);
- Residents with a higher level of educational attainment (high, 16%; medium, 12%; low, 7%); and,
- Residents in Newtownards, 19% [Holywood and Clondeboy, 1%].

### 2.10.2 Experience of participating in a Council engagement / information exercise

Those who had participated in a Council engagement / information exercise were asked to rate their experience of doing so, with 87% rating their experience as either 'excellent' (16%) or 'good' (71%), 10% as 'fair' and 3% as 'poor'.



<sup>4</sup> Included: community association (n=1); a councillor visiting a community centre (n=1); councillor surgery (n=3); health and safety (n=1); meetings and conferences (n=1); social care (n=1); education (n=1); vulnerable people (n=1); and via work (n=1).

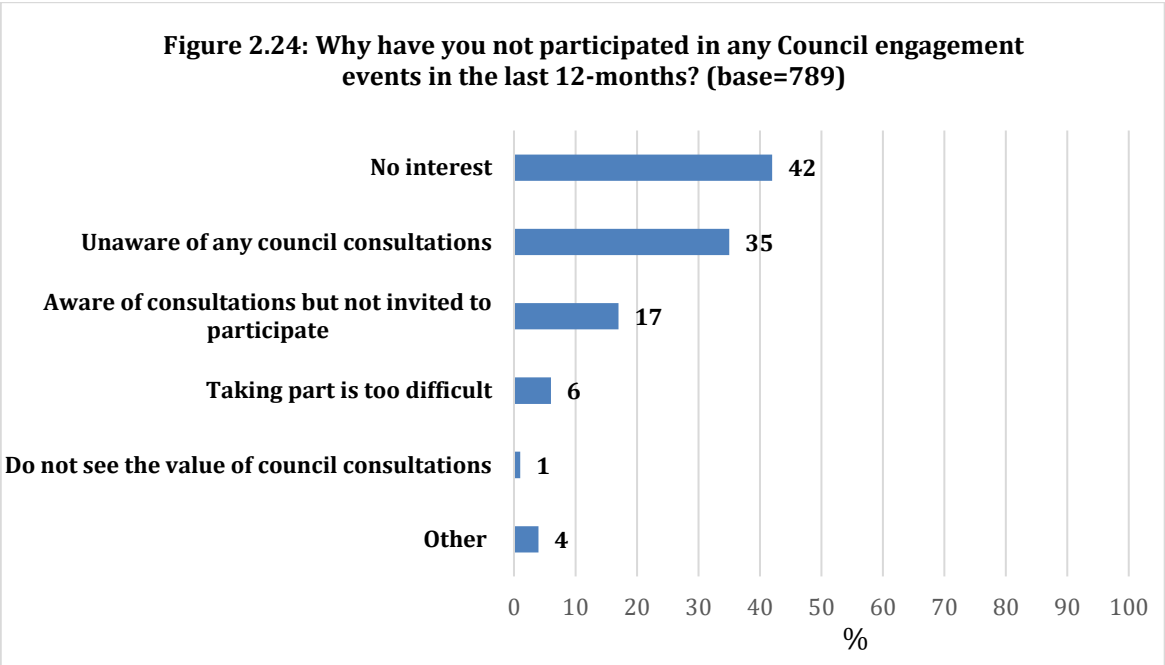
2.10.3 Reasons why some residents rated their engagement experience as poor

Those who rated their experience of engaging in Council engagement / information exercises as poor made the following comments:

- They were never really acted on. Disappointing nothing really came of it.
- Knew at the time it wouldn't actually happen.
- Nothing was acted upon. Felt a bit pointless. Like a show more than anything really serious.
- Well nothing really came of it and you could sense that at the time.

2.10.4 Reasons for not participating in Council engagement / information exercises

Those who had not participated in a Council engagement / information exercise were asked why they had not, with the most common reasons being: no interest (42%); being unaware of Council consultations (35%); being aware of consultations but not being invited (17%); taking part is too difficult (6%); and not seeing the value in Council consultations (1%). Four percent cited other reasons<sup>5</sup>.



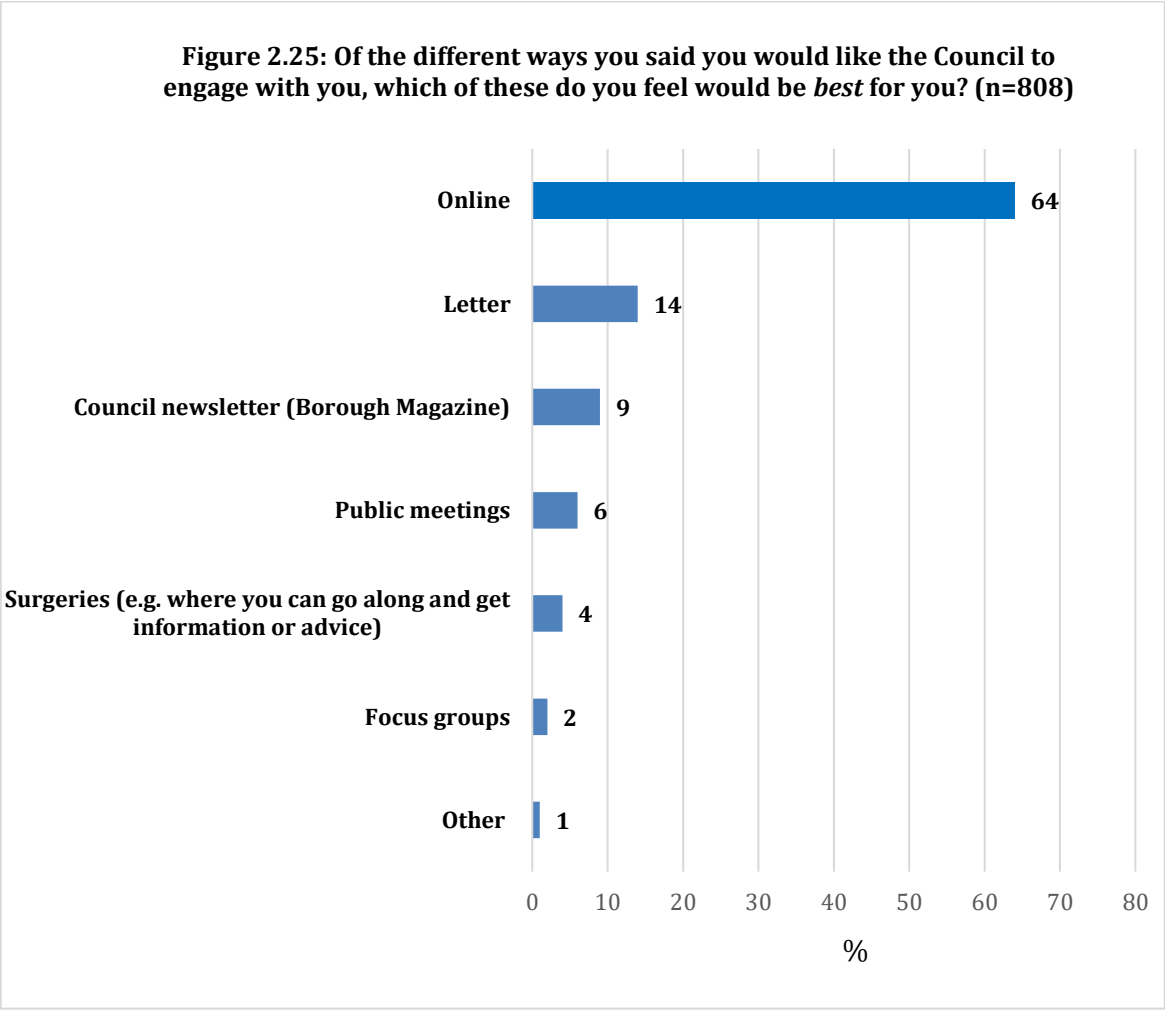
<sup>5</sup> Included: being too busy / don't have the time (n=21); being anxious and not very confident (n=1); do not take time with work and family (n=1); and ill health (n=1).



2.10.5 Future Council engagement with residents

The survey found that approximately eight out of ten (81%) residents said they would like the Council to engage with them, with 19% saying they don't want the Council to engage with them.

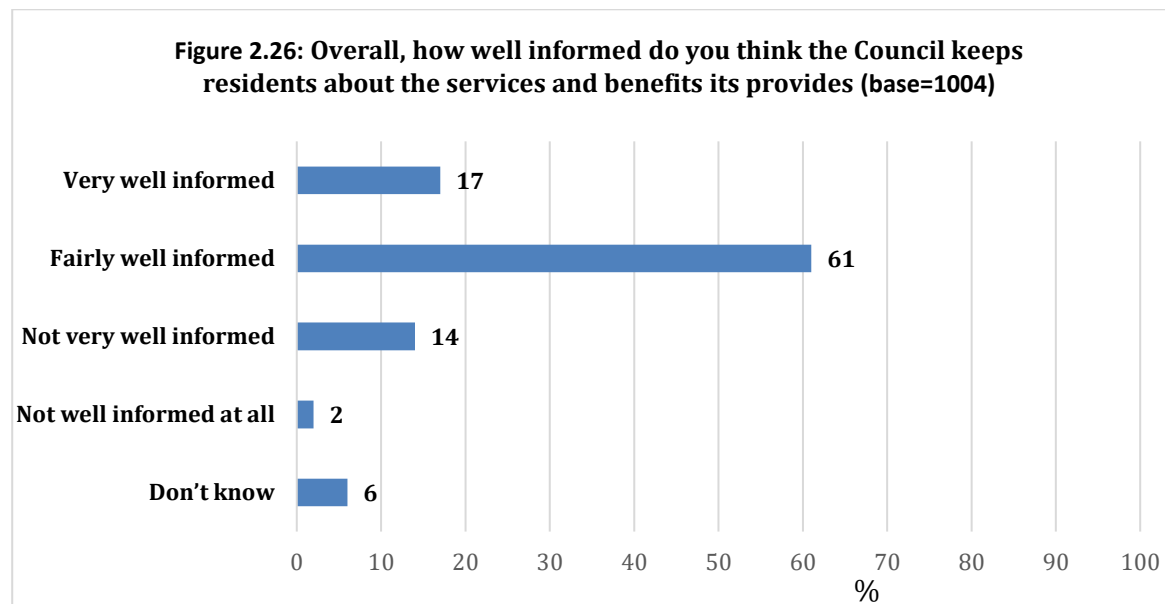
Among those who would like the Council to engage with them (n=808), 64% said they would like the Council to engage with them online, 14% via a letter from the Council and 9% would like the Council to engage with them via the Council newsletter (Borough Magazine). Other preferences for Council engagement included: public meetings (6%); surgeries (4%); and focus groups (2%). One percent cited other ways they would like the Council to engage with them<sup>6</sup>.



<sup>6</sup> Included: online public meetings (n=1).

### 2.10.6 Council keeping residents informed about services and benefits it provides

Almost eight out of ten (78%) residents said the Council keeps residents either 'very' (17%) or 'fairly well informed' (61%) about the services and benefits it provides, with 16% saying that residents are either 'not very well informed' (14%) or 'not well informed at all' (2%) about the services and benefits it provides. Six percent answered, don't know.

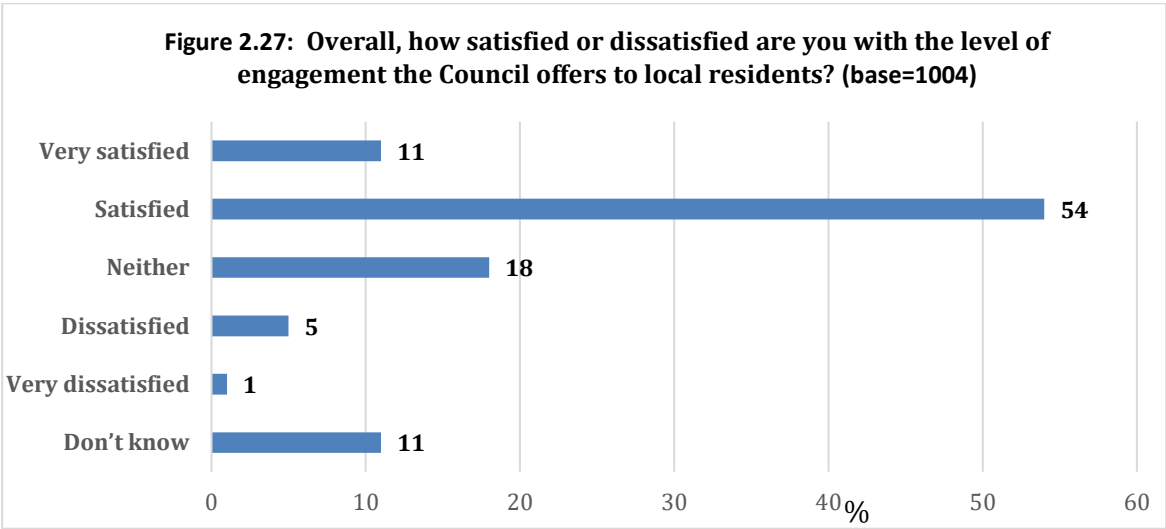


**Those residents more likely to believe that the Council keeps them either 'very well informed' or 'fairly well informed' included:**

- ABC1 residents compared with C2DE residents (86% vs. 69%);
- Better educated residents (high, 78%; medium, 76%; low, 62%);
- Non-disabled residents (84% vs. 63%);
- Economically active residents (80% vs. 72%);
- Residents in Holywood and Clondeboy, 99% [Bangor East and Donaghadee, 65%]

2.10.7 Satisfaction with level of engagement Councils offers local residents

Approximately two out of three (65%) residents say they are either 'very satisfied' (11%) or 'satisfied' (54%) with the level of engagement the Council offers local residents. Eighteen percent are 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied', with 6% either 'dissatisfied' (5%) or 'very dissatisfied' (1%). Eleven percent of residents answered, 'don't know'.



Those residents more likely to be satisfied with the level of engagement offered by the Council included:

- Younger residents (16-34, 71%; 35-59, 64%; 60+, 64%);
- ABC1 (73%) residents (C2DE, 56%);
- Non-disabled residents (77% vs. 54%);
- Economically active residents (69% vs. 62%);
- Residents with a higher level of educational attainment (high, 79%; medium, 77%; low, 44%); and,
- Residents in Holywood and Clondeboy, 98% [Ards Peninsula, 33%].

## 2.10.8 Reasons for dissatisfaction with level of engagement the Council offers local residents

The reasons for dissatisfaction with the level of engagement the Council offers residents included:

- Barely know about anything that is going on.
- Can't recall the last time we were asked for our views.
- Can't remember ever engaging with the council or being asked my views.
- Could make more use of social media (polls etc.) to gauge what people want.
- Do not believe that residents have any say in decision making.
- Don't feel there are many opportunities to have a say.
- Don't feel views are listened to enough.
- Don't know enough about what is going on in the area. When I do, usually bad news in the papers.
- Don't think it is true of any council. Decisions made in the best interests of governments and big industries.
- Don't think they ask for your views enough.
- Don't think they do engage enough especially with younger people.
- Don't think we get much of a say when it is big projects.
- Don't think what people are concerned about is reflected in what the council end up doing.
- Engagement is quite low.
- Feels disconnected. You hear about things after a decision has already been made.
- Feels like asking views is an empty gesture. The decisions will be made regardless.
- Hard to have a say when you have no time. Those with nothing to do often get a heavier say and it isn't fair.
- Have to really go out your way to have a say.
- On paper they are seen to give residents a voice but they have closed minds so to me there is little point.
- If you want to find out about something you can. More can be done to let people have a say in new ways.
- Lots of decisions get made that residents have no say over i.e. the leisure centres being privatised.
- Magazine should be more regular.
- Need to engage more at a local level.
- Need to make it easier to have a say.
- Need to use online more.
- Never hear from them.
- Never heard them ask for my views.
- Never really been made aware of any opportunity to give our views on anything.
- Residents views make little difference when money is involved.
- Should be much easier now to ask people for their views due to social media and the internet at large.
- Should be much easier to engage now due to the internet but there is limited engagement still.
- Some leisure centres are being privatised and there was no dialogue about it.
- Tend to find out about a decision being made when it is too late i.e. the leisure centres being sold off.
- Information/engagement irregular. More consistent. Every quarter should be a magazine/ something.
- There could be more ways for residents to have a voice.
- They do not ask residents or businesses.
- They don't contact me.
- They don't send anything out and not everyone has the internet.
- They need to involve us more.
- They never ask.
- They never ask what we want they just do it.
- They never get back to you.
- Think a lot gets decided and there is no consultation with residents at all.
- Council provides good services but as for having a say/making decisions, currently not the case at all.
- Think the magazine should be more regularly distributed.
- Be more proactive especially as people are online. Never been easier to engage, especially younger people.
- Think they could use social media and other ways to get people's opinions.
- Think you have to go find it out on your own rather than being informed.
- This is one area that they can improve. Too difficult to get involved if you do not have time and are busy working and looking after kids. All the people not working or with no kids have too much of a say.
- Too difficult to be involved in decision making. Have to dedicate a lot of time.
- Unless it is something very contentious people aren't made aware of a lot of things.
- We live in a council area which is not kept well at all. Street lights are out, weeds are overgrowing, roads are full of pot holes. We as residents have tried to approach councillors and the council but unfortunately it falls on deaf ears and we are getting nowhere.
- We never get information from them.
- We never get to hear of anything the council are doing.
- Would say that we as a household aren't very aware of what the council is doing so that indicates there isn't enough being done to get people involved.
- You can only really have a say if you have enough time or like being involved in everything and participating in meetings.

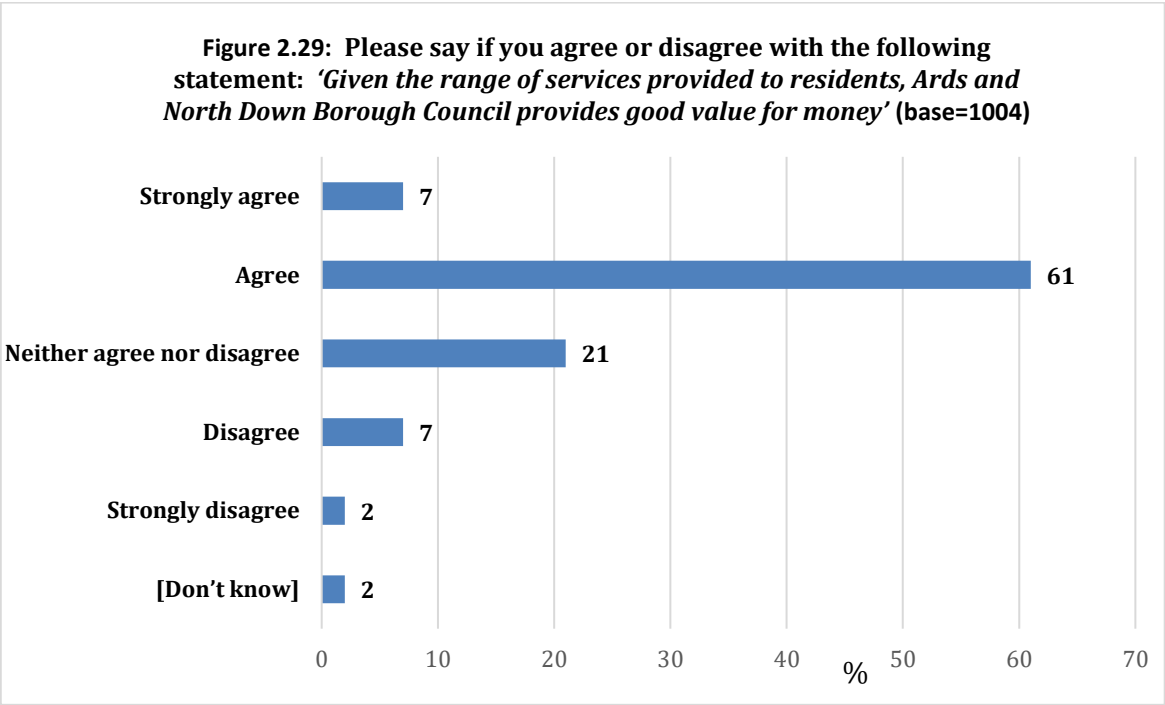


2.11 Value for money

All residents were asked if they agree or disagreed with the following statement:

*'Given the range of services provided to residents, Ards and North Down Borough Council provides good value for money'.*

In response, almost half (68%) of residents said they either 'strongly agree' (7%) or 'agree' (61%) that the Council provides good value for money, with 21% saying they 'neither agree nor disagree' and 9% either 'disagreeing' (7%) or 'strongly disagreeing' (2%). Two percent answered, 'don't know'.



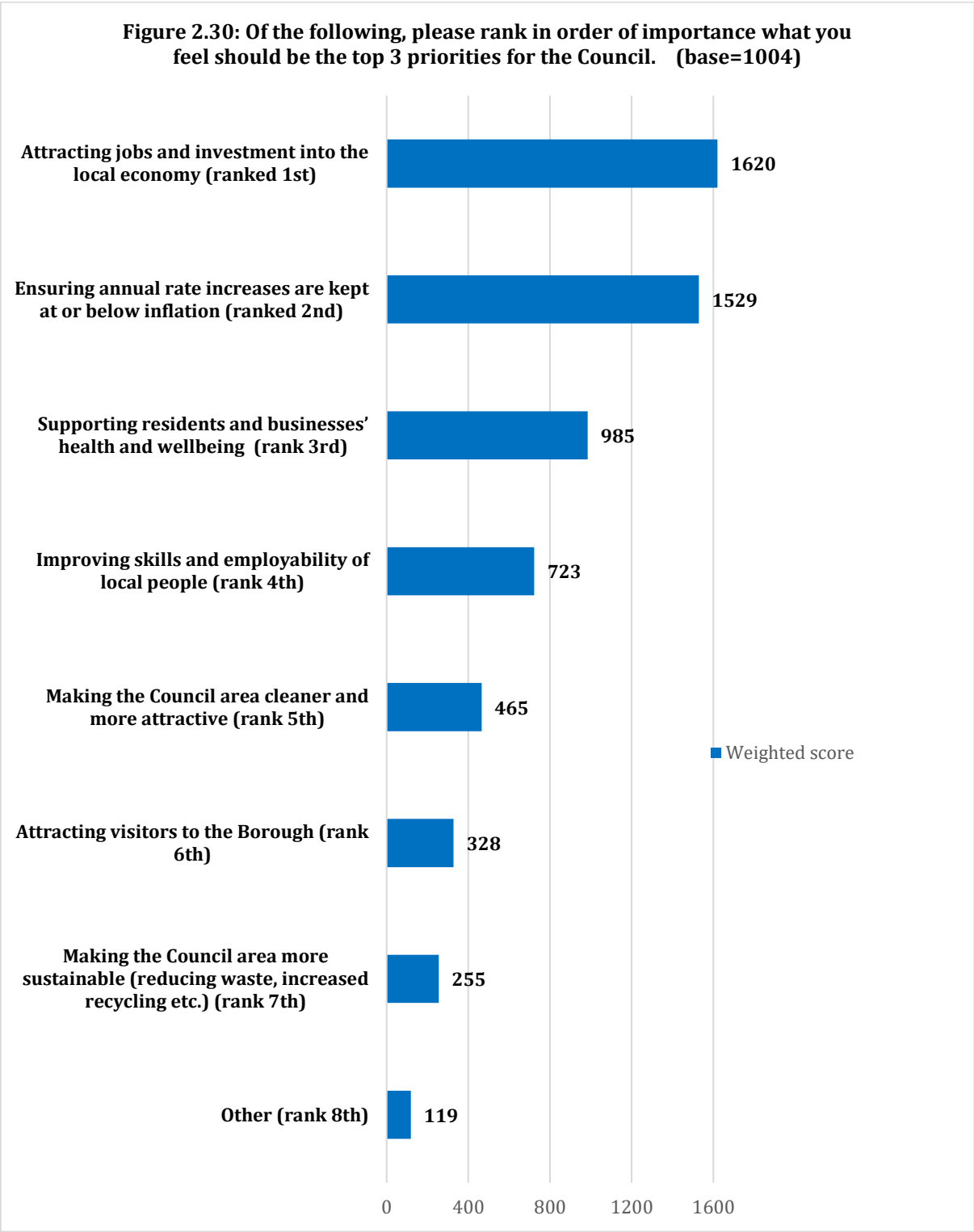
**Residents more likely to believe that the Council provides 'Value for Money' included:**

- ABC1 (80%) residents (C2DE, 56%);
- Non-disabled residents (73% vs. 60%);
- Residents with a higher level of educational attainment (high, 81%: medium, 76%: low, 51%); and,
- Residents in Holywood and Clondeboy, 91% [Newtownards, 56%].

2.12 Council priorities

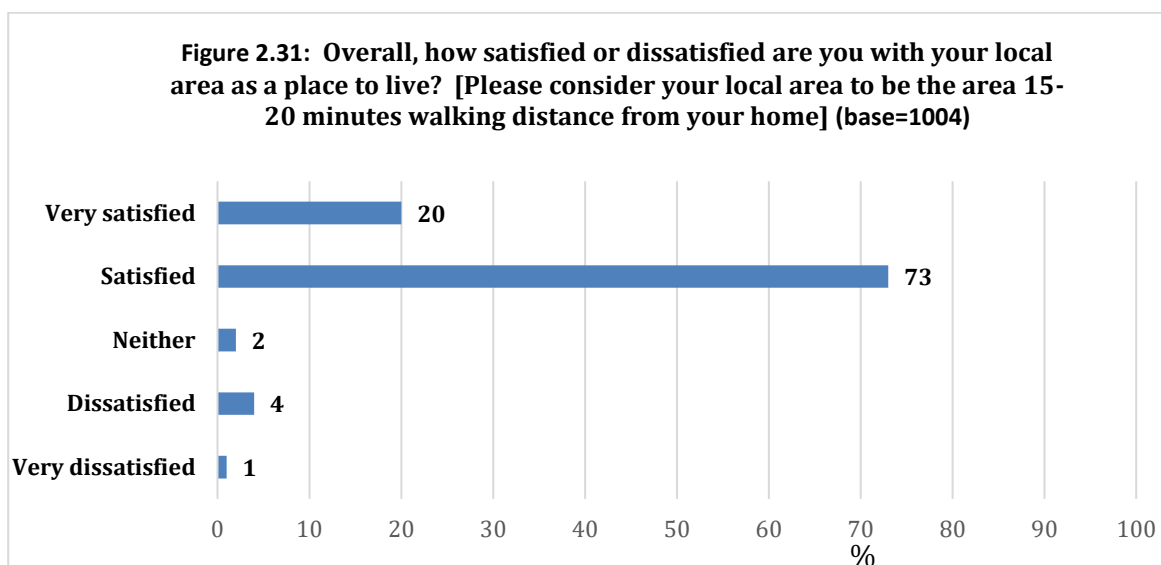
The survey provided an opportunity for the Council to measure resident perception of Council priorities, with residents asked to list in rank order of importance what they believe should be the top 3 priorities for the Council.

Figure 2.30 shows that residents ranked attracting jobs and investment into the local economy the most important priority for the Council (weighted score=1620). Ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in importance is ensuring annual rate increases are kept at or below inflation (weighted score=1529), with supporting residents and businesses' health and wellbeing ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> most important (weighted score=985).

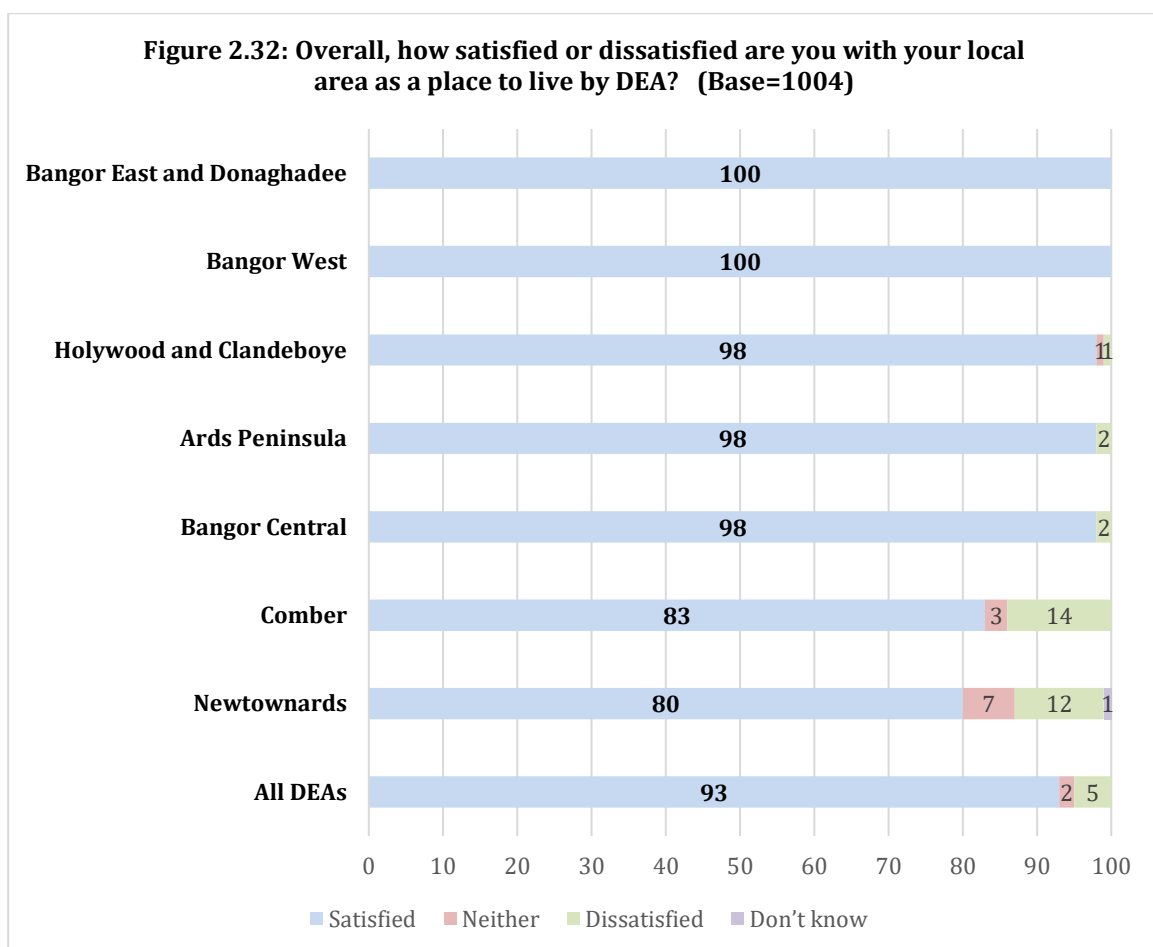


## 2.13 Satisfaction with local area as places to live

More than nine out of ten (93%) residents said they are either 'very satisfied' (20%) or 'satisfied' (73%) with their local area as a place to live. Two percent are 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied', and five percent are either 'dissatisfied' (4%) or 'very dissatisfied' (1%).



Analysis by area shows that all residents in Bangor East and Donaghadee and Bangor West were satisfied with their local area as a place to live, with residents in Newtownards (80%), least likely to be satisfied.





### 2.13.1 Reasons why residents dissatisfied with their local area as a place to live

The reasons why some residents said they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their local area as a place to live included:

#### Ards Peninsula

- Not much to do in the area for younger people.
- Not very clean. Dog fouling in the pitches and parks. Needs more restaurants, bars etc.
- The area is untidy and needs attention to make it easier on the eye.

#### Bangor Central

- Nothing being done about litter or dog fouling.
- Since the pandemic lots of businesses have shut. Lots of parks run down and less things to do.
- There's so many things needing done.

#### Bangor East and Donaghadee

- None of the residents dissatisfied.

#### Bangor West

- None of the residents dissatisfied.

#### Comber

- Not much to do. Also just think the houses look really old and the area just doesn't look very nice.
- Don't know your neighbours anymore. No community spirit.
- Grass isn't being cut. Lots of rubbish laying around. People just leaving stuff on the street to get it picked up.
- It is a dump. Litter everywhere. Grass is never cut. Roads are so bad. Just looks depressing.
- Lots of derelict looking buildings. Place hasn't changed for 10+ years.
- Needs an upgrade. Lots of buildings in poor condition.
- Needs more cycling infrastructure, better gardening, more local services, better transport.
- Not a very exciting place. Very quiet. Not many good cafes or bars.
- Not as vibrant as it once was.
- Not much in the area. Bit disconnected from everything.
- Not very exciting in terms of bars, restaurants etc.
- Poor transport links - forces you to need a car.
- Too many cars. Need more legitimate cycle routes and cycling infrastructure
- Very noisy area now. Dog fouling gotten worse now everyone has a dog. Not very peaceful anymore.
- Would be good to have a gym nearby.
- Would like to move away. Neighbours aren't the best.
- Would say lots of improvements to the roads are needed and improvement in quality of shops.

#### Hollywood and Clondeboyne

- Need more shops

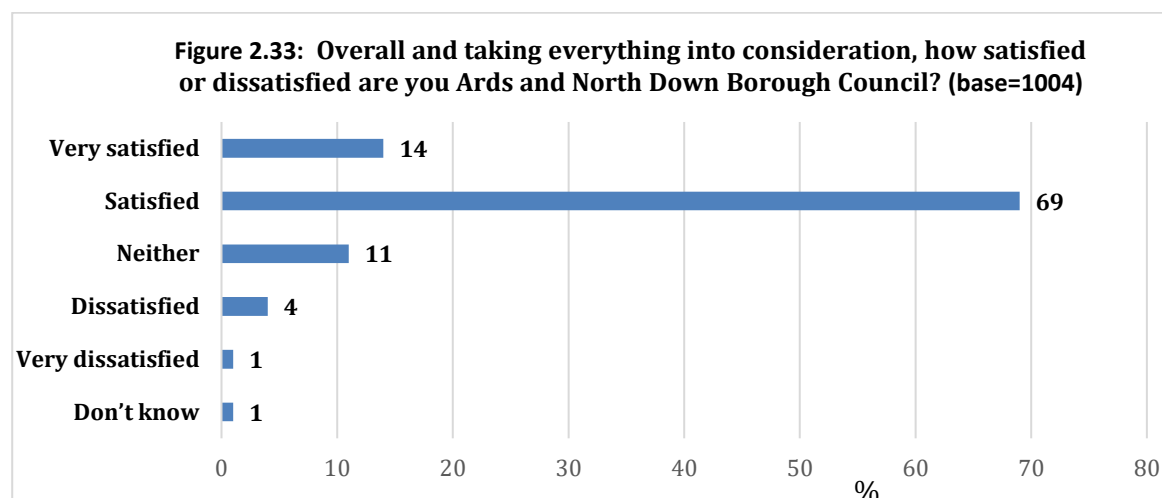
#### Newtownards

- A lot of the spirit has gone. The sense of community isn't the same.
- Boring. Not a lot to do.
- Buildings look a bit rundown. Shops aren't great. Lots of empty shops.
- Dangerous driving. Dog fouling has went up a lot as well.
- Dangerous driving. Vandalism. Lots of noise.
- Don't like all the flags and the division.
- Don't think it has recovered from covid. No buzz. Lots of shops empty..

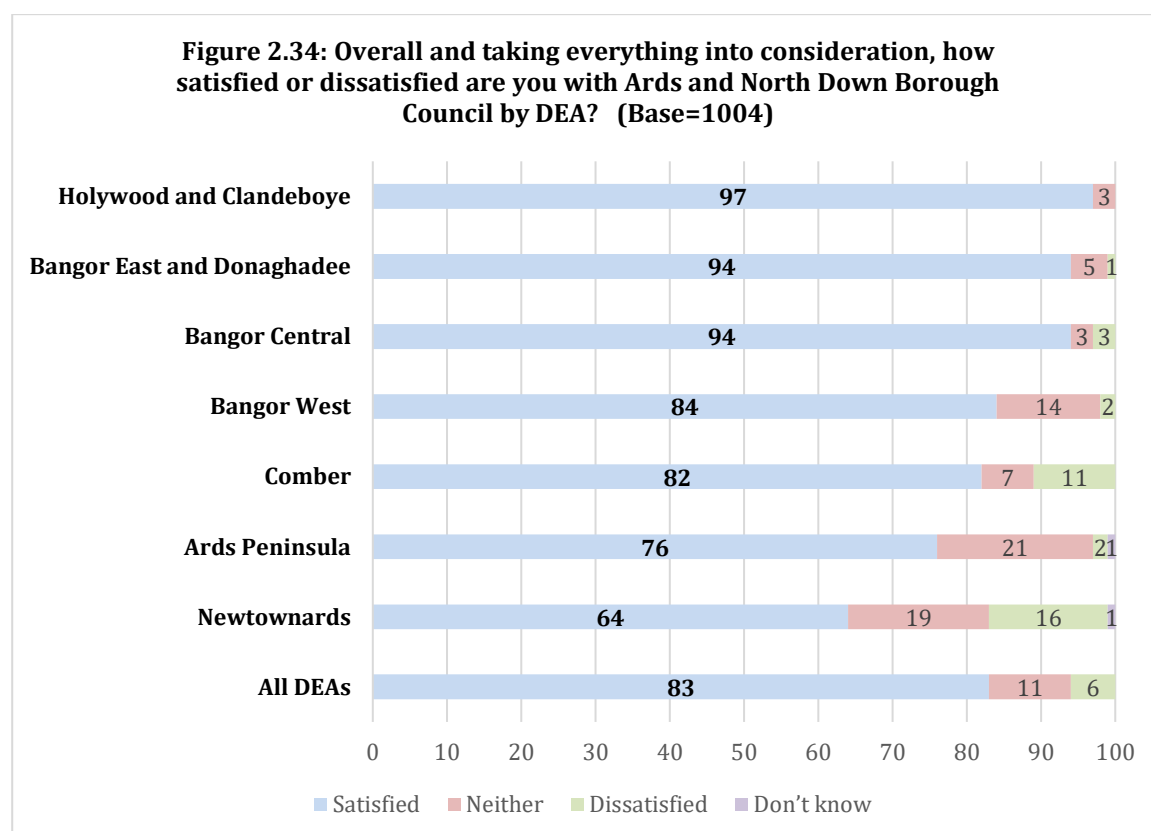
- Housing not nice to look at. Also too many cars in the street. Some people have 2-3 cars per household.
- It looks old and tired. Roads are in bad condition. Not enough is being done to make use of the countryside.
- Lots of disturbances. Noisy. Doesn't feel safe at night.
- Lots of flags on street poles. Can get very rowdy at times. Noisy and feels unsafe at night.
- Lots of vandalism and very noisy.
- No real sense of community.
- No real sense of community. Looks very dull and tired.
- Not a lot of good pubs or good restaurants. Not enough green spaces.
- Not enough parks and green spaces.
- Not enough things for kids to do.
- Roads in poor condition. Dangerous driving is out of control.
- Shop fronts need to be filled. New business needs supported.
- Some streets are a bit dark. Streets are untidy too, lots of litter.
- Still feeling the effects of the pandemic. Need more shops. More local business.
- Too many cars. Quite noisy. Roads are in bad condition. Graffiti on shop fronts.
- Want to have more gyms and more cycling routes.
- Would like to see more being done about vandalism, dog fouling and kids getting up to no good.

## 2.14 Overall resident satisfaction with the Council

Overall, and taking everything into consideration, 83% of residents said they are either 'very satisfied' (14%) or 'satisfied' (69%) with the Council. Eleven percent were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied', with 5% either 'dissatisfied' (4%) or 'very dissatisfied' (1%). One percent answered, 'don't know'.



Analysis by area shows that 97% of residents in Hollywood and Clandeboye were satisfied overall with the Council, with residents in Newtownards (64%) least likely to be satisfied.



**Those residents more likely to be satisfied with Ards and North Down Borough Council included:**

- ABC1 residents (89%) compared with C2DE residents (76%);
- Those with relatively higher levels of educational attainment (high, 90%; medium, 88%; low, 73%);
- Non-disabled residents (88% vs. 77%);

## 2.14.1 Reasons why residents dissatisfied with Ards and North Down Borough Council

The reasons why some residents are dissatisfied with Ards and North Down Borough Council include:

- A bit quiet and uninvolved.
- Apart from taking the bins and cleaning the streets they don't appear to be doing much else.
- Area where we are is nice but go into the town and there is a lot of litter. Lots of shop fronts not being used.
- Lots of tired looking old buildings that need investment.
- Believe they could offer more of what residents actually want.
- Can remember the plans for the regeneration almost 10+ years ago and it never happened.
- Town centre is in need of investment and being renovated and re-organised.
- Could be more engaging. Use social media more.
- Difficult to communicate with. Don't get a straight answer. Poor experience with waste collection and recycling.
- Difficult to communicate with. Food/drink is expensive at all council events/facilities.
- Don't do enough in the community. Should be more visible.
- Don't feel the council were very helpful.
- Don't spend the money wisely.
- Don't think the money is being spent wisely. Should be spent on infrastructure and looking ahead into the future.
- Don't think they really do a lot.
- Every time I have had an issue/problem it's difficult to communicate with them and get any action to resolve it.
- Haven't done enough to protect key services from being privatised.
- Housing in our area is very poor. It is not clean or tidy either.
- I don't think the council did enough about my complaint.
- I want a house and can't get one.
- I wanted the council to do more.
- Lot of people struggling with cost of living and not enough help has been provided.
- Need to do more to make sure services remain in public hands.
- Never ask for our opinions. Very quiet. Don't provide enough meaningful services.
- No idea what it is they actually do and how they spend our money.
- No real sense of community as there was before and think the council is partly to blame.
- Not enough being done to help people with rates.
- Not happy with proposed privatisation of council leisure centres etc.
- Not providing enough - especially for kids.
- Not very active. Distant, uninvolved apart from the basic things like cleaning streets and running leisure centres.
- Not very present in the community. Have been less and less since covid.
- Nothing gets done.
- Offer very little other than street cleaning and collecting bins.
- When complaining about noise, litter and dog fouling it wasn't a good experience and felt like a waste of time.
- Should be doing more of the things people want like gardening maintenance and trying to freeze rates.
- Should be making residents more aware of the services.
- Some services at risk of being privatised. The Town Masterplan hasn't been achieved. Not good.
- Struggle to do the basics now like keep the town clean and the parks looking well maintained.
- Contact experience not great. Don't have resources to cope with basics e.g. pest control, keeping the area tidy.
- The situation with the leisure centres being at risk of privatisation.
- Expensive for rates.
- There not that bothered about helping you when you need it.
- Too quiet. They do not interact with people enough and the town has just stayed the same for years and years.
- They are very ignorant to deal with.
- They do not offer enough support or engagement to residents.
- They have a duty to do more and to engage the entire Borough and deliver our vision.
- They have been selling off some services to private companies.
- They keep increasing rates.
- they keep reducing services and jobs.
- They need to do much more about litter on the streets.
- They're not doing anything to help the people or the town.
- Think it is a bit bloated. They need to restructure a lot of the current council and change the outlook.
- Think they can do more to be visible and active in the community. More direct face to face representation.
- Stagnated since pandemic. Plans in place haven't come through e.g. Greenway and regeneration. Still waiting.
- Too much focus on recycling and on things that don't matter much to ordinary people.
- Unhelpful and difficult to communicate with.
- Very slow to react to enquiries or complaints.
- We as residents feel they do not care about our opinion. They will do it their way.
- When I've used the online services it is good; but the town needs to be better looked after.

## 2.15 Suggestions for Council improvement

All respondents were invited to suggest one area they would like to see the Council improving on, with the most common suggestions including: keeping areas clean / reduce litter / reduce fly-tipping etc. (8%); freeze both domestic and business rates (7%); more jobs / attract employment (6%); and improve maintenance of roads and pathways (6%).

	%	n
Keep area clean and tidy/reduce litter/fly tipping/clear way grass/ weeds / street cleaning	8	85
Cheaper/freeze rates - both domestic and business rates	7	72
More jobs/attract employment to the area (incl. jobs for young people and disabled)	6	59
Improve roads and pathways maintenance	6	57
Attract more tourism/visitors to the area	4	43
Transparent / more public consultation/keep community informed of plans/developments and delays	4	38
Doing more for young people - provision of activities, services and facilities	4	43
Access to more affordable/better quality housing	3	32
Be more environmentally aware/carbon neutral and sustainable	3	31
Focus on local regeneration/help fill empty shops	3	32
More/larger bins both domestic and public	3	26
Just keep doing what they are doing/nothing more really	3	30
Attract new businesses to area	2	19
Support local businesses more	2	24
Stop appointment system at the recycling centres and increase opening times	2	24
Improve street lighting	2	16
Clamp down on dog fouling/ increased number of dog wardens/provision of more dog waste bins	2	24
Do more to help the community/increase level of public services and access to social care	2	21
Provide financial support to most vulnerable in the community / those struggling to pay bills / energy	2	23
More activities/services/facilities for young children	2	24
Better public transport and bus services	1	12
More free parking	1	6
Better/improved/more green spaces/parks	1	11
Better/safer play parks	1	9
Improved social media presence/online consultation/quicker online processes	1	11
Bigger/more recycling bins	1	8
More CCTV locally	1	9
Reduce vandalism/anti-social behaviour/loitering	1	8
Develop cycling routes/green routes	1	8
Responding to queries and complaints quicker	1	9
Getting things done a bit quicker/when they say they will	1	8
Provide more support and services for older people/pensioners	1	10
More waste/bin/recycling collections	1	10
More recycling stations - bottle banks/clothing banks	1	11
More funding for education	1	7
More leisure centres/sports centres/facilities and classes	1	8
Increased Police presence needed	1	7
More funding for people with special needs/people with disabilities	<1	3
Allow vans and camper vans into recycling centres	<1	2
Encourage green investment to area	<1	4
To be more accessible/easier to contact	<1	2
Provision of more childcare resources	<1	1
Better recycling guidance (currently just put a sticker on the bin with no explanation)	<1	3
Improved access to health service resources	<1	2
More community events	<1	4
Provision of more benches and public seating	<1	3
More public toilets	<1	3
Stop putting up council rents	<1	3
Protect services from being privatised	<1	4
Spend budgets wisely	<1	4
Other	4	39
Don't know	5	52

## Appendices

## Appendix 1 (Questionnaire)



**Resident Survey (2023)**

**Questionnaire Draft**

**V6 - FINAL**

**1 November 2023**





Introduction

Good morning/afternoon/evening, my name is [NAME] from Social Market Research an independent research agency. We are undertaking a residents’ survey on behalf of Ards and North Down Borough Council. The aim of the survey is to help the Council understand the views and experiences of local people so that it can plan and deliver better services. The survey asks about living in Ards and North Down, your local area and wellbeing and satisfaction with Council services..

The survey is anonymous and confidential and you or your household cannot be identified in any way. Please note you will be asked for your personal details at the end of the survey but these details will not be linked to the answers you have given during the survey or given to Ards and North Down Borough Council. They are purely used by us for validation purposes (i.e. to make sure the survey was conducted correctly when we carry out our quality control checks).

By participating, we accept that you are opting in to freely submit information and personal data on a consensual basis. Your responses will be confidential and your rights are protected under GDPR. You don’t have to answer any question you don’t want to, and you can end the interview at any time. Please be as honest as possible in your response. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers. If you have questions about this survey, I will provide you with a telephone number for you to call to get more information.

X1. This call may be recorded for training and quality purposes are you happy with this? **(Single Code)**

Yes	1
No	2

X2. Are you happy to consent to take part in the survey? **(Single Code)**

Yes, continue	1
Yes, but not at this time and arrange a call back	2
No – terminate interview (thank and close)	3
Other (please specify)	4

X3. INTERVIEWER: Enter your interviewer ID number

X4. INTERVIEWER: Insert Sample Number

## Section A: Council Services

**I want to start by asking you about your awareness and use of services provided by Ards and North Down Borough Council. Please remember there are no right, or wrong, answers and the Council simply wants to better understand how much residents know about different services.**

- A1. First, please say which of the following services do you believe are provided by Ards and North Down Council? **INTERVIEWER READ OUT: Code all mentioned**

Arts and Museums	1
Car parking	2
Community group support	3
Business support	4
Enforcement (e.g. in relation to dog fouling, noise control etc.)	5
Environmental health (food hygiene – scores on doors, water quality control, house safety visits etc.)	6
Leisure and community centres	7
Licensing (e.g. dogs, gaming, entertainment etc.)	8
Planning and Building Control	9
Play parks and open spaces	10
Public toilets	11
Cemeteries	12
Road maintenance	13
Regeneration of towns and villages	14
Street cleansing	15
Street Lighting	16
Tourism Services e.g. visitor information services	17
Household waste collection service	18
Household recycling centres	19

- A2. In the last 12 months have you used or visited any of the following Council provided services, facilities or events?  
**INTERVIEWER READ OUT: Code all mentioned**

Arts and Museums	1
Car parks	2
Community group support	3
Business support	4
Enforcement and licencing (e.g. in relation to dogs, noise, entertainment etc.)	5
Environmental health (food hygiene - scores on doors, water quality control, house safety visits etc.)	6
Leisure and community centres	7
Planning and/or building control	8
Play parks and open spaces	9
Registration of births, deaths, marriages, civil partnerships	10
Attractions e.g. Pickie / Exploris/ Visitor Information Centres	11
Council events	12
Household waste collection service	13
Household recycling centres	14
Not used any of the above services	15

- A3. Have you used, visited or attended any additional council services, facilities or events in the last 12 months? (i.e. council services, facilities, events etc. not on the previous list)

Yes	1
No	2

**ASK IF A3 EQ 1**

A4. Which other service (s), facilities or events have you used or visited in the last 12 months?

**ASK FOR EACH SERVICE USED, VISITED OR ATTENDED AT A2 AND A4**

A5. How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the service you received at each of the services, facilities or events you used, visited or attended? **Single code**

Very satisfied	1
Satisfied	2
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3
Dissatisfied	4
Very dissatisfied	5
Don't know	6

Arts and Museums	1
Car parks	2
Community group support	3
Business support	4
Enforcement and licencing (e.g. in relation to dogs, noise, entertainment etc.)	5
Environmental health (food hygiene - scores on doors, water quality control, house safety visits etc.)	6
Leisure and community centres	7
Planning and/or building control	8
Play parks and open spaces	9
Registration of births, deaths, marriages, civil partnerships	10
Attractions e.g. Pickie / Exploris/ Visitor Information Centres	11
Council events	12
Household waste collection service	13
Household recycling centres	14
Other services / facilities visited	15

**ASK FOR EACH SERVICE FLAGGED 4 (DISSATISFIED) OR 5 (VERY DISSATISFIED) AT A5**

A6. Why were you dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with this service? **(Answer as appropriate)**

	Reason for dissatisfaction
Arts and Museums	
Car parks	
Community group support	
Business support	
Enforcement and licencing (e.g. in relation to dogs, noise, entertainment etc.)	
Environmental health (food hygiene - scores on doors, water quality control, house safety visits etc.)	
Leisure and community centres	
Planning and/or building control	
Play parks and open spaces	
Registration of births, deaths, marriages, civil partnerships	
Attractions e.g. Pickie / Exploris/ Visitor Information Centres	
Council events	
Household waste collection service	
Household recycling centres	

**The next few questions are about recycling.**

A7. How would you rate your level of commitment to recycling? **(Select one only)**

**Single code**

Very high	1
High	2
Medium	3
Low	4
Very low	5

A8. How confident are you that you put all your different materials / waste in the right place to ensure they are recycled where possible? **Single code**

Very confident	1
Confident	2
Not very confident	3
Not at all confident	4

A9. What **single thing** do you think would help you recycle more?

## Section B: Contact with the Council

**I now want to ask you about your experience of contacting the Council and general communication with the Council.**

- B1. In the last 12 months have you contacted or made an enquiry to the Council face-to-face, by phone, email, social media or any other way? **Select all that apply**

Yes, face-to-face	1
Yes, by phone	2
Yes, by email	3
Yes, by social media	4
Yes, (other – please specify)	5
No	6

**IF MORE THAN ONE FORM OF CONTACT AT B1 ASK B2 ELSE GO TO B3**

- B2. Was your most recent contact by face-to-face, phone, email, social media or some other way?  
**Single code only**

Face-to-face	1
Phone	2
Email	3
Social Media	4
Other (please specify)	5

**ASK IF B1 LT 6**

- B3. How would you rate your experience of your most recent contact?  
**Single code only**

Excellent	1
Good	2
Fair	3
Poor	4
Very poor	5

**ASK IF B3 EQ 4 OR 5**

- B4. Why do you say that?

**I now want to ask you about broadband, the internet and going online.**

- B5. Is your home connected to broadband? **(Select one only)**

Yes	1
No	2

B6. How would you rate the quality of broadband coverage where you live?

**Single code only**

Excellent	1
Good	2
Fair	3
Poor	4
Very poor	5
[Don't know]	6

B7. How often do you use the internet / go online?

**Single code only**

At least daily	1
Every few days	2
Weekly	3
Fortnightly	4
Less often	5
Never	6

B8. Do you use any of the following social media platforms?

**Code all that apply**

Facebook	1
Twitter \ X	2
Instagram	3
LinkedIn	4
Don't use any of these social media platforms	5

B9. In the last 12 months have you visited the Council's website? **Single code only**

Yes	1
No	2

**ASK IF B9 EQ 1**

B10. Why did you visit the Council's website? **Code all that apply**

Get information on a council service	1
Find out about opening times for a service (e.g. household recycling centre, leisure centre etc.)	2
Find out about a council event	3
Pay for/book a Council service, e.g. buy a dog licence, book a HRC visit	4
Get contact details of someone in the Council	5
Get contact details of your local councillor	6
Other (please specify)	7

**ASK IF B10 EQ 1, 2, 3 OR 4**

B11. When you visited the council's website, which service (s) were you looking for information about?

**Code all that apply**

Arts and Museums	1
Building control	2
Car parking	3
Community halls or centres	4
Community group support	5
Business support	6
Environmental health (food hygiene - scores on doors, water quality control, house safety visits etc.)	7
Leisure centres	8
Licensing (e.g. dogs, gaming, entertainment etc.)	9
Planning	10
Play parks and open spaces	11
Regeneration projects within towns and villages / Bangor Waterfront	12
Registration of births, deaths, marriages, civil partnerships	13
Tourism Services e.g. visitor information services	14
Activities e.g. Pickie / Exploris etc.	15
Council events	16
Household waste collection service	17
Household recycling centres	18
Other services, facilities or events (please specify)	19
Don't know / can't remember	20

**ASK IF B11 LT 19**

B12. Were you able to find the information you were looking for? **Single code only**

Yes	1
No	2

**ASK IF B9 EQ 1**

B13. Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the Council's website?

**Single code only**

Very satisfied	1
Satisfied	2
Neither	3
Dissatisfied	4
Very dissatisfied	5
Don't know	6

**ASK B13 EQ 4 OR 5**

B14. Why are you dissatisfied?

- B15. The Council is continually reviewing how it provides services to residents. How supportive or unsupportive would you be of the Council making more of its services available online (e.g. registration of births, deaths, marriages, getting dog licences etc.)?

**Single code only**

Very supportive	1
Supportive	2
Not very supportive	3
Not at all supportive	4
Don't know	5

**ASK IF B15 EQ 3 OR 4**

- B16. Why do you say that?

- B17. How likely is it that you personally would engage in online transactions to avail of council services?

**Single code only**

Very likely	1
Likely	2
Not very likely	3
Not at all likely	4
Don't know	5

### Section C: Communication and Perception

**I now want to ask you about getting information on Council services and communication with the Council generally.**

- C1. How easy or difficult do you find getting information on Council services or initiatives?

**Single code only**

Very easy	Easy	Difficult	Very difficult	(Don't know)
1	2	3	4	5

- C2. Looking to the future, what are **the best ways** for the Council to communicate with you to let you know what is going on across the Council?

**INTERVIEWER READ OUT AND CODE TOP 3 IN RANK ORDER OF IMPORTANCE**

	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3
Council website	1	1	1
Email	2	2	2
Events	3	3	3
Facebook	4	4	4
Instagram	5	5	5
Leaflets	6	6	6
Letter	7	7	7
Local newspapers	8	8	8
Mobile phone apps	9	9	9
Radio	10	10	10
Twitter \ X	11	11	11
Via a Council magazine posted to all households	12	12	12
Other Social Media (please specify)	13	13	13
Other (please specify)	14	14	14



- C2a. Are you supportive or unsupportive of a Council magazine being sent to all households in the Borough. This magazine would provide information on Council services and events.

Supportive	1
Unsupportive	2
Don't know	3

- C3. From time to time the Council undertakes engagements with residents regarding the provision of particular services. Have you ever taken part in a council engagement/information exercise ?

**Select all that apply**

Yes, in the last 12 months	1
Yes, more than a year ago	2
No	3
Don't know / can't remember	4

**ASK IF C3 EQ 1 OR 2**

- C4. Thinking about the **most recent engagement exercise** you took part in, what was this about? **DO NOT PROMPT RESPONDENT – Single code only**

Bangor Waterfront	1
Good relations	2
Greenways Routes	3
Town Centre Masterplans	4
Other (please specify)	5
Don't know / can't remember	6

**ASK IF C5 EQ 1 or 2**

- C5. How would you rate your experience of taking part in the most recent Council engagement / information exercise you took part in? **Single code only**

Excellent	1
Good	2
Fair	3
Poor	4
Very poor	5

**ASK IF C5 EQ 4 OR 5**

- C6. Why do you say that?

**ASK IF C3 EQ 3**

- C7. Why have you not participated in any Council engagement events in the last 12-months? **Code all that apply**

Unaware of any council consultations	1
No interest	2
Aware of consultations but not invited to participate	3
Do not see the value of council consultations	4
Taking part is too difficult	5
Other (please specify)	6

- C8. If the Council is running an engagement event in the future, how would you like the Council to engage with you? **READ OUT**  
**Code all that apply**

Public meetings	1
Online	2
Council newsletter (Borough Magazine)	3
Letter	4
Focus groups	5
Surgeries (e.g. where you can go along and get information or advice)	6
Other (please specify)	7
Do not want the Council to engage with me	8

**ONLY DISPLAY IF MORE THAN ONE ITEM SELECTED AT C8 (DON'T ASK IF C8 EQ 8)**

- C9. Of the different ways you said you would like the Council to engage with you, which of these do you feel would be **best** for you? **(Select one only)**

Public meetings	1
Online	2
Council newsletter (Borough Magazine)	3
Letter	4
Focus groups	5
Surgeries (e.g. where you can go along and get information or advice)	6
Other (please specify)	7

- C10. Overall, how well informed do you think the Council keeps residents about the services and benefits its provides? **Single code only**

Very well informed	Fairly well informed	Not very well informed	Not well informed at all	(Don't know)
1	2	3	4	5

- C11. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the level of engagement the Council offers to local residents? **READ ALOUD TO ALL RESPONDENTS: By engagement we mean giving local people information about the council, asking them for their views and giving them a direct say in decision-making. Single code only**

Very satisfied	1
Satisfied	2
Neither	3
Dissatisfied	4
Very dissatisfied	5
Don't know	6

**ASK IF C11 EQ 4 OR 5**

- C12. Why are you dissatisfied?

- C13. If Ards and North Down Borough Council were a person, what single word or phrase would you use to describe its personality?

C14. Please say if you agree or disagree with the following statement:

*'Given the range of services provided to residents, Ards and North Down Borough Council provides good value for money'* **Single code only**

Strongly agree	1
Agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
<i>[Don't know]</i>	6

#### Section D: Council Priorities and the Council as a Place to Live

**Thank you for your patience. We are more than half way through the survey and I now want to ask you about Council priorities. I also want to ask you about your local area as a place to live.**

D1. Of the following, please rank in order of importance what you feel should be the top 3 priorities for the Council.

**INTERVIEWER READ OUT AND RECORD TOP 3 IN RANK ORDER**

	Rank		
	1	2	3
Attracting jobs and investment into local economy			
Ensuring annual rate increases are kept at or below inflation			
Supporting residents and businesses' health and wellbeing			
Improving skills and employability of local people			
Making the Council area cleaner and more attractive			
Making the Council area more sustainable (reducing waste, increased recycling etc.)			
Attracting visitors to the Borough			
Other (please specify)			

D2. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?

*[Please consider your local area to be the area 15-20 minutes walking distance from your home]* **Single code only**

Very satisfied	1
Satisfied	2
Neither	3
Dissatisfied	4
Very dissatisfied	5
<i>Don't know</i>	6

**ASK IF D2 EQ 4 OR 5**

D3. Why are you dissatisfied?

- D4. Overall and taking everything into consideration, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with Ards and North Down Borough Council? **Single code only**

Very satisfied	1
Satisfied	2
Neither	3
Dissatisfied	4
Very dissatisfied	5
Don't know	6

**ASK IF D4 EQ 4 OR 5**

- D5. Please say why you are dissatisfied?

- D6. If there was **one single thing** or area you would like to see the Council improving on, what would this be?

### Section E: Demographic and Monitoring Questions

**Finally, in this final part of the survey I will ask you some questions about yourself.**

- E1. Are you...? **(Select one only)**

Male,	1
Female	2
Identity as other (please specify)	3
Prefer not to say	4

- E2. What age are you? **INTERVIEWER RECORD AGE:**

- E3. What is your marital status? **Single code only**

Single (never married and never registered as a same-sex civil partnership)	1
Married or in a registered same-sex civil partnership	2
Living together, as if you are married or in a registered same-sex civil partnership	3
Separated (but still legally married or in a registered same-sex civil partnership)	4
Divorced or formerly in same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	5
Widowed or surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership	6
Prefer not to say	7

- E4. Now, can I ask you a few questions about your health?

Yes	1
No	2

**ASK E4 EQ 1**

- E5. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? Include problems related to old age. **READ OUT - Single code only**

Yes, limited a lot	1
Yes, limited a little	2
No	3
Prefer not to say	4

**ASK E5 EQ 1 OR 2**

- E6. Please say how this disability affects you. **DO NOT PROMPT – Code all mentioned**

Physical Disability	1
Hearing Impairment	2
Sight Impairment	3
Mental Health condition	4
Learning Disability	5
Long Standing illness	6
Other (please specify)	7
Prefer not to say	8

- E7. Please indicate your community background. **Single code only**

I am a member of the Protestant community	1
I am a member of the Roman Catholic community	2
I am not a member of either the Protestant or the Roman Catholic communities	3
Prefer not to say	4

- E8. Please state your religious denomination. **Single code only**

No religion	1
Christian	2
Buddhist	3
Hindu	4
Jewish	5
Muslim	6
Sikh	7
Other religion (please specify) [pop up box]	8
Prefer not to say	9

- E9. How would you describe your national identity? **Single code only**

British	1
Irish	2
Northern Irish	3
English	4
Scottish	5
Welsh	6
Other (please specify) [pop up box]	7

E10. What is your ethnic group? **Single code only**

White	1
Chinese	2
Irish Traveller	3
Indian	4
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	6
Black Caribbean	7
Black African	8
Black Other	9
Mixed ethnic group (please specify) [pop up box]	10

E11. Do you have dependants or caring responsibilities for family members or other persons? **(Select one only)**

Yes	1
No	2

**ASK E11 EQ 1**

E12. Please indicate which of the following caring responsibilities you have.  
**(Code all that apply)**

A child or children	1
A person with a disability	2
An elderly person	3
Other (please specify) [pop up box]	4

E13. Are you currently.? **Single code only**

Employed full-time	1
Employed part-time	2
Unemployed	3
Self-employed	4
Full-time homemaker	5
Retired	6
Still studying	7
Disabled or too ill to work	8
Prefer not to say	9

E14. What is the occupation of the chief income earner in your household?

**INTERVIEWER RECORD OCCUPATION**

E15. **INTERVIEWER RECORD SEG OF CHIEF INCOME EARNER: (Select one only)**

A	B	C1	C2	D	E
1	2	3	4	5	6

E16. What is the highest level of education qualifications you have obtained?

**Single code only**

Degree or higher degree	1
Higher education qualification below degree level	2
A-levels (or equivalent)	3
ONC/BTEC	4
O-level or GCSE equivalent (Grade A-C)	6
O-level or GCSE (Grade D-G)	7
No formal qualifications	8
Other (please specify) [pop up box]	9
Prefer not to say	10

E17. Are you happy to answer a question about your sexual orientation? This information is anonymous, and you cannot be identified in any way.

Yes	1
No	2

**ASK E17 EQ 1**

E18. Is your sexual orientation towards someone of...? **CODE ONE ONLY**

The same sex	1
Different sex	2
Both sexes	3
Not sure	4
Other (WRITE IN)	5
Refused	6

**CLOSE AND THANK RESPONDENT**

## Appendix 2 (Technical Appendix)



## Survey Sampling

Given the importance of the survey, and the contribution of the survey results to providing the Council with a robust evidence base, it was essential that the sampling methodology produced survey results representative of all residents aged 16+ across the Borough.

To this end, the survey was conducted using quota sampling with tightly controlled quotas applied for resident: age; sex; social class; and, DEA within the Borough (Table A1.1). Table A1.1 presents the sample profile compared with known population parameters and shows that sample estimates are broadly in line with census estimates. The 95% Confidence Intervals are also presented.

Table A1.1 Sample Profile Compared with Ards and North Down Population (aged 16+) [N=1004]				
		Population (%)	Sample (%)	95% Confidence Interval (+/-)
Sex	Male	48	48	44.9-51.1
	Female	52	52	48.9-55.1
Age	16-34	24	19	16.6-21.4
	35 to 59	40	49	45.9-52.1
	60+	36	32	29.1-34.9
Social Class <sup>7</sup>	ABC1	55	54	50.9-57.1
	C2DE	45	46	42.9-49.1
District Electoral Area	Comber	12	13	10.9-15.1
	Bangor East and Donaghadee	18	13	10.9-15.1
	Newtownards	15	19	16.6-21.4
	Bangor West	12	13	10.9-15.1
	Bangor Central	15	15	12.8-17.2
	Holywood and Clondeboyne	13	13	10.9-15.1
	Ards Peninsula	15	14	11.9-16.1
Source: Northern Ireland Census of Population				

## Survey Data Collection

The survey was conducted using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). Fieldwork on the survey was conducted between 27 October and 23 November 2023. A pilot survey was completed prior to the main survey, with the survey questionnaire revised accordingly. All interviews were conducted by telephone with interviewers briefed before the commencement of fieldwork. All survey procedures were in accordance with the ISO20252:2019 Standard.

<sup>7</sup> Social class definition based on the National Readership Survey (NRS) and used widely in market research to classify occupations (A: upper middle class; B: middle class; C1: lower middle class; C2: skilled working class; D: working class; E: non-working)

Unclassified

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**ITEM 13****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Exemption Reason	Not Applicable
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Finance
Date of Report	05 February 2024
File Reference	FIN161
Legislation	Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below: Not applicable
Subject	Prudential Indicators & Treasury Management – 2023/24 Qtr 3 Report
Attachments	

**Introduction**

In February 2023, Council approved its annual Capital and Treasury Management Strategies, including the setting of Prudential Indicators (PIs) for the current financial year ending 31 March 2024. These are statutory requirements in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act (NI) 2011, the CIPFA Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code.

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the PIs and treasury management activity at the end of quarter 3 of the financial year, as required by the CIPFA Codes. The figures presented in this report are based on knowledge and information held at 31 December 2023.

Not Applicable

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## 1.1 Capital - Expenditure & Financing

The Pls for capital expenditure and financing should ensure that, within a clear framework, the capital investment plans of the Council are affordable, prudent and sustainable. Updates to these Pls are set out below.

	Original Forecast	Revised Forecast
Table 1.11	£m	£m
Capital Expenditure 2023/24 (Current Year)	17.406	7.788

The original estimate of £17.406m has been revised to £7.533m, reflecting the capital expenditure that is now expected to be incurred by 31 March 2024. The reduction in the forecast is primarily due to programme slippages in the planned major capital schemes, particularly

- Greenway Schemes – Comber to Newtownards and Newtownards to Bangor, due to delays in the planning process, including awaiting responses from statutory consultees;
- Bangor Aurora Pool Floor – currently undergoing a detailed assessment of business needs;

The revised capital expenditure forecasts for the three-year plan, together with the capital financing implications and previous year activity are summarised below.

	Actual	Revised Forecast		
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Table 1.12	£m	£m	£m	£m
Capital Expenditure	5.187	7.788	19.406	30.593
<b>Financed by:</b>				
Loans	2.427	4.901	10.341	17.520
Grants	1.384	1.983	7.309	11.725
Capital Receipts	1.080	0.895	1.346	0.953
Revenue/Reserves	0.296	0.009	0.409	0.395

## 1.2 Capital – Capital Financing Requirement and External Borrowings

The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP (minimum revenue provision). See section 1.4 for further information on MRP.

Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short term. The Council has complied and expects to continue to comply with this requirement in the medium term as shown below.

Not Applicable

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	Actual	Revised Forecast		
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Table 1.2	£m	£m	£m	£m
Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)	76.328	75.853	79.784	90.301
External Gross Borrowing	63.725	59.651	61.226	72.574
Gross Borrowing within CFR	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The difference between the CFR and the Gross Borrowing figures represents the Council's underlying need to borrow (£14.6m 23/24 forecast) and indicates that historic capital expenditure has been temporarily financed from internal revenue resources. This has been made possible due to an increase in the Council's cash reserves in the current and previous years. The position has been similar for several years now with the Council last taking out long-term borrowings in November 2018.

### 1.3 Capital - Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit each year, known as the 'Authorised Limit.' In line with statutory guidance, a lower 'operational boundary' is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

The revised forecast for external gross borrowing at 31/03/24 is £59.7m (table 1.2). The Council is therefore forecast to remain well within both the Authorised Limit and the Operational Boundary set for the year as follows:

Table 1.3	2023/24
Authorised limit – borrowing	£ 86.235m
Operational boundary – borrowing	£ 81.235m

### 1.4 Capital - Revenue Budget Implications

Capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget. Instead, interest payable on borrowings and MRP (minimum revenue provision), together known as capital financing costs, are charged to revenue. These financing costs are compared to the net revenue stream i.e.. the amount funded from District Rates and general government grants, to show the proportion of the net revenue stream which is made up of capital financing costs.

Table 1.4	2022/23 Actual	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Forecast
Financing costs (£m)	8.158	7.782	8.781	9.712
Proportion of net revenue stream (%)	14.0%	12.4%	13.9%	14.1%

The forecast financing costs for 2023/24 of £7.8m is in line with the budget set for the year.

Not Applicable

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## 2.1 Treasury Management – Debt Activity

The following table summarises the position on long-term borrowings at 31/12/2023.

Table 2.1				
Lender	Balance 01/04/23	New Loans	Repayments	Balance 31/12/23
Dept of Finance	£ 56.450m	£ -	(£ 1.604m)	£ 54.846m
Banks (LOBOs)	£ 7.275m	£ -	(£ 1.000m)	£ 6.275m
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£ 63.725m</b>	<b>£ -</b>	<b>(£ 2.604m)</b>	<b>£ 61.121m</b>

The Council does not currently hold any short-term borrowings.

The revised capital financing requirement (table 1.2) shows that the Council could increase its level of external borrowings to £75.8m by 31 March 2024. However, an assessment of the Council's cashflow position forecasts that there will be adequate cash reserves to temporarily finance capital expenditure for the remainder of the current year and therefore no further borrowing is anticipated before 31 March 2024.

Therefore, after further repayments on existing long-term loans are made in February 2024, the level of external borrowings at 31 March 2024 is forecast to be £59.65m.

## 2.2 Treasury Management - Debt Related Treasury Activity Limits

The table below shows the position of all debt related treasury activity limits.

Table 2.21		
Interest rate exposures	Limit 2023/24	Actual at 31/12/23
Quantity of debt held at variable interest rates - upper limit	30%	2%
Quantity of debt held at fixed interest rates - upper limit	100%	98%

Table 2.22			
Maturity structure of fixed interest rate borrowing	Lower Limit 2023/24	Upper Limit 2023/24	Forecast 2023/24
Under 12 months	0%	15%	4.7%
12 months to 2 years	0%	15%	6.0%
2 years to 5 years	0%	20%	13.8%
5 years to 10 years	0%	30%	27.2%
10 years and above	30%	90%	48.3%

Not Applicable

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## 2.3 Treasury Management - Investment Activity

The objectives of the Council's investment strategy are safeguarding the repayment of the principal and interest on its investments on time, with the investment return being a secondary objective. The current investment climate continues to be one of overriding risk consideration, particularly that of counterparty risk. In line with advice provided by treasury management consultants, officers continue to implement an operational investment strategy of placing short-term investments with approved high-quality counterparties.

For the period from 1 April to 31 December 2023, Council has earned interest of £463k on investment deals with approved financial institutions as summarised below:

Table 2.31	Average Deposit Size	Average Term	Average Interest Rate	Interest Earned
CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund	£2.7m	Call A/c	4.89%	£103,187
Invesco Investment Mgt Ltd	£2.6m	Call A/c	5.02%	£86,489
State Street Global Advisors	£2.7m	Call A/c	4.86%	£101,285
Barclays Bank	£1.7m	Call A/c	4.80%	£53,357
Bank of Scotland	£2.0m	Call A/c	4.85%	£77,029
Santander	£1.1m	Call A/c	2.91%	£10,060
Other Local Authorities	£3.0m	3 mths	4.20%	£31,414
<b>Totals</b>				<b>£462,821</b>

This compares favourably to the budget set for the year of £220k. The forecast investment interest income for the financial year is expected to be circa £600k, which will result in a favourable variance of £380k.

The total balance of funds held in investment accounts at 31 December 2023 was £11m. The table below shows the risk and return metrics on these investments against other NI Councils.

	Counterparties	Investments	
Table 2.32	Credit Rating	Liquidity	Rate of Return (%)
ANDBC	A+	100%	5.31%
NI Council Average	A+	74%	5.17%

Source: Arlingclose Ltd Local Authority Quarterly Investment Benchmarking report Dec-23

The Council's limit for total principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days is £500k. The Council has not entered into any such investments.

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council notes this report.

Unclassified

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**ITEM 14a****Ards and North Down Borough Council**

Report Classification	Unclassified
Council/Committee	Corporate Services Committee
Date of Meeting	12 March 2024
Responsible Director	Director of Corporate Services
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administration
Date of Report	15 February 2024
File Reference	
Legislation	
Section 75 Compliant	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> If other, please add comment below:
Subject	Response to NOM 164 - Event Management
Attachments	Appendix 1 - Follow up email to attendees

**BACKGROUND**

The following Notice of Motion was agreed by Council at its meeting in March 2023:

‘That this Council acknowledges the exceptional work which community and voluntary groups carry out, often staging events which were previously run by this Council. Risk Management and Event Management Plans should assist the planning and the safe running of these events. However, many voluntary groups find the process arduous and inflexible, especially when trying to organise events on Council owned land. This Council therefore requests that a full review of this process takes place in consultation with community groups to ascertain their concerns, ensuring that Health and Safety expectations are realistic and meet the necessary requirements. Groups should be more actively supported as part of the process and that, if necessary, a wide range of supporting materials should be provided for a range of events; thereby ensuring that voluntary groups are more robustly assisted in their work rather than hindered by the current burdensome process.’

A report was brought to Corporate Services Committee in June 2023, detailing the review that officers had carried out in relation to the process that organisers of

Unclassified

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events on Council Land were required to follow to secure approval for the event to proceed, with a particular focus on the health and safety evidence requirements that formed part of the approvals process.

It was accepted that health and safety, in particular Risk Assessments and Event Management Plans, could be a complex area to navigate therefore, to further support event organisers, officers intended to hold an Event Organisers workshop. Officers wrote to 59 event organisers to seek feedback on the aspects of event management that caused them the most difficulty or concern, in order that these issues could be factored into the design of the workshop and it was recommended that Council noted that officers had undertaken a review of the process and that the Notice of Motion had been addressed. It was further agreed that officers would report back to the committee after the Event Management Workshop had taken place.

The Events Management Workshop took place on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at Ards Blair Mayne Wellbeing and Leisure Complex and the details are summarised below:

- The workshop was led by an external facilitator, Vanessa Mawer, who has spent many years working with agencies and event organisers, advising, educating and implementing event safety.
- Officers sent an invitation to attend to all Elected Members, 59 stakeholders and relevant officers.
- Attendees: 1 Elected Member, 7 officers and 14 stakeholders.
- The aim of the workshop was to enable attendees to plan their events and to ensure (so far as is reasonably practicable) the events take place safely. The objectives were to explain relevant legislation and guidance for events, to understand what a landowner needs to allow their land to be used and considerations for the content of event documentation.
- Information was provided at the event by Council's Head of Environmental Health on Safety Advisory Groups (SAG) – the rationale and benefits of attending and Council's terms of reference for SAG, details of which can be found at Appendix 5 of the Council's Land and Property policy [Council land and property | Ards and North Down Borough Council](#)
- A follow up email was sent out to all attendees providing further support including relevant links and documents – see Appendix 1.

The attendees were asked to evaluate the workshop on a feedback form with a score between 1 (lowest) and 4 (highest) and the responses were as follows:

1. Workshop objectives were stated clearly and met - 100% scored a 4/4
2. The workshop was well organized – 100% scored 4/4
3. The information presented was relevant and useful – 83% scored 4/4, 17% scored 3/4
4. The facilitator and officers provided adequate time for questions and answered them satisfactorily – 100% scored 4/4



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5. This workshop increased my understanding of Health & Safety, Event Management and Risk Assessments – 50% scored 4/4, 50% scored 3/4
6. The workshop gave me a good understanding of the Council's responsibilities as landowner – 83% scored 4/4, 17% scored 3/4
7. The presenter(s) suggested ways to follow up the training and provided information on where further information could be accessed – 67% scored 4/4, 33 % scored 3/4
8. The physical arrangements were adequate – 100% scored 4/4
9. How would you rate this workshop? (Please check one) – 100% scored 4/4

Comments from attendees:

*“Really enjoyed the workshop, especially as someone not very au fait with event management topics. Topic was very interesting, and Vanessa was a great presenter. The catering was also very good.”*

*“The Workshop was extremely useful and explained the Landowners responsibilities well.”*

*“Event was a great opportunity to match faces to names. Some content not directly relevant to our operations (e.g. Bouncy Castle requirements), but still useful background information. Have previous experience of Health & Safety and Risk Assessment process in a work context. Standardised template will be helpful for future submissions. Vanessa's extensive knowledge base and practical application was particularly helpful. Overall, a great Council initiative that will be mutually beneficial to both Council and land users – well done to all involved.”*

*“Very well organized, excellent speaker, ideal venue, and very enjoyable lunch.”*

*“It was useful to see just how seriously the Council took their responsibility to ensure health and safety arrangements at events. I came away with a clear appreciation of the organizers' equally demanding responsibility. The facilitator was excellent.”*

## RECOMMENDATION

If it is recommended that the Council notes the review that officers have undertaken, that an Event Management Workshop has taken place, the feedback from attendees and agrees that the Notice of Motion has been addressed.

Dear Stakeholder,

Many thanks for attending the Event Management Workshop on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and we hope you found it useful and informative.

I have attached an event feedback form and would be very grateful if you would complete and return it to [landrequests@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk](mailto:landrequests@ardsandnorthdown.gov.uk) no later than COB Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

We are always available to talk to you about your proposed event on Council Land. If you wish to do this, please give us as much notice as possible so we can make the appropriate arrangements. We can organise a site visit, a telephone call or a Teams video call.

Please find the links and attachments for information referred to during the presentation:

- PLASA\_Lightning\_Guidance June 2019.pdf - attached
- [Council land and property | Ards and North Down Borough Council](#)
- [Introduction to Health and Safety | Ards and North Down Borough Council](#)
- [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2000 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Fire Safety Guides - Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service \(nifrs.org\)](#)
- [Event Management Toolkit | Ards and North Down Borough Council](#)
- [Entertainment licence \(Northern Ireland\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Occupiers' Liability Act \(Northern Ireland\) 1957 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The Occupiers' Liability \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1987 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2000 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Risk assessment | Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland \(hseni.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The Purple Guide](#)
- [E-Learning | ProtectUK](#)
- [ProtectUK | Home](#)
- [National Protective Security Authority | NPSA](#)
- [Bouncy castles and other play inflatables: safety advice \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Information Sheets & Technical Bulletins \(pipa.org.uk\)](#)

If you have any queries or would like any other information, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you for your support.

Kind regards,  
Alison  
Head of Administration



PLASA\_Lightning\_G  
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